

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 708

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to urge the retention of the 118th Airlift Wing of the Tennessee Air National Guard at Berry Field in Nashville.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Air National Guard 118<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing has existed officially in one form or another in the Nashville, Tennessee area since 1921 and has served important roles in the national defense arena during both war and peacetime since; and

WHEREAS, during the more than eight decades of its history the unit has been known by several designations and has flown many types of aircraft; now designated as the 118<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, it flies the C-130H; and

WHEREAS, under its assigned transport mission, the unit has flown more than 200,000 hours and millions of miles in international and stateside missions in direct support of United States military missions; the Wing has supported the Berlin and Cuban missile crises, national and state civil disturbances, the Vietnam War, and Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, to name only a few of the better known operations; and

WHEREAS, as a part of the United States military base closings and realignments announced Friday, May 13, 2005, by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the dispersal of the 118<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing will cost the Nashville area 191 full-time jobs and 511 traditional National Guard positions, most to other states; four C-130 cargo airplanes would be reassigned to Peoria, Illinois, four others to Louisville, Kentucky; the Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron would be reassigned to Fort Worth, Texas, and the aerial port and firefighters would be reassigned to Memphis; and

WHEREAS, the 118<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is the only mission-capable medical unit available within the state to be deployed in support of natural disasters or Homeland Security requirements; and

WHEREAS, the loss of jobs would negatively impact the economy of the Nashville area, and while the loss of unit identity and the pride in unit history is difficult to quantify, it seems indisputable that these intangibles have over the years had a profound impact on the level of performance of the 118<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and its precursors; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are persuaded that it is in the interest of the United States Military, the Department of Defense, the citizens of Tennessee, and the American people to retain the services of this highly trained and competent unit as it presently exists and where it is based; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we most earnestly and strongly urge the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, the members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States Congress to retain the 118<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the Tennessee Air National Guard intact at its present base at Berry Field in Nashville, along with its aircraft and associate units.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States; the Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense; each member of the Base Realignment and Closing Commission; the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Clerk of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress; the President of the Senate and the Secretary of the Senate of the United States Congress, and each member of Tennessee's Congressional delegation.