

## United States Senate

August 18, 2020

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett  
Secretary of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Secretary Barrett,

Three cities in Texas —Houston, Fort Worth, and San Antonio—recently submitted applications to be considered for the privilege of hosting the permanent location of U.S. Space Command headquarters. Each of these meets and exceeds the selection criteria outlined by the Air Force for choosing a location, and moreover each brings a culture, enthusiasm, and history which would make any of them an ideal location for the headquarters of U.S. Space Command.

The Air Force's stated criteria for the selection of the U.S. Space Command headquarters listed three main items: a reasonable cost of living, a strong technology sector, and proximity to established military base infrastructure to support the command and their families. As was made clear in their nomination packages, the three Texas cities nominated for consideration excel under all of these criteria.

There is no better location for the men and women of Space Command than the great state of Texas. Cities and towns across Texas have been repeatedly recognized as among the best communities in the nation for supporting the military, including through numerous national awards from veterans' organizations and the Department of Defense for their support of military bases. The state of Texas is home to one of the fastest growing technology sectors in the world, and of course the U.S. Army Futures Command recently made the decision to locate its headquarters in Austin, Texas in 2018 for these very same reasons. Despite Texas's growth, common-sense state policies have ensured our cost of living remains low, which ensures service-members a high quality of life.

San Antonio, nicknamed Military City USA, is home to numerous Air Force, Army, and Navy bases, including Fort Sam Houston, Randolph Air Force Base, Lackland Air Force Base, Camp Bullis, Camp Stanley, and Martindale Army Airfield, all of which are under the umbrella of Joint Base San Antonio. The city also has a number of great Texas universities and colleges which include the University of Texas San Antonio, Trinity University, and Texas Lutheran University. San Antonio also hosts a robust and advanced aerospace industrial base including the Boeing Corporation's large presence at Kelly Field and the Southwest Research Institute which has led a number of complex space projects for NASA including the New Horizons mission.

Houston, nicknamed Space City, is not only home to the Johnson Space Center which itself is home to the famed Mission Control Center of NASA, but also the Army's 75<sup>th</sup> Innovation Command and Ellington Air Force Base, all of which contribute to Houston's recognition as the most diverse big city in America. The city has a number of terrific colleges and universities including Rice University and the University of Houston. It also hosts advanced industries, many of which are well versed in all things space like Jacobs, Oceaneering, Intuitive Machines, Paragon Space Development Corporation, and the large contingent of the Boeing Corporation's Defense, Space & Security Division, which, among many other things, helps to keep the International Space Station in top shape for American astronauts and our international partners.

Finally, the city of Fort Worth easily meets and exceeds the Air Force's stated criteria for the headquarters of U.S. Space Command. Fort Worth houses the expansive Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth with over 10,000 active duty and reserve members of the Navy, Marines, Army, and Air Force assigned to the base. Similar to both San Antonio and Houston, Fort Worth is home to numerous top-notch universities and colleges like Texas Christian University and Texas Wesleyan University. This city is also home to a number of leaders in advanced industries, including the one-of-a-kind Lockheed Martin facility, where the world's most advanced fighter jet, the F-35, is built and tested.

As you and I discussed while together touring the F-35 plant in Fort Worth, when it comes to space, Texas leads the nation. There's a reason why one of the first words spoken on the surface of the moon was that of a Texas city. The importance of space to the state of Texas, and vice versa, has only grown since. The state is home to large contingents of the best aerospace technology and development corporations in the world and hosts a litany of private research, development, manufacturing, and launch sites like those of Blue Origin, SpaceX, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrup Grumman, and United Launch Alliance, just to name a few. And those commercial entities are dramatically expanding their footprint in Texas. The state is also home to an unrivaled university system, which works hand-in-hand with our military on cutting-edge technologies. The U.S. Army Futures Command, for example, co-located its headquarters within the University of Texas System headquarters, and partnered with Texas A&M for a hypersonics laboratory in 2019. Likewise, Rice University has partnered closely with NASA since the beginning of the space program to help solve complex engineering challenges and perform scientific experiments to better inform space exploration.

No state in the union has more tenacious or effective advocates for the military or for space. Both are vital priorities for Texas. Both Senator Cornyn and I have previously served for many years on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and for the last six years I have chaired (what is now) the Aviation and Space subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee. Governor Abbott has led the Texas Military Preparedness Commission in awarding \$66 million in grants for infrastructure projects that support the 15 military installations in the state. The state has also passed numerous laws to support military families by allowing military children to register for school earlier and allowing military spouses to transfer certifications and licenses without cost.

Texas is the prime location for the new headquarters for U.S. Space Command. Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio have proven track records of providing a great home to military members and veterans, supporting advanced educational institutions to train the next generation of service members, and fostering advanced industries on the cutting edge of aerospace and space exploration. When it comes to space, I've been the lead author of major legislation that has passed into law under both the Obama and Trump administrations. I'm proud to be a passionate supporter of and advocate for the Space Force, space exploration, and renewed American leadership in space, and I am eager to see the great things the new headquarters of U.S. Space Command will accomplish. My office is ready to support in any way possible with any questions you may have about Texas and our tremendous military facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ted Cruz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ted Cruz  
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable John Henderson, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force