

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 23

By Green

A RESOLUTION to express support for the maintenance of current troop levels at Fort Campbell and urge Congress to oppose any reductions.

WHEREAS, in June 2014, the U.S. Army Environmental Command issued a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) report stating that a reduction of 140,000 troops plus associated civilian reductions will be needed in order to achieve the savings required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112-25) if sequester cuts to the defense budget are reinstated in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the impact to Fort Campbell would be devastating, as its total military population of 31,092 would be reduced by 7,000 troops, representing twenty-two percent of the total service members stationed there, with a possible loss of more than 15,000 active duty troops by 2020; and

WHEREAS, the largest employer in both Tennessee and Kentucky, Fort Campbell is the region's biggest economic driver, with an overall annual impact of \$4.4 billion; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of such drastic cuts to Fort Campbell would result in staggering fiscal consequences, with yearly income in the area expected to fall by 7.7 percent or \$986.6 million annually, with significant sales tax receipt losses of between \$7.4 million and \$11.6 million in both Tennessee and Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, these projected cuts would cause a possible population loss of 58,590 individuals, closure of ten schools, and 16,500 empty dwellings in the Fort Campbell region, as private sector jobs would be lost in construction, real estate, and education, in addition to the military and civilian post-based job losses, forcing individuals and families to relocate to find employment; and

WHEREAS, with seventy percent of those working at Fort Campbell residing off post, reductions to troop levels will not only be catastrophic to the local housing market but deeply damaging to local property tax collections and local government services; and

WHEREAS, the impact to the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System would be dire, as the projected cuts would reduce enrollment by about 8,500 students and necessitate the closure of two high schools, two middle schools, and six elementary schools, plus the elimination of 1,147 jobs; and

WHEREAS, under such circumstances, Montgomery County would be paying millions of dollars for school buildings it no longer needs after issuing fifteen-year revenue bonds to construct additional schools annually to keep up with growth in recent years; and

WHEREAS, nearby Austin Peay State University, the fastest-growing public university in the State of Tennessee, would also experience a heavy fiscal blow, as one in five students at the institution are military-connected and accounted for more than \$29 million in tuition and fee revenues from programs that serve the military and military-connected students over the past three years; and

WHEREAS, the value of Fort Campbell to the Department of the Army and the security of the United States is paramount, as the post is not only one of the most deployed installations in the country, but also strategically geographically located to be accessible by rail, water, air, or land, allowing these well-trained troops to be ready to accommodate a variety of missions on short notice; and

WHEREAS, the Volunteer State takes great pride in supporting our military men and women as they selflessly serve their fellow Americans in the United States Armed Forces, and is proud to stand by them in opposition to actions that would put our great nation at risk; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we strongly support the maintenance of current troop levels at Fort

Campbell and express our strong opposition to any effort to reduce the personnel strength of the base and its operations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we respectfully urge Congress to oppose any measure that would reduce current troop levels at Fort Campbell and ultimately harm the military readiness of the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.