

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 22, 2005

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

BRAC Commission

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Dear Chairman Principi:

As deliberations begin on BRAC 2005, we hope that you will consider two recent developments that further highlight both the national and regional importance of Willow Grove Joint Reserve Base, and the people that serve there.

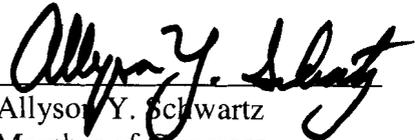
You may be aware that the 913<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing stationed at Naval Air Station / Joint Reserve Base (NAS/JRB) Willow Grove, PA is pending mobilization to the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. As we have stated in previous letters, meetings, and hearings, our nation currently relies on reservists more than ever before. This particular activation further illustrates the value of the combat ready, fully-staffed, and trained Reserve members in Pennsylvania, and throughout the United States. However, despite its continued reliance on the 913<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing in ongoing military efforts, the Department of Defense barely mentioned the unit in its BRAC recommendations, except to note that the Air Force plans to reassign the 913<sup>th</sup>'s aircraft and disestablish the unit.

Clearly, the 913<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing remains an important part of the multi-service team at NAS/JRB Willow Grove. This unit and the other joint service personnel stationed at this base remain ready, willing and able to serve. If the current BRAC recommendations stand, these dedicated men and women will not be available for rapid deployments to distant conflicts nor will they be available to support Civil Authorities in Homeland Defense missions.

In fact, today we have seen yet another example our region's reliance on the skills and training of the personnel at NAS/JRB Willow Grove. Just this morning, a tanker truck carrying gasoline overturned and burst into flames on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Plymouth Township. A foam truck from the Navy Fire Department at NAS/JRB Willow Grove was dispatched, enabling civil authorities to minimize the harmful effects of this crash on the people of Southeastern Pennsylvania. By all accounts, today event appears to be an unfortunate accident, but it highlights the capabilities of the Willow Grove personnel and the important role they would play should the mid-Atlantic region be the target of a terrorist attack.

We hope that the BRAC Commission and the Department of Defense will recognize the importance of the individual sacrifices and contributions that all of the service members stationed at NAS/JRB Willow Grove continue to make on behalf of our nation, serving in support of both combat and Homeland Defense/Security missions.

Sincerely,

  
Allyson Y. Schwartz  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress