



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

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COLUMBIA 29211

May 24, 2006

The Honorable Robert Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval H. 4938, R-317.

H. 4938 would institute an Emergency Air Wing within the State Guard. I am vetoing the bill because it has the potential for serious unintended consequences affecting the safety of other pilots and passengers, and because it results in an unnecessary duplication of a service provided by the Civil Air Patrol.

One of the most important items that came out of the After Action Reports on the events of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina was the need for uniform coordination of the airspace in disaster areas. In hurricane situations, aircraft flying low to the ground in confined areas with low visibility have difficulty keeping track of each other and are exposed to an increased risk of mid-air collisions. This is why there is considerable top-down coordination of air missions, extensive training and a tightly integrated organizational structure.

In a federal disaster situation, the Active Force, Air Guard and Reserve and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) all operate subject to the coordination of one Air Branch Director that in turn is under one Incident Commander, and just this year, the Air Force has moved approval authority for Defense Support to Civil Authority missions (including CAP hurricane relief missions) from the Air Force Agency for National Security and Emergency Preparedness (AFNSEP) to the First Air Force Commander in an attempt to more tightly integrate the operations of the Civil Air Patrol with the Air Force.

Adding a brand new volunteer air unit, with different levels of training, different maintenance requirements and different standard operating procedures takes us away from the direction of tighter integration and coordination and may increase the potential for accidents. I think this

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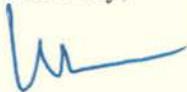
helps explain why no other state in the union has a State Guard air wing such as H. 4938 proposes.

I support the idea of volunteerism and admire the fact that some private pilots in the state want to be of service in times of crisis. Pilots who want to help in disaster relief efforts can volunteer with the Civil Air Patrol based here in South Carolina. In addition to its own fleet of airplanes, the Civil Air Patrol utilizes the services of thousands of pilots and their private planes nationwide for its tasks of, among other things, conducting search and rescue, assessing storm damage, and transporting emergency personnel, medical supplies, blood and live tissue. For those who prefer not to be involved in disaster relief, but still want to use their planes to help people, there is a group of private organizations that does this – the Air Care Alliance, a nationwide league of humanitarian flying organizations with volunteer pilots who cover their own flying expenses.

I recognize that with the speed with which H. 4938 moved through the General Assembly, some legislators may not have had quite as much opportunity to fully consider the merits of the bill as they might have wished. When considering whether to override this veto, I would encourage Members of the General Assembly to consult citizens with extensive military aviation experience on the advisability of this bill.

For these reasons, while respecting the intentions of the bill's supporters, I am returning H. 4938 to you without my signature.

Sincerely,

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

Mark Sanford

MS/jcm

cc: The Honorable Daniel T. Cooper