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3RD DISTRICT, INDIANA

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

June 3, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Department of Defense's base closure and realignment recommendations, particularly as they relate to the 122<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing based in Fort Wayne, Indiana. For the last sixty years, the 122<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing has proudly resided in Fort Wayne, Indiana, while making vital contributions to our nation's air defense superiority.

Mr. Chairman, I believe Northeast Indiana and the City of Fort Wayne provide physical attributes that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the Midwest region of the United States. With 166 acres of land leased at a nominal cost by the State of Indiana and the Fort Wayne Airport Authority, an additional 90 acres adjacent to the base reserved for military use, and 1250 acres of undeveloped land at the airport complex, the Fort Wayne Air Guard base is not threatened by land encroachment, making it an ideal location for expansion and the consolidation of like missions. Furthermore, the airport has the largest commercial runway in the State of Indiana at 12,000 feet, providing the base with the flexibility needed to accommodate any type of plane. More importantly, however, Northeast Indiana, the City of Fort Wayne, and Allen County have a proud tradition of supporting the needs of our warfighters. At a time when the National Guard and the Armed Services are having difficulty attracting new recruits, the 122<sup>nd</sup> is currently operating at 104.2% manning strength and ranks ninth in overall recruiting for the Air National Guard.

In addition to our outstanding recruiting success in Northeast Indiana, the 122<sup>nd</sup> is fortunate to have state of the art facilities and a variety of special use airspace and range complexes nearby and readily available for training purposes. There are four locations within the State of Indiana available for use by the Air National Guard, including: Hilltop MOA, 12 Mile MOA, Atterbury Range Complex and Jefferson Proving Grounds. These special use locations and ranges, in addition to the \$35 million in federally earmarked

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military construction and air traffic control investments at the airport, help ensure the Air Guard has the resources and facilities it needs for current and emerging mission requirements.

Please know that I am grateful for your service to our country and am willing to assist you or any of the Commissioners as you go through this grueling process over the next few months. Thank you for thoughtful consideration of my views on the 122<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing and Northeast Indiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Souder". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Souder  
Member of Congress

Cc: BRAC Commissioners