

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2014

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, we write to urge you to reject the Department of Defense's (DOD) latest proposal for a new base realignment and closure (BRAC) round. The previous BRAC round was deeply flawed from the grossly inaccurate one-time closing costs estimates to the miscalculation of an available civilian skilled workforce to support new missions. The nation has yet to fully benefit from the total savings promised from 2005 BRAC.

In September 2005, the BRAC Commission recommended that the Department of Defense close Fort Monmouth in New Jersey and realign the Army's Communication Electronic Command to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. The estimated one-time costs to implement the closure of Fort Monmouth were completely inaccurate. In 2005, BRAC estimated that the cost of closing Fort Monmouth would be \$780 million. However, by 2011, the one-time cost of closing Fort Monmouth had ballooned to \$1.8 billion. If the BRAC used accurate data instead of underestimating the costs by \$1.1 billion, then we believe a different decision would have been reached regarding the viability of Fort Monmouth.

We support DOD's desire to make sure our defense funds are spent as efficiently and responsibly as possible. However, it is clear that the problems with BRAC estimates are not limited to the Fort Monmouth realignment. A March 2012 GAO report notes that the costs associated with implementing all of the 2005 BRAC recommendations have increased by over 50 percent from the original 2005 estimates and upfront costs will not be recouped until 2018. Additionally, an April 2013 GAO report demonstrates that one reason for these cost increases is that DoD's Cost of Base Realignment Actions (COBRA) model fails to capture all of the costs associated with BRAC projects. We also remain highly concerned that DOD is still not capable of providing audit-ready financial statements.

As reported by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the closing of Fort Monmouth represents the loss of 5,638 direct jobs and approximately 16,000 indirect jobs in the region. Although thousands of civilian and military jobs at Fort Monmouth were scheduled to be transferred, a portion of those individuals slated for transfer have chosen not to do so. Despite unemployment rates, media outlets in the Aberdeen, Maryland area have documented the shortage of qualified candidates to fill positions created by this realignment. A

report published by the Defense Acquisition University Senior Service College Fellowship found that Aberdeen Proving Ground would need to hire more than 25,000 civilians over five years in fields of science, engineering and other hard to find positions.

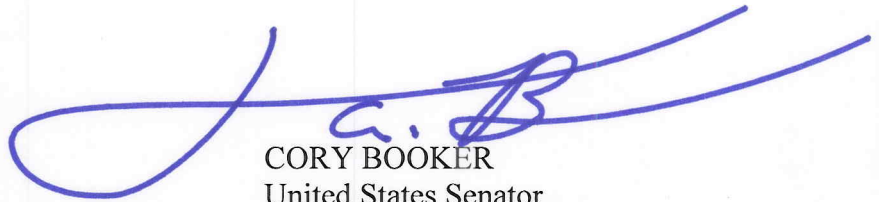
We strongly believe that, before a new BRAC round is considered, a clear assessment of whether or not the 2005 BRAC has achieved the promised savings must be reported. Additionally, we urge you to consider the tremendous economic impact previous BRAC rounds have had on the states and communities affected by these recommendations. While we recognize the enormous budgetary constraints the Department is currently under, we urge you to carefully consider these factors and evaluate alternative ways to achieve cost-savings.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



CORY BOOKER
United States Senator