

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3302

April 2, 2014

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2015 Defense Appropriations bill, we write to express our serious concerns regarding the President's proposed inactivation of the 440th Airlift Wing located at Pope Field.

As you know, the 440th is a critical component in high-level training and timely deployment of both Airborne and Special Operations located at Ft. Bragg. Beyond the direct impact of over 1,200 service members and their families directly associated with the unit, our fear is that the deactivation of this unit will adversely affect the high-quality training that some of our nation's best combat units rely on.

While we certainly understand that the Air Force and Department of Defense face significant budget pressure that requires difficult decisions to be made, we expect them to consider the cost of operating particular airframes and assess the monetary and operational value derived from co-locating units. Having the 440th Airlift Wing on post has proven to be a critical asset to the airborne and special operation missions it supports.

Should the 440th be inactivated, we believe that units regularly conducting training and operations with local aircraft and crews will be forced to rely on out-of-state units to fly to Ft. Bragg in order to complete routine missions and training exercises. This could weaken the strong working relationship between the Air Force and the Army, which has been built over the last seven years at Ft. Bragg and Pope Field. We believe that not having planes ready onsite will lower the quality of training, while ultimately costing taxpayers more money and valuable resources.


We request that the following language be included in the FY15 Defense Appropriations bill:


None of these funds shall be used to inactivate, relocate, or otherwise disrupt the mission, personnel, or aircraft of the 440th Airlift Wing.

There is no question that we face difficult fiscal challenges, but as we make budget decisions regarding national security we simply cannot afford to cut the quality and frequency of training for those units we rely on most.

Sincerely,


Renee Ellmers
Member of Congress


Richard Hudson
Member of Congress


David Price
Member of Congress


Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress