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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3813

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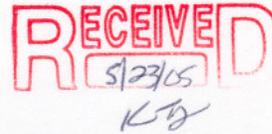
May 17, 2005

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Chairman Anthony Principi
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202



Dear Chairman Principi:

The men and women of the National Guard and Reserves continue to proudly serve the United States in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has the fourth largest contingent of National Guard and Reserve service members from any state currently stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. These 4,500 individuals have volunteered to take leave from their jobs, their families, and their personal concerns in order to serve our nation. For this, we are all grateful.

However, I am concerned that our armed services and the Department of the Navy in particular, may lose a large number of volunteer service members if the DoD BRAC recommendations are implemented as presented to the Commission. As you consider these recommendations, I am confident that you will keep in mind the impact that they may have on our nation's ability to recruit and retain Reserve service members.

Specifically, it is my hope that you will address the following questions and concerns:

- The DoD report did not account for lost Guard and Reserve billets in its overall tally for job losses at bases recommended for closure or realignment. However, these installations serve as second homes for many of our volunteer service members who spend time on base to receive training and access health and commissary services. **Can you explain why the DoD Report omitted these service men and women, particularly when there may be no other local or regional installations available to them?**
- The reservists from the Northeast may be the hardest hit by the DoD recommendations, because that region of the country would be without any facilities to house the Naval Air Reserve or the air functions of the Marine Corps Reserve. With the nation's increasing reliance on the Reserve Components of our armed forces, our volunteer service members must continue to receive the highest level of training. **Can you explain how these individuals will be fully integrated into National Defense Team without direct access to a local or regional facility where they can reinforce and expand their skills?**
- On May 13th, 2005, Vice Admiral John Cotton, Chief of the Navy Reserve, wrote, "The Navy's senior leadership understands and embraces the value provided by the Navy Reserve, however, that is not the case throughout. At the deck plates, the value of the Navy Reserve is not apparent. This is due largely to misperceptions about the Reserve Component (RC) that go unchallenged. Our task is to change the Active Component (AC) mindset so that RC units or personnel are thought of as a primary solution set rather than an after thought. Only then will full and complete integration be realized."

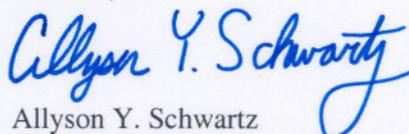
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The Vice Admiral's observation is particularly troubling in light of the Navy's intention to transfer its Reserve Components to Active Component facilities. If the culture of the Navy is currently such that the Reserve Components are treated as an "after thought", **what assurance do we have that DoN will be prepared to allocate the resources necessary to transport, train and support the Reservists who no longer have access to a local or regional facility?**

As you begin to review of the Department of Defense's (DoD) recommendations, please know that I appreciate the hard work that you and the other Commissioners, as well as the staff of the BRAC Commission, have before you. Ultimately, I support the efforts to streamline and further modernize our nation's military, but I believe this must be achieved without compromising the strength of our National Guard and Reserves, or undermining regional homeland security needs.

Should you need more information related to my request, or on any other matter before the commission, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. You may also follow up with my Military Legislative Assistant, Kirk Freeman, at (202) 225-6111.

Sincerely,



Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress