



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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06152005

June 10, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi, Chair  
2005 Defense Base Closure & Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark Street  
Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Principi:

This letter represents the full and unqualified support of the Kalamazoo County Michigan Board of Commissioners in opposition of the proposed realignment of the 110<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing and closure of the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. Kalamazoo County, like our neighboring Calhoun County to the East has historically been strong supporters of the defense of our nation.

Since early in the last century Kalamazoo County gave up thousands of acres of land to the military as they prepared to fight the conflicts of the last century. Kalamazoo County joins with Battle Creek and Calhoun County to proudly play its role in the war on terrorism.

The Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has recommended a list of military facilities be closed and/or realigned which included the 110<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing as part of the BRAC process. Kalamazoo County believes that there must have been some type of mis-interpretation in the evaluation criteria that resulted in the 110<sup>th</sup> even appearing on the BRAC list.

As we understand the criteria Military Value, Military Essentiality and Military Readiness were highly valued with taxpayer cost, being relevant, but not as highly valued. To state the obvious, the Federal Government has invested over \$37 million dollars into the Battle Creek Air National Guard base in the last decade to make it the most state-of-the-art A-10 maintenance and support facility in America. The unique and specialized facilities are not realignable and therefore they will

need to be recreated at whatever facility the A-10's ultimately call home, at great costs.

There is not an A-10 squadron in the National Guard in this country that is more combat ready than the 110<sup>th</sup>. They have been activated and served with distinction in Operation Noble Eagle, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. During two deployments in 2004 alone, a total of 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 14 Bronze Stars were awarded to members of the 110<sup>th</sup>. If military readiness is valued by the Defense Department the 110<sup>th</sup> cannot fulfill its mission for several years if it is realigned. Many of the 932 full- and part-time National Guard members will not be transferred to the 110<sup>th</sup>'s proposed new home because there are already military personnel there that have first option in servicing these unique aircraft. However those individuals are not qualified in the service, maintenance and operation of A-10's. It will take years and millions of dollars to regain the razor sharp efficiency and skill in the A-10's that exist in Battle Creek. Military readiness is priceless in this time of terrorist threats.

Kalamazoo County implores the BRAC Commission to carefully examine the military value, readiness and cost effectiveness of the Pentagon recommendation to realign the 110<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. Kalamazoo County believes the value of the 110<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is clear and compelling. We ask this for the good of the Air Force readiness, the national defense, the Southwest Michigan community and especially for the 932 Guards men and women who have so proudly served every time they have been ask and with great distinction.

Sincerely,



Robert Brink, Chair

Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners

c: Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Governor  
Honorable Carl Levin  
Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Honorable Fred Upton  
Honorable Joe J.H. Schwartz, M.D.