

By: Representatives Pennartz, S. Malone, D. Altes

HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE,
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND THE
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU TO RETAIN THE 188TH FIGHTER
WING IN FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

Subtitle

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
THE AIR FORCE, THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND THE NATIONAL
GUARD BUREAU TO RETAIN THE 188TH FIGHTER
WING IN FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, the 188th Fighter Wing, Arkansas Air National Guard, located at Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Fort Smith, Arkansas, plays an important role in the defense of our nation and has been deployed in the past six years for expeditionary combat support for Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other contingency operations worldwide; and

WHEREAS, during the summer of 2005, the Fort Smith region rallied with the 188th Fighter Wing when the Pentagon recommended through a Base Closure and Realignment Commission action that the Arkansas Air National Guard unit be stripped of its flying mission; and

WHEREAS, the unit's unique and unmatched attributes, including its range, airspace, joint forces training capabilities, and cost-effectiveness, and stellar performance record since its inception in 1953, along with assistance from local, state, and federal elected officials and private



entities compelled the members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission in 2005 to take unprecedented action and award a new flying mission to the 188th Fighter Wing, known as the “Flying Razorbacks”; and

WHEREAS, members of the 188th Fighter Wing are preparing for a third combat deployment in seven years with two different weapons platforms and for the second time during those three deployments are faced with not knowing if they will have a job when they return; and

WHEREAS, the 188th Fighter Wing recently was awarded the United States Air Force’s second highest unit award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, for its performance from October 1, 2008, through September 30, 2010, by:

Completing the weapons system conversions from F-16s through two separate A-10 Thunderbolt II “Warthog” upgrades ahead of schedule;

Maintaining a mission capable rate for the A-10 above the Air National Guard average and achieving the highest A-10 unit in the Air National Guard from August 2009 through July 2010;

Acing an Air Combat Command Unit Compliance Inspection in 2009 with an overall mark of 99.4 percent;

Earning the coveted Patriot Team Award as the Air National Guard’s top national recruiting office;

Developing an avionics solution for Air Force-wide problems with A-10s, earning the designation as the only unit authorized to perform repairs outside the standard repair parameters and saving more than \$1.5 million annually; and

Logging 2,700 combat hours in Afghanistan without missing a single mission tasking assignment, less than one month after completing the conversion to A-10s; and

WHEREAS, the 188th Fighter Wing operates as the most efficient and cost-

effective fighter wing in the nation with the following attributes:

Razorback Range, where pilots practice, approximately five minutes off the ramp at Ebbing Air National Guard base, providing maximum flying time for training; and

A bridged Hog and Shirley Military Operating Area above the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests that provides air space comparable in size to the Nellis ranges for joint exercises with other United States Air Force and ground assets free of encroachment and environmental issues; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of the 188th Fighter Wing on the Fort Smith community is in excess of \$150 million annually; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Fort Smith Region is consistently in the top five metropolitan statistical areas with low costs of doing business; and

WHEREAS, the 188th Fighter Wing is the lowest-cost fighter wing in the United States Air Force with unsurpassed airspace and training facilities,

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS THAT:

(1) The United States Department of Defense, the United States Department of the Air Force, and the National Guard Bureau exercise sound judgment on behalf of our nation's defense and maintain fighters on the ramp at the 188th Fighter Wing and continue to utilize the wing's unique range, airspace, joint forces capabilities, and cost-effectiveness attributes;

(2) The United States Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, and his staff be hereby formally invited to visit the City of Fort Smith and the 188th Fighter Wing before the unit's deployment this spring; and

(3) Upon its adoption, a copy of this resolution be delivered to the United States Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, the United States Department of Defense, the United States Department of the Air Force, and the National Guard Bureau.