



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& VISITOR'S CENTER

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BRAU Commission

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Received

Letter of Support for NAVSTA Ingleside

Dear Congressman Ortiz,

This is a letter of strong support for importance of keeping Naval Station Ingleside open. The presence of the Navy, and their dependent families, has provided a very positive impact on our community and our schools economically as well as socially.

The location of NAVSTA Ingleside, less than 10 miles from the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico, makes it a critical link in the chain of national defense and in the war on drugs and terrorism. To close the base would be a serious compromise of our defense of the Gulf Coast. Our nation's defense is stronger because of the location of NAVSTA Ingleside. The facilities were well planned and lend themselves to additional uses and combining of missions. The heavy weather mooring system that was installed at Ingleside makes it a safe haven for vessels in hurricane strength storms. The proximity of this Navy base to the Gulf of Mexico allows more effective defense against drug traffic out of South America and allows protection from terrorism from the Southern Hemisphere.

The economic impact of the Navy personnel and their dependent families, as well as the support services and industry that the Navy presence has attracted, is measured in hundreds of millions of dollars. The property tax base in Aransas Pass has increased dramatically in the past few years. New businesses are opening at a rapid rate. New business and increased home building means badly needed increased revenue for the school district. There are approximately 13 industries contributing to the positive economic impact of Aransas Pass and the Aransas Pass Ind. School District as a direct result of NAVSTA Ingleside. Additional educational advantages are offered by St. Leo University in Ingleside. This university is a satellite campus that was attracted by the Navy presence. This is a benefit, not only to Navy personnel, but the civilian population as well.

The community of Aransas Pass and the students and staff of Aransas Pass Ind. School District are better now because of the exposure to the diverse cultures of Navy personnel and their dependents. Navy personnel are quick to offer to help with community projects. Personnel from NAVSTA Ingleside built a gazebo at one of our elementary schools for the enjoyment of the students. Navy wives are volunteers and substitute teachers at the campuses. Navy dependents have been integrated into the workforce of our community and they are doing well. The Navy has brought us good neighbors and we don't want to lose them.

Our school district established a Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training program and it has had the total support of NAVSTA Ingleside. We have several graduates who have been inspired to enter the United States Navy because of the NJROTC and the close presence of the Navy.

In the mid-1980's when we were supporting Ingleside in their bid for the "Homeport" to be located at the site in Ingleside, we talked about how we would welcome the Navy and the Navy responded favorably noting that in many other places yard signs could be seen saying "No Sailors Allowed" and other such derogatory sentiments. The Navy was impressed with the warm welcome they received in the Aransas Pass/Ingleside communities.

That welcoming attitude has not changed. We want the Navy as our neighbors. We want to continue to be with them in the mutually beneficial relationship we have enjoyed for several years. We strongly oppose the closing of Naval Station Ingleside.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carl A. Montoya, Chairman of the Board
Aransas Pass Chamber of Commerce
Superintendent of Schools
Aransas Pass Ind. School District

Cc:

Corpus Christi Port Authority Commissioner Judy Hawley
South Texas Military Task Force Chairman Loyd Neal