

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 3, 2011

Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

General Norton A. Schwartz
Chief of Staff of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley and General Schwartz:

We are writing in regards to the Air Force's Civilian Personnel Restructuring Initiative. As a result of this initiative some 50 civilian employees at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) and many employees at Eielson Air Force Base were notified today their positions are being eliminated. Further, JBER will no longer be able to fill over 200 vacant billets within the 673rd Air Base Wing required to support the joint basing initiative and the increase in base population over the last several years.

We are extremely concerned about workers impacted by this decision. We have to keep in mind these are real people and this bad news piles on to an already bleak outlook on jobs. More than 50 Alaskans will be dealing with the financial and emotional realities of losing their job during the holiday season. We urge you to work directly with displaced workers and provide every opportunity for training and assistance to transition them into vacancies at the installations.

In November the 4/25 Brigade Combat Team of JBER will begin a ten-month long deployment to Afghanistan. Airmen from JBER and Eielson Air Force Base continuously deploy in support of overseas operations. Many of Alaska's military spouses are employed at our installations. Worrying about degradation in quality of life and job loss is an additional stressor created by this decision.

Further, we are concerned this may add to the anxiety of our troops, many of whom have spouses who are Air Force civilians. Already faced with the demands of regular deployments this action places even greater stress on our service members. Additionally, we were not provided detailed justification for reductions in civilian personnel at JBER and Eielson. We understand budget constraints demand better business practices and civilian personnel decreases totaling 9,000 are now occurring at Air Force installations across the county. However, information provided to our offices to date provides no substantial evidence the Civilian Personnel Restructuring was executed in a thoughtful and concise manner to achieve savings and efficiencies. Instead, it appears formulaic, across-the-board cost savings were ordered up at the expense of hard working Alaskans and by eliminating personnel growth necessary for the 673rd Air Base Wing to continue to provide quality base services and support to military members and their families. Additionally, these civilian personnel

reductions may be in violation of previous agreements between the Air Force and the Army for joint basing.

In order to ensure the Civilian Personnel Restructuring initiative does not result in additional unnecessary job loss and degradation of base services we request the following information be provided to our offices:

- For eliminated encumbered civilian personnel positions:
 - Number of employees accepting voluntary retirement.
 - Number of employees accepting voluntary separation.
 - Number of employees to be involuntarily separated.
 - Number of employees to transition to other vacant positions on the installation and a detailed description of plans to provide assistance and training.
 - Number of military spouses in encumbered positions.

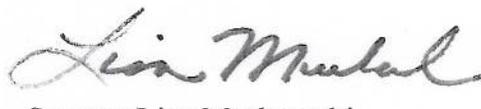
- With regard to the major factors identified by the Air Force as driving the civilian personnel reductions at JBER and Eielson, identify the number of billets that fall into each category and provide a position description for the following:
 - Civilian to Military Conversions.
 - Tailoring Installation Support.
 - Joint Basing.

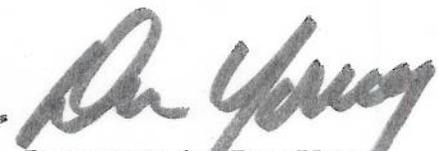
- For billets identified as being eliminated due to joint basing at JBER provide:
 - Number and description of billets previously identified as necessary growth with the Army to support joint basing requirements.
 - Detailed description and results of an assessment conducted which determined those positions are no longer required.
 - A list of billets eliminated that were funded by the Army.
 - A detailed description of how services and support agreements with the Army to support joint basing will be executed without the previously identified manpower.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and look forward to the response.

Sincerely,


Senator Mark Begich


Senator Lisa Murkowski


Representative Don Young