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COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS  
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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4901

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

June 17, 2005

Ronald Leonhardt  
City Clerk  
City of Milwaukee  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3515

Dear Ronald:

Thank you for contacting me with a notification of the Milwaukee Council resolution passed on May 20, 2005. I appreciate hearing an update on this issue and the viewpoints of the council.

As you know, it is important to me to protect the interests of the citizens in Milwaukee and throughout the State of Wisconsin. It is for this reason that I am grateful for the information and recommendations provided in the council resolution regarding the Department of Defense's (DOD's) recommendation to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) to close the 440<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the United States Air Force Reserves (USAFR) at General Mitchell International Airport. The council's resolution will help build a framework for the work required in Congress.

On May 13, 2005, the DOD announced that it would close 33 major U.S. military bases and realign 29 others. I was surprised and disappointed to learn that the 440<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the USAFR was one of the bases selected for closure. The 440<sup>th</sup> is renowned for its excellent recruitment and retention rates and its brave soldiers have played a vital role in the War on Terrorism. In fact, over 600 brave reservists from the 440<sup>th</sup> have been deployed around the world since September 11, 2001. Further, the 440<sup>th</sup> is an excellent asset to Southeastern Wisconsin, providing up to 1,800 jobs in the state as part of our community since 1957.

Since learning of this unfortunate news, I have been working with my colleagues in the Wisconsin delegation to prevent the 440<sup>th</sup> from leaving Milwaukee. Although I support the BRAC process because of the need to modernize our military, I am very concerned about the recommendation to close the station at Mitchell International Airport. If the 440<sup>th</sup> is moved, I am very concerned that the overall recruiting and retention rates of the Air Force Reserves may be damaged because many of the brave Wisconsinites who currently serve at the 440<sup>th</sup> will have difficulty making the long commute to other regional Air Force Reserve stations. The final decision on this recommendation will not be made until late 2005, and I will be fighting for the 440<sup>th</sup>

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throughout this process. At this time, I would like to take the opportunity to share with you information on the BRAC process and ways that you may get involved to help us keep our base in Milwaukee.

As you may know, the ongoing BRAC process is the fifth base closure round since the end of the cold war. The previous rounds, instituted in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995, resulted in the closure or realignment of 97 major military installations and affected a total of 451 bases of all sizes. The net savings accrued from the first four rounds have been estimated at about \$17 billion to date. The current BRAC process was authorized in 2001 with the purpose of saving money and modernizing and restructuring our forces to better meet our needs in the non-traditional War on Terrorism. It is estimated by the DOD that the current BRAC round will save \$49 million over 20 years to the military and will result in a new loss of 10,782 military jobs and 18,223 civilian jobs as the military is restructured.

On November 15, 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the first steps in implementing the new 2005 BRAC process. These included development of a force structure plan, comprehensive inventory of military installations, and establishment of criteria for selecting bases for closure and realignment. The criteria include the following eight factors:

- The current and future mission capabilities and the impact on operational readiness of the DOD's total force, including the impact on joint warfighting, training, and readiness;
- The availability and condition of land, facilities and associated airspace at both existing and potential receiving locations
- The ability to accommodate contingency, mobilization, surge, and future total force requirements at both existing and potential receiving locations to support operations and training;
- The cost of operations and the manpower implications;
- The amount of time for the cost savings to be realized;
- Economic impact on the existing community;
- The ability of both the existing and potential receiving communities' infrastructure to support forces, missions, and personnel; and
- Environmental impact

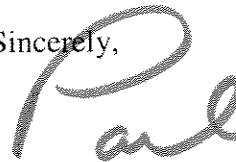
Most recently, on May 13, 2005, the DOD submitted to the BRAC Commission its recommendations for closure and realignment on the basis of the 8 factors established by Secretary Rumsfeld. The BRAC Commission, which consists of nine members with military and congressional backgrounds, is chaired by former Veterans Administration Secretary Anthony Principi. The Commission is charged with the task of reviewing the DOD's recommendations on the basis of the same eight factors and must make its own recommendations to the President by September 8, 2005.

The BRAC Commission has the ability to add or remove bases from the BRAC list. In order to add a base to the list, seven of the nine Commission members must concur. However, in order to remove a base, only a simple majority must vote for that action. To perform this duty, the Commission will be conducting regional hearings across the country, will be visiting each base proposed for closure, and will be attending hearings in Washington, D.C. throughout the summer. Further, the Commission also accepts public comments on its website at the following address: <http://www.dod.mil/brac>. In order to help the Wisconsin congressional delegation retain the 440<sup>th</sup> in Wisconsin, I urge you to visit this site and submit your comments. Your views can also be submitted to the BRAC Commission at the following postal address: *2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission; 2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600; Arlington, VA 22202.*

After the Commission submits its views to the President, the President must accept or reject the list. If he rejects the list, it is returned to the Commission for revisions. If the President rejects the list a second time, the process is discontinued. However, if the President accepts the BRAC recommendations, they are forwarded to Congress, which then has 45 days to disapprove or the list becomes law. If Congress fails to pass a motion of disapproval, the BRAC recommendations must all be implemented within six years.

Thank you again for contacting me on this issue. If I can be of further assistance to you regarding this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to respond and be of service to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul", written in a cursive style.

Paul Ryan  
Serving Wisconsin's First District