

ORIGINAL

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
BRAC 2005 Independent Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to request the Commission conduct a site hearing at New Castle County Airport Air Guard Station in Delaware. The Pentagon has recommended a realignment of 148 personnel from this facility and the transfer of its 8 C-130s to other bases. We believe it is critical that this decision and its impact receive closer examination.

Among the glaring impacts that will result from realigning by this unit, is the fact that Delaware would lose its only Air Guard flying unit. This will significantly impact the Governor's ability to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies. Additionally, as you know, maintaining an Air Guard flying unit in every state was a position strongly advocated by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, and the Director of the Air National Guard, Lieutenant General Daniel James, and all of the Adjutants General. It is our understanding that the citizens of only 3 other states and one territory are being so disadvantaged.

In addition, the Pentagon's listing of the number of positions lost does not seem to account for the link between the airplanes and the other missions at the base. The report lists a maximum potential job reduction of 250 over the next five years. However, it appears that over 500 traditional reservists may no longer have missions at the base, which could potentially have a much greater impact than originally described in the Pentagon's report.

These are just the initial reasons for a closer examination of the decision to realign New Castle, but we believe they are significant enough that the Commission should plan a site hearing. We look forward to discussing the base and its missions with you and the Commission in more detail in the future. If we can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or have your staff contact ours (Erin Logan with Senator Biden, Sheila Murphy with Senator Carper, and Jim Catella with Representative Castle).



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator

Thank you,



Thomas Carper
United States Senator



Michael N. Castle
Member of Congress