

2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2005

GEORGIA TECH HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER

800 SPRING STREET, NW

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

STATES TESTIFYING

GEORGIA, ALABAMA AND TENNESSEE

COMMISSIONERS:

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL SKINNER

COMMISSIONER JAMES BILBRAY

COMMISSIONER HAROLD GEHMAN, CHAIRMAN

CHAIR:

COMMISSIONER HAROLD GEHMAN

APPEARANCES :

COMMISSIONER GEHMAN

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY

COMMISSIONER SKINNER

DAN COWHIG, Deputy General Counsel

CERTIFIED

COMMISSIONER GEHMAN: This is the time and day 8:23 a.m. and it's June 30th, Thursday, at the State of Georgia Base Realignment and Closure Regional Hearing, Georgia Tech Conference Center. Good morning, my name is Harold Gehman. I will be the chairperson for this regional meeting for the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

I am pleased to be joined by my fellow commissioners Jim Bilbray and Sam Skinner for today's session. As this Commission has observed during our first period, every dollar inappropriately assigned and located in the infrastructure is a dollar not available to provide the training that might save a marine's life, purchase the munitions to win a soldier's firefight or fund the advances that can ensure our continued dominance of the air and seas.

Congress entrusted the Defense Department with vast but not unlimited resources. We have a responsibility to our nation, the men and women who bring the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force to life, to demand the best possible use of these limited resources.

Congress recognized that fact and authorized the Department of Defense to prepare a

proposal to realign or to close domestic bases. However, that authorization was not a blank check. The members of this Commission accepted the challenge and the necessity of providing an independent, fair, equitable assessment and evaluation of the Department of Defense proposals and the data and the methodology used to develop that proposal. We've committed to the Congress, to the President and to the American people that our deliberations and decisions will be open and transparent, and that our decisions will be based on criteria set forth in the statute.

We continue to examine the proposed recommendations set forth by the Secretary of Defense on May 13th and measure them against the criteria of the military values as set forth in the law, especially the need for surge manning and for homeland security.

But be assured we will not be conducting this review as an exercise in a sterile cost accounting. This Commission is committed to conducting a clear reality check that will not only shape our military capability for decades to come, but will also have a profound effect on your communities and on the people who bring those communities to life.

We are also committed to ensuring our deliberations and

decisions will be devoid of politics and that people in the communities affected by the BRAC proposals will have, through our site visits and through our public hearings, a chance to provide a direct input on the substance of the proposals and the methodology and assumptions behind them. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Commission to thank the thousands of involved citizens who have already contacted the Commission - that shared with us their thoughts, concerns and suggestions about the base closure realignment proposals.

Unfortunately, the volume of correspondence we received makes it impossible for us to respond directly to each one of you in this short time with which the Commission must complete its mission. We want everyone to know the public inputs we received are appreciated and are taken into consideration as part of our review process.

While everyone in this room will not have an opportunity to speak, every piece of correspondence received by the Commission will be made a part of our permanent record as is appropriate.

Today we will hear testimony from the states of Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee. Each State's elected delegation has been allotted a block of time that is determined by the overall impact of the Department Of Defense's closure and realignment recommendations on their states. The delegation

members that work closely with their communities to develop agenda, I am certain, will provide information and insight that will make up a valuable part of our review.

We would greatly appreciate if you would adhere to your time limits, because every voice is important. To make sure that the last person speaks, gets their allotted time, we will have to enforce the time limits on the first person who speaks. I am sure you understand.

I will now request all the witnesses from the State of Georgia to rise for the administration of the oath that is required by the base closure and realignment statute. The oath will be administered by Dan Cowhig, the Commission's designated federal officer.

(Panel sworn.)

COMMISSIONER GEHMAN: Governor Perdue, you have the floor, sir.

GOVERNOR PERDUE: Mr. Gehman, Mr. Skinner, Mr. Bilbray, good morning and welcome to Georgia. I know that the last several weeks, months has been extremely busy for you. We want you to know we appreciate your service and the great responsibility placed on you for assessing the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations and helping to meet the future needs of our nation's military.

We want you to know -- to take away this

message very clearly: Georgia is a patriotic state, always has been, with a strong military tradition. We consider all military personnel bases in Georgia to be part of our Georgia family, whether they be Active-duty, Reserve, National Guard alike. We take extreme pride and do all we can to support and to care for this extended family.

You will soon hear from the individual Georgia Communities, the host bases affected by the Pentagon's recommendations. But I want you to know what Georgia as a whole has been doing to help our men and woman in uniform. Early in our administration, it was brought to my attention that military families and their dependents were not eligible for our in-state tuition at our colleges and universities.

I worked with our Board of Regents to correct this inequity. And now I am proud to say our military families and their dependents are on par with their civilian counterparts.

Through our frequent meetings with Georgia base commanders, I have learned how predatory payday lending practices were snaring many of their troops in an endless web of debt.

In response to these concerns which were













































































































































































































































































































