

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 22, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We write today on behalf of the Fort Campbell and Fort Knox communities in Kentucky regarding the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) process currently being undertaken by the Army to incorporate the administration's plans to significantly reduce the active-duty component of the Army. We are deeply concerned that these proposed cuts to our nation's military force structure, particularly in light of significant conflict across the globe, could undermine our national defense.

Specifically, we are strongly opposed to any potential personnel reductions at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. While we understand the Army is facing budget reductions—and are supportive of DOD examining ways to cut duplicative or unnecessary programs—both Kentucky installations and the servicemembers and civilians based there are of critical importance to our national security and to the Commonwealth. We believe any potential cuts at these posts would be unwise—both from a fiscal and policy standpoint.

As you know, Fort Campbell and Fort Knox host some of the Army's most essential commands and operations. Fort Campbell, home to one of the Army's largest airfields, is a Power Projection Platform capable of quickly deploying a significant number of troops and hosts the famed 101st Airborne Division, as well as several vital special operations commands, among others. Fort Knox is home to multiple major commands under the Training and Doctrine Command, Human Resources Command and several other active and reserve component commands. Together, these installations boast approximately 189,000 operational training acres and some of the Army's best training facilities. The Kentucky Army National Guard's Western Kentucky Regional Training Site offers an additional 12,000 acres of training space for Kentucky servicemembers. Hundreds of millions of dollars have also been invested in recent years by the Army and local and state governments to improve a wide breadth of infrastructure on both posts and in their respective communities. Taking full advantage of recent and significant infrastructure improvements and robust acreage by continuing to host important commands and active-duty operations at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox is a prudent course for the Army.

Kentucky's Army installations also provide an excellent cost of living and quality of life for servicemembers and their families. There are no Army communities more supportive of their local servicemembers and installations than Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, both of which have been consistently recognized by the Army's Communities of Excellence program. The thousands of our constituents who have written to the Army advocating on behalf of these installations during the SPEA process are a testament to this unwavering community support.

Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, as well as their missions and personnel, are important to our national security, important to Kentucky and important to us. We ask that the Army work closely with both communities and the Kentucky Congressional delegation when scheduling public SPEA hearings, which we understand are likely to take place in the late fall or winter. Above all, we ask that you keep in mind our deep concerns regarding any potential personnel cuts at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox as the SPEA process continues.

Thank you for your time and attention to this vitally important matter.

Sincerely,



MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR



RAND PAUL, M.D.
UNITED STATES SENATOR

Cc: The Honorable John M. McHugh, Secretary of the U.S. Army
Cc: General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army