

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 11, 2005

Chairman Anthony Principi
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

As the BRAC Commission begins its final deliberations regarding the realignment and closure recommendations made by the Department of Defense (DOD), we would like to re-emphasize the value of Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) Willow Grove as a strategic homeland security asset.

It has been reported that Northern Command is in the process of developing war plans for guarding against and responding to terrorist attacks in the United States. According to Northcom, this unprecedented action is necessary because DOD is well equipped and situated to respond to a biological, chemical or nuclear attack in any of the 50 states. We believe this further highlights the importance of NAS JRB Willow Grove to Pennsylvania and the entire Northeast region.

The Northeast region of the United States is a major economic hub in the U.S., as it is densely populated and home to transportation and telecommunications infrastructure that is vital to domestic and international trade. However, DOD continues to relocate critical military assets outside of the Northeast. The recommended closure of NAS JRB Willow Grove is the most recent DOD action that would significantly weaken the Department's ability to play a role in the protection of this vital region.

NAS JRB Willow Grove's 8,000 foot runway is in close proximity to all of the major metropolitan areas in the Northeast, as well as the National Capital Region, and the 162 acre base could easily serve as a staging area for emergency response teams and supplies. Additionally, all of the armed services are represented on the base, and they have previous valuable joint operations experience with the Coast Guard, FEMA, PEMA, and the FAA. This jointness, both within the military and among various government entities, will be absolutely essential in the event of another catastrophic attack on our homeland.

We appreciate the task you and the other BRAC Commissioners have before you in the coming weeks, and are grateful for the time and consideration you have already dedicated to NAS JRB Willow Grove. We are confident that, in the end, you will share our conviction that this base is too valuable to be closed.

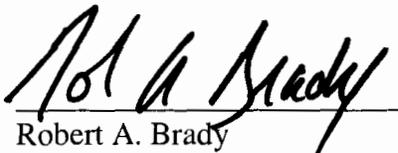
Sincerely,


Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress

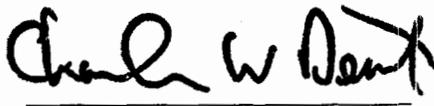

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