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BRAC Commission
2521 S. Clark St
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Sirs and Ladies:

I am CPO Richard Robertson, USN (Ret); I am also a disabled veteran. I currently am the Director of the DoD mandated Retiree Activities Program officed at Cannon Air Force Base, the only active program in New Mexico. I have dealings with 2300 retired military, their families and survivors.

Within 100-mile radius of Cannon AFB, there are 1601 military retirees and 100 annuitants/survivors. According to the 2000 census, the population of New Mexico is 1.3 million persons. That same census also indicates there are 195,043 veterans of which 38,000 are disabled and 14,372 are retired.

When I left active duty in 1979 there were 3 reasons that I returned to New Mexico:

- 1) Close proximity to a Military Treatment Facility (MTF), Cannon AFB
- 2) Cost of living
- 3) I grew up and graduated from high school here.

I believe Cannon AFB is the heart of this area. Its closure would be a very real burden to these many retired/disabled military or their surviving families and possibly the local economy, not only in Southeastern New Mexico but the Texas Panhandle as well. Many retirees/survivors use the MTF for many reasons, but most prominent is that it is free and medications can be gotten free if it is on the formulary.

Comparatively speaking, Cannon is not as large as Davis/Monthan in Arizona, Randolph in Texas or you're own Andrews in DC. Benefits, however, are: three hundred fifty days of the year are perfect flying weather, the recent expansion of the air space for the supersonic training, the Melrose bombing range as utilized other branches bases as well.

In recent years BRAC has closed Amarillo AFB and Reese AFB in Texas requiring those retirees to come to Cannon AFB for assistance. Should Cannon AFB close, the nearest MTF would be at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, NM, some 250 miles or 4 hours driving time.

I believe the population of the cities in East Central, Southeastern New Mexico and West Texas (the 100 mile radius) want Cannon to remain open.

I don't think I am telling you anything you did not already know, however, as a citizen of Clovis New Mexico, a retiree and disabled veteran, I felt that I should speak my peace and it is my sincere hope that Cannon AFB will remain open and a part of our lives and community.

Very respectfully

CPO Richard Robertson, USN (Ret)