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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3504**

May 25, 2005

**RECEIVED**

**05312005**

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
2521 South Clark Street  
Suite 600  
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

Thank you for your fine service as the Base Realignment and Closure Commission begins its regional hearings and site visits. I appreciate your willingness to take on this demanding assignment in support of reconfiguring our nation's military to meet the challenges of the future.

In the light of the serious recruitment and retention difficulties faced by the National Guard, I share the concerns you expressed about the Pentagon's planned consolidation of Guard bases and missions. The 179th Airlift Wing of the Ohio Air National Guard, stationed at Mansfield Lahm Airport in my congressional district, is slated for closure under the Department of Defense plan. This unit, which has seen 35 deployments in support of our national defense in just the last four years, excels at recruitment and retention; it currently stands at 106 percent of authorized manning. Consolidating C-130 bases in the manner proposed by the Pentagon will certainly lead to the departure of many of these dedicated and talented men and women from the Guard.

As you continue to review sites for commission visits, I ask that you give Mansfield every consideration for such a visit, consistent with all applicable rules and regulations governing your work. I believe you will find that the 179th presents a compelling case due to the active role it plays in homeland defense and the Global War on Terror. Many guardsmen from the unit are currently deployed in Asia, working seamlessly alongside their active duty counterparts. The unit is the seventh-largest employer in north central Ohio, with an annual economic impact of roughly \$70 million.

In addition, I ask that you make available to me the installation-specific data presented to the commission on the 179th. Without access to this important data, the Mansfield community cannot properly make its case that this vital guard unit should remain open and operational.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Yours truly,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Oxley', is written over the typed name and title.

Michael G. Oxley, M.C.  
Fourth Ohio District

MGO/jbd