



Air Force Association

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An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization

Board of Directors

May 4, 2012

Senator Joe Lieberman
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1903

Dear Senator Lieberman,

We, the Board of Directors of the Air Force Association (AFA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization representing approximately 115,000 current and former Airmen and their families, are writing to express our great concern and opposition for legislation recently passed in both Houses of Congress.

Specifically, Section 308 of the House-passed Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (H.R. 2146) and title V of the Senate-passed 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012 (S. 1789) would dramatically restrict military and federal civilian personnel from participation in events sponsored by military and veterans associations.

Two provisions of this legislation are particularly troublesome. One states any government agency can only participate in only one conference sponsored by a given organization per year. Another strongly discourages such participation by imposing burdensome reporting requirements on any government official who speaks at a private organization's conference.

The AFA hosts multiple events each year at national, state and local levels. Participation by military and civilian leaders is essential to preserving the conversation with the American public, an increasing percentage of whom have never served in uniform.

These events inform and educate attendees on national defense issues; promote educational programs encouraging careers in the scientific and technical disciplines; and provide a forum for defense leaders to explain national security policies. Promoting informed dialogue between the government and the private sector is vital in this era of constrained resources. Without opportunities to exchange information with industry, government operates in a vacuum, the result of which is uninformed decision-making, bad policy and a misuse of resources.

These conferences and meetings are essential to the development of informed policymaking. We strongly urge you to prevent these unreasonable statutory restrictions which will discourage government attendance at educational conferences, significantly alienating government employees from the public they serve.

Sincerely,

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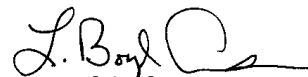
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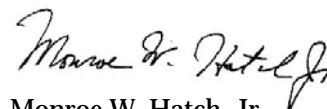
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