

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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SPEAKER'S DRUG TASK FORCE
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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

BRAC Commission

July 20, 2005

JUL 22 2005

Received

Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for the recent opportunity to testify at the St. Louis regional BRAC hearing on June 20th. As you know, I offered a strong defense of the military decision to consolidate two F-16 fighter wings at the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base. My support for this decision is based on the merits of the base's infrastructure, its strategic location, its excellent reputation and the high military recruitment rates in the northeast region of Indiana. The arguments being raised against the consolidation of fighter wings in Fort Wayne are simply inadequate or irrelevant to the Defense Department's decision. Because many of the points I made at the hearing were not reflected in my written testimony, I would like to reiterate some of those points in the form of this letter.

Among the arguments being made by opponents of consolidation in Fort Wayne are the opinions that Springfield's parking spaces and hopeful future munitions depot make the base more desirable for consolidating fighter planes. Additionally, these individuals are making the argument that closing the Springfield base would cost more than keeping it open. Each of these arguments is lacking in relevance.

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*Thanks for your
concern.*

Sincerely,
Mark
Mark Souder
Member of Congress

*Is this easier or harder
than Vet Security?*

*Do you remember this
Beary technician? He does
my ability in India &
since she used to report
with you years ago.*

CC: The BRAC Commission

*P.S.
Is it from your very table
Social Security next?*

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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SPEAKER'S DRUG TASK FORCE
CO-CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2005

Honorable James V. Hansen
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

BRAC Commission

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*Thanks for your
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Sincerely,


Mark Souder
Member of Congress

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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BRAC Commission

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Received

July 20, 2005

General James T. Hill
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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*Thank for your
contributions.*

Sincerely,

Mark Souder
Member of Congress

*We passed some amendments
on the H. Byrd bill for
an veto in E. Pacific and
some related to Colombia. We
bottle on!*

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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Washington, DC 20515

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July 20, 2005

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Honorable Samuel K. Skinner
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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*Thank for your
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Sincerely,



Mark Souder
Member of Congress

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515 BRAC Commission

JUL 22 2005

July 20, 2005

Received

General Lloyd Warren Newton
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Newton:

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*Thanks for your
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Member of Congress

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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Honorable James H. Bilbray
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
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Thank you again for your attention to my recent testimony. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please contact me as I am willing to assist you at any time. And, should your commission ever consider reversing the military decision to consolidate F-16s to the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base, it is my hope that you will send a few of your members to come visit the base in Fort Wayne. I think you will find that the Defense Department's decision is the right course to take.

*Thank for your
contribution*

Sincerely,


Mark Souder
Member of Congress

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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BRAC Commission

July 20, 2005

JUL 22 2005

Received

Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr.,
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Admiral Gehman:

Thank you for the recent opportunity to testify at the St. Louis regional BRAC hearing on June 20th. As you know, I offered a strong defense of the military decision to consolidate two F-16 fighter wings at the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base. My support for this decision is based on the merits of the base's infrastructure, its strategic location, its excellent reputation and the high military recruitment rates in the northeast region of Indiana. The arguments being raised against the consolidation of fighter wings in Fort Wayne are simply inadequate or irrelevant to the Defense Department's decision. Because many of the points I made at the hearing were not reflected in my written testimony, I would like to reiterate some of those points in the form of this letter.

Among the arguments being made by opponents of consolidation in Fort Wayne are the opinions that Springfield's parking spaces and hopeful future munitions depot make the base more desirable for consolidating fighter planes. Additionally, these individuals are making the argument that closing the Springfield base would cost more than keeping it open. Each of these arguments is lacking in relevance.

First, while Springfield does have a greater number of F-16 parking spaces than Fort Wayne, the spaces at both bases are more than adequate to cover the consolidation of 26 planes at one base. The greater number of parking spaces in Springfield is not an advantage as it is not necessary to the consolidation.

Secondly, while Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin's intention to provide the funding needed to build a munitions storage facility in Springfield is honorable, it should not be considered as a reason to keep planes at that base. Fort Wayne already has a munitions storage depot and has the capacity to both store and load live munitions on the F-16s. This ability was critical following the terrorist attacks of 9-11 as Fort Wayne's Blacksnakes were among the first to provide air cover to Chicago. The 122nd's location in Fort Wayne is strategic for homeland security reasons as the F-16s can fly to a number of Midwest cities, including Chicago, Detroit and Indianapolis, in less than 15 minutes from takeoff.

Another argument raised by the Illinois delegation is that it would cost more to close the Springfield base than it would to keep it open. This argument is simply irrelevant. The military must consolidate like missions and assets within the Air National Guard because they are reducing its air assets by two thirds. Furthermore, numerous F-16's are being retired even before the F-35 is deployed. Therefore, there will be certain financial costs involved with realigning bases, but these costs are inevitable and should be assumed with any regional consolidation. The same argument Illinois is making could be made in Fort Wayne, but it is irrelevant to the military's decision.

Finally, the Illinois delegation claimed the recruiting numbers in Fort Wayne should not be considered by the BRAC Commissioners as a valid reason for consolidating planes in Fort Wayne given the strong recruiting numbers in Springfield. I disagree. While Springfield does have good numbers, Fort Wayne's are better. At a time when the National Guard and the Armed Services are having difficulty attracting new recruits, the 122nd is operating at 104.2% manning strength and ranks ninth in overall recruiting for the Air National Guard. The other branches of the Armed Services report similar recruiting numbers. In 2004, Northeast Indiana was ranked first in the Midwest for Army recruiting. On the reserve side, the most recent recruiting numbers are even better. The latest third quarter numbers ending on June 13th revealed that Army reserve recruiters in Northeast Indiana exceeded their recruitment goals by 16 percent. These numbers demonstrate the strong patriotism and support for our military that is deeply rooted in my district. These numbers are an indication of the 122nd's ability to recruit additional personnel should it be expanded.

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*Thanks for your
contributions.*

Sincerely,

Mark Souder
Member of Congress

*Please note the comments
related to Springfield. They
had incomplete info in
St. Louis (failed to check web-
site portal over previous
week) & gave you false
info on opinions to RW).*

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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CO-CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2005

Honorable Philip Coyle
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

BRAC Commission

JUL 22 2005

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Thanks for your contribution

Sincerely,



Mark Souder
Member of Congress

CC: The BRAC Commission

MARK E. SOUDER
3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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BRAC Commission

July 20, 2005

JUL 22 2005

Received

Brigadier General Sue Ellen Turner
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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*Thank you for your
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Mark Souder
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CC: The BRAC Commission