

Written Statement for the Record
Congressman Timothy M. Kennedy (NY-26)
House Armed Services Committee Member Day
April 10, 2025

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee:

As you craft the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), I am pleased to offer written testimony in support of several priorities for Western New York and our nation's broader defense capabilities.

Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS), a joint U.S. Air Force Reserve and New York National Guard station located in my district, contributes directly to the mission success of Air Force operations by supporting readiness capabilities both at home and abroad. NFARS is home to the 914th Air Refueling Wing, with squadrons dedicated to aerial refueling of U.S. and allied aircraft for over 50 years.

Currently, the NFARS Operations Group is spread across six outdated, disjointed, and code-deficient buildings, inhibiting command and control operations between squadrons and impeding base operations. To address these inefficiencies, NFARS received a \$54 million authorization in the FY26 NDAA, partially appropriated at \$16.11 million through the FY26 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, to construct a new, flightline-based Combined Operations Airfield Facility (COAF).

In the FY27 NDAA, additional funding is needed to provide \$54 million in total federal support for completion of the COAF. The COAF will allow for streamlined communications between squadrons, decreased mission response times, improved training, and a more effective command and control that supports domestic and international refueling operations. This project requires sustained federal investment in order to achieve the highest mission efficiency for refueling operations both at home and abroad.

LC-130 Aircraft

As the Arctic becomes a battleground for global strategic dominance in defense and national security, it is critical that we invest in U.S. military capabilities to preserve regional stability, protect American security, and defend against the growing presence of adversaries in the Arctic.

Since 1975, the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing has operated ski-equipped LC-130s to ensure the United States maintains a strategic presence in the polar regions. However, this model of LC-130s, manufactured over five decades ago, requires modernization in order to keep pace with evolving military needs as well as increasing Russian and Chinese competition in the Arctic. The current LC-130H fleet suffers from a critically low 45 percent availability rate, which diminishes the supply chain for aging H-models and creates risk of mission failure in the Arctic and Antarctic. As such, I respectfully request that the Committee include a \$620 million authorization dedicated to four LC-130Js in order to improve aircrew safety, upgrade U.S. capabilities in the polar region, assert strategic dominance in the Arctic, and achieve Initial Operating Capacity by FY31.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for the record. I appreciate all that this Committee does on a bipartisan basis to support our servicemembers and their families, the defense industrial base, and this nation's national defense objectives.