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Richard Durbin

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ ILLINOIS

FAX

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TO: Chairman Principi

OFFICE: BRAC Commission

FAX NO: (703) 699-2735

FROM: Sen. Durbin et al

PHONE: (202) 225-2142

DATE: May 20, 2005

PAGES (including this cover sheet): 3

NOTE:

ORIGINAL**Congress of the United States**

Washington, DC 20510

May 20, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
Polk Building - Suites 600 and 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

As members of the Illinois and Iowa congressional delegations, we want to thank you for your willingness to undertake the task that lies before you: evaluating the Department of Defense's recommendations for base realignment and closure. We recognize the time and commitment that this task demands of you, your fellow commissioners, and your staff. As a bipartisan, bicameral delegation, we write to you today to express our deep concerns about some of the recommendations that have been presented to you regarding the removal of certain components from Rock Island Arsenal and to request a regional hearing at Rock Island regarding the proposed realignment.

Rock Island Arsenal, as you know, is a vital national security asset. Its core manufacturing capabilities have been a critical and reliable source of materiel during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we appreciate the Department of Defense's recognition of the Arsenal factory's organic capabilities and its recommendation to expand them to include munitions. Rock Island Arsenal's capabilities and facilities extend even further, however, and we strongly object to the proposed removal of several units from Rock Island Arsenal as proposed in the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure list of May 13, 2005.

The removal of these units, including the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, the Northwest Regional Installation Management Agency, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and the North Central Civilian Operations Center, as well as Depot Maintenance positions, fundamentally violates the basic principle of BRAC and represents a major economic loss to the area of over 1200 direct jobs. These units' performance has been outstanding: the North Central Civilian Operations Center, for example, has been rated by the Army's own metrics as the best operating CPO in the country. The movement of the TACOM-RI functions to Detroit and the disruption of this crucial military function at a time of war and its separation from the related work of the Arsenal contradicts the goals of base realignment to promote greater national security.

Among the great assets of the Arsenal are its central location and its room to grow, with more than 300 acres and 1.9 million square feet available for additional development, along with its community support and the support of two state governments – Illinois and Iowa.

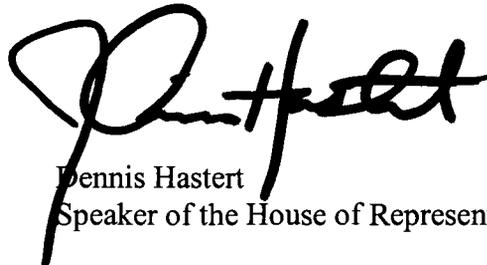
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The leading criterion for evaluation under the base closure process is military value. These tenants of the Rock Island Arsenal, the workforce that staffs them, and the facility itself represent tremendous military value which should not be disrupted. We look forward to working with you and your staff as we demonstrate how the Pentagon's analysis deviated substantially from the required selection criteria and to discussing these issues at a regional hearing at Rock Island.

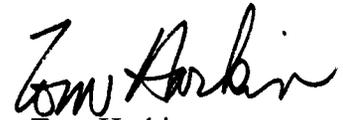
Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House of Representatives



Tom Harkin
United States Senator



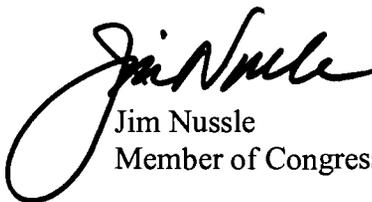
Charles Grassley
United States Senator



Barack Obama
United States Senator



Lane Evans
Member of Congress



Jim Nussle
Member of Congress

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