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

December 10, 2012

The Honorable Buck McKeon  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

As the House and Senate Armed Services Committees move to conference on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, I respectfully ask for your support of House-approved language to strengthen congressional oversight and review of base closure decisions by the Department of Defense (DoD). Specifically, I urge you to include in the final conference report Section 2872 of the House-passed NDAA (H.R. 4310) without changes.

Section 2872 amends 10 USC 993 to require DoD to justify any base closure or transfer of troops impacting more than 1,000 uniformed personnel. Prior to acting, DoD is to provide a written justification, an evaluation of the costs and benefits, and an evaluation of the local economic, environmental, strategic and operational consequences.

The need to strengthen Congress' review of base closure decisions is well-illustrated by the poorly crafted FY13 Force Structure Announcement drafted by the Air Force. In addition to massive retirements and transfers of aircraft and manpower, the Air Force is proposing to shut down one base: the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station. This base is home to the 911th Airlift Wing, which is comprised of more than 1,100 reservists, seven C-130s. It has one of the highest mission-capable rates and recruitment levels in the Air Reserve. Despite the 911th's accomplishments and high marks, the Air Force completed no analysis prior to targeting it for closure.

The Air Force inaccurately claims there are fewer than 300 civilian employees authorized to be employed at the Pittsburgh IAP Air Reserve Station, allowing the Pentagon to close the base without congressional review under 10 USC 2687. But compared to similar bases housing C-130s, Pittsburgh IAP Air Reserve Station employs fewer civilians due to its strategic location at the Pittsburgh International Airport. For a mere cost of \$20,000 a year to the Pentagon, the Pittsburgh International Airport provides emergency response, air traffic control, and runway maintenance. If the Pittsburgh IAP Reserve Station had to in-source those activities like other bases, the base would have much higher overhead costs, its authorized personnel number would

far exceed the 300-person threshold, and thus, the Pentagon would be prevented from unilaterally closing it.

The Pentagon is trying to close this base not because it's costlier to operate or less efficient than other bases. Instead, DoD is using an arbitrary and disputed number (300 civilian employees) to avoid having the decision reviewed and approved by Congress. Enabling DoD to use ambiguous language to make a suboptimal decision like closing the Pittsburgh IAP Air Reserve Station would set a terrible precedent. These kinds of back-door base closures would become more commonplace in violation of Congress' intent in enacting 10 USC 2687 and 10 USC 993.

Both the House and Senate have rightfully passed the aforementioned reporting and evaluation requirements for base closures and troop reductions as part of each chamber's respective version of the NDAA. However, Section 2872 of the House bill also requires the President to include notice of force structure changes and base closures in the annual budget request. Adopting Section 2872 would give Congress two opportunities to review, block or approve base closures and force restructuring: in the annual defense authorization bill and the defense appropriations bill.

The necessity for stronger congressional oversight of force structure changes and base closures is not a new issue. Since the 1960s, the Executive Branch has tried repeatedly to close bases for reasons other than what was in the best interest of the taxpayers or our nation's defense. Enactment of Section 2872 would build upon the long-standing constitutional authority of Congress to provide for the national defense, appropriate funds, and carry out oversight of Executive Branch decisions to ensure adherence to legislative intent.

Thank for your work on behalf of our nation's security and our country's military families. I stand ready to assist in providing you with any additional information about the importance of Section 2872 and the 911th Airlift Wing. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact my office at (202) 225-2301.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy  
Member of Congress