

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0200

Dear Secretary Carter:

We write today on behalf of members of the Armed Forces based at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, their families, and the surrounding communities that support our servicemembers. As the Army moves forward in implementing the President's plan to significantly reduce the active-duty component of the Armed Forces, we would like to reiterate that we remain deeply concerned that these proposed cuts are potentially dangerous to our national security, particularly in light of significant conflict across the globe.

When the United States has been threatened by forces outside our borders, the servicemembers stationed at Army installations in the Commonwealth of Kentucky have answered the call to sacrifice and defend this great nation. While we understand the Army continues to face budget reductions, the Army installations in Kentucky provide critical services that are necessary for the national defense and security of our country.

Since 2013, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has absorbed a disproportionate amount of active-duty Army reductions. When looking at the value each installation provides for training and resources, we believe these reductions to be shortsighted and fiscally irresponsible.

The strategic importance of Fort Campbell is undisputed as a base from which soldiers can deploy. The ability to mobilize many special operations units, commands and the 101st Airborne relies heavily on the resources and manning of these facilities. Unlike other installations, Fort Campbell is home to the second largest runway in the continental United States, on-post rail line access, close proximity to the U.S. Interstate System, and barge transportation capabilities, to assist in rapidly deploying members of the Armed Forces anywhere in the world.

Fort Knox has made an exceptional home for the Army's Human Resources Command, multiple commands under the Training and Doctrine Command, and the recently relocated Leadership Development and Assessment Course. The post has also been leading the Army in energy independence, as demonstrated by the recent completion of its forward-looking Energy Security Project that allows the installation to produce all of its own power and save tax-payer dollars. With almost 88,000 certified maneuverable acres, 5,500 buildable acres to meet the Army's future needs, and the only live-fire Riverine Ops Range in the continental United States, we feel the Army should utilize Fort Knox as a greater asset.

Kentucky's Army installations also provide an excellent cost of living and quality of life for servicemembers and their families. Essential to the quality of life is the unwavering community support of local residents. As was demonstrated by attendance and the personal testimonials given at each listening session in January of this year, it is hard to imagine there are any Army communities more supportive of their local servicemembers and installations than Fort Campbell and Fort Knox.

As you consider the implications of Army reductions, we ask that you continue to keep in mind the impacts these reductions could have on our national security and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



RAND PAUL
UNITED STATES SENATOR



MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR