

7/13
Spoke w/ Chertone
she said this &
all similar
this reproduced
to my notes
this prepared

Tiffany

Charlie,
this was given to
ATP by Senator Kennedy
yesterday. Wanted you
to see it before it goes to
Mara for the record.
Jennifer

Saul

OK

Copies to R: A 7/12

and Mara 7/12
original

Charlie

Tiffany
for
response 7/12

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

July 6, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
Polk Building
Suite 600
2521 South Clarke Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Secretary Principi:

I'm writing to urge you to preserve a national treasure for the health and well-being of our military, our veterans, and all Americans – the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

AFIP aids in the diagnosis of cancers, heart diseases, and many other life-threatening illnesses with a competence and accuracy that is unmatched anywhere in the world. Their diagnoses save thousands of lives every year.

However, AFIP is slated for dissolution as part of the closure of Walter Reed. Some of its functions will be assigned to other facilities. However, its world class capabilities would be lost – capabilities that have taken almost a century and a half to build. I believe that the invaluable core functions of pathology consultation, education and research that AFIP provides to the military and civilian medical communities must be preserved.

The AFIP has a unique historical role in both civilian and military medicine in the United States. The Institute has been part of the national pathology landscape since it was founded by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 as the Army Medical Museum. Over the years, the AFIP, as an agency of the Department of Defense, has served as a center for pathology education, research, consultation, and diagnosis for all military and civilian health care providers.

Currently, AFIP's world-class staff renders second opinions on more than 43,000 cases a year, both military and civilian, and makes initial diagnoses in over 8,700 cases. It also maintains the world's largest and most comprehensive electronic consultation

program. AFIP's Department of Telemedicine and Distance Learning runs the Army's Telepathology Program and currently operates 27 robotic microscopes at Army medical treatment facilities around the world. This technology allows AFIP consultants in the United States to use microscopes at remote sites in the field, speeding diagnoses and the delivery of treatment.

Over the many decades of its existence, AFIP has developed a world renowned tissue repository that contains more than 50 million specimens of preserved material that cover the entire spectrum of human and animal disease. This treasure trove holds the key to understanding and diagnosing diseases, and is in the highest demand by researchers within the Institute as well as around the country. AFIP's pathology collection has recently been used, for example, to characterize the 1918 influenza virus from a tissue sample from that era, and helps us prevent flu epidemics today. The AFIP is also poised to make even greater strides in the future, as newer technologies such as genomics, proteomics, and micro-arrays are applied to repository samples.

All of this great potential would be lost under the present proposal to divide up the AFIP and reduce its functions. The current BRAC plan calls for various facets of the AFIP to relocate and continue, including the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, the DNA Laboratory, and the Tissue Repository. However, the heart of the AFIP – the pathologists and doctors who have rendered such a great service to the Armed Forces and the nation – will be disbanded. We would lose the brain trust of the AFIP, where the world's pathologists turn when facing exceedingly complex cases. We would lose the stewardship of its irreplaceable tissue repository. Without ongoing data collection and maintenance of the repository, its value to the medical community will be greatly reduced. Also lost will be the Institute's key educational programs that have drawn pathologists and radiologists from around the world for over 50 years.

In the strongest possible terms, I urge that the BRAC commission be given the maximum flexibility in addressing the recent BRAC process recommendations so that this vital resource can be maintained.

With respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Kennedy", written in a cursive style.

Edward M. Kennedy