

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 26, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to request you conduct a thorough review of the Trump Administration's last-minute decision to move U.S. Space Command from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Huntsville, Alabama and suspend any actions to relocate the headquarters until you complete the review. This move undermines our ability to respond to the threats in space and is disruptive to the current mission. Additionally, significant evidence exists that the process was neither fair nor impartial and that President Trump's political considerations influenced the final decision.

Congress re-established U.S. Space Command in 2018. The Air Force began the selection process in 2019, conducting site visits and environmental reviews. In May 2019, the Air Force announced six finalists: Peterson Air Force Base (AFB), Schriever AFB, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, and Buckley AFB in Colorado; Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, and Vandenberg AFB in California. In August 2019, the Air Force re-established U.S. Space Command and named Peterson AFB the provisional headquarters until 2026. Notably, Peterson AFB was the home of U.S. Space Command from 1985 to 2002. The finalists expected the final basing decision in October 2019. By the end of 2019, however, the selection process inexplicably slowed, and by March 2020, the Air Force announced it would redo the process with new methodology and criteria, which represented a significant departure from the standard Air Force strategic basing decision process. The Air Force cited the creation of the Space Force as the ostensible reason for disregarding months of work and starting anew. On January 13, 2021, with one week left in President Trump's term, the Air Force announced the decision to move U.S. Space Command to Huntsville. Before the Air Force even announced its decision, Alabama press and politicians indicated that the Administration intended to move U.S. Space Command to Huntsville.

National Security. Our national security should be the most important consideration for this critical basing decision. This decision will uproot the servicemembers and civilians currently conducting the mission in Colorado and remove them from the nexus of military and intelligence space operations. It will undermine our national security mission and our superiority in space. Colorado is home to unique military and intelligence space assets and is the point of military and intelligence operational space integration. Colorado served as the original home of U.S. Space

Command from 1985 to 2002 and became the home of the Joint Forces Space Component Commander and Air Force Space Command. The National Space Defense Center (NSDC) at Schriever AFB, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, and the satellite communication capabilities at Peterson AFB represent the nation's premier military and intelligence space coordination entities. It is not an accident these entities are co-located. The NSDC's recent budget justification underscores that the Air Force appreciates the national security benefits of the proximity. The communications infrastructure in the Colorado Springs area -- unlike Huntsville -- is specifically designed to support the space mission. The national security benefits of co-locating Space Command with these existing missions and communications infrastructure is critical to our superiority in space.

Personnel. As a command with a higher percentage of civilians than military personnel, the government may have to offer incentives to bring people along. Historically, there can be high rates of attrition when organization and programs move. For instance, roughly 80 percent of the Missile Defense Agency civilian employees declined to relocate when it moved from the Washington, D.C., area to Huntsville, Alabama. This is not a risk the space mission can afford.

Political Influence. The Department of Defense must also review reports of political influence in this two-year process. At the outset, it is unclear why there was a basing process to reestablish a command with an existing and concentrated mission that was rehatted. In addition, it is unclear why the Air Force slowed and eventually stopped its standard strategic basing process in 2019. Certain press reports have suggested this was done due to requests from various Members of Congress who argued their state should have been included in the process. Finally, there is evidence President Trump's political considerations influenced the timing and final decision.

Lack of Transparency. The process lacked transparency regarding state and local incentives. While the Air Force claimed the process was based on specific criteria, we understood it also considered incentive packages that states and communities offered. This created significant ambiguity in community presentations that the previous Administration never made public. This prevented clear, public evaluation of the scoring criteria. Similarly, since May, the Air Force has told our staff it was using a detailed point system to evaluate the bases. Our understanding, however, is the final decision was made with a +/- baseline evaluation scale rather than a point system. The seeming inconsistencies raise concerns about how the previous Administration rendered the final decision.

Lack of Sufficient Data. In June 2020, the Air Force published their "Support to Military Families Report." This provided a ranking of every Air Force base in the nation based on how well they support military families. The report examined schools surrounding the bases and the state's spouse licensure reciprocity laws. In vetting the ratings, Colorado identified several concerns with the report's analysis. For instance, the authors used an incomplete state dataset to

calculate the student learning rate and omitted the measure of grade-level attainment. It also failed to account for the state's extended graduation timelines to ensure students are college and career ready. Assuming these flaws are explainable, the Air Force didn't even include Army base Redstone Arsenal in this report. It is therefore not clear how the Air Force evaluated Huntsville's ability to support military families.

Colorado Springs is already home to critical space assets and missions: the National Space Defense Center, U.S. Northern Command, North American Aerospace Defense Command, Cheyenne Mountain Air Station, and the U.S. Air Force Academy. Ninety miles north, Buckley AFB hosts the National Reconnaissance Office's Aerospace Data Facility-Colorado. Colorado is now home to eight of the nine current Space Force Deltas. Our state also boasts the nation's largest aerospace economy on a per capita basis and has demonstrated an unflinching commitment to servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

In view of the effects on national security and the irregularities of the selection process, we request you pause all actions related to moving U.S. Space Command and immediately review the manner in which the Trump Administration conducted this process.

We would also be happy to meet with you to discuss this in further detail.

Sincerely,



---

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



---

John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



---

Doug Lamborn  
United States Representative



---

Joe Neguse  
United States Representative



---

Diana DeGette  
United States Representative



---

Ed Perlmutter  
United States Representative



---

Jason Crow  
United States Representative



---

Ken Buck  
United States Representative



---

Lauren Boebert  
United States Representative

CC:  
The Honorable Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defense