

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## *Chairman*

Representative Bob Miller

Phone (907) 465-6878  
State Capitol Building  
Room 112  
Juneau, Alaska 99801



## INTERIOR DELEGATION

## *Delegation Members*

Rep. Bob Miller  
Rep. Alan Dick  
Rep. David Guttenberg  
Rep. Scott Kawasaki  
Rep. Steve Thompson  
Rep. Tammie Wilson  
Rep. Eric Feige  
Sen. Albert Kookesh  
Sen. Joe Thomas  
Sen. Joe Paskvan  
Sen. John Coghill

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
United States Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1400

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

Dear Secretary Panetta,

The Interior Delegation of Alaska would like to weigh in with our perspective and concerns about potential base closures and the negative impact it will have on our state. Just today we heard about the announced transfer of the F-16 Aggressor Squadron to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, leaving Eielson Air Force Base divided and vulnerable to closure. It is vital that Fort Wainwright, Eielson AFB, Fort Greely and Clear Air Station continue to grow as part of our nation's defense as well as remain an integral and essential part of Interior Alaskan communities.

Fort Wainwright and Eielson AFB represent nearly sixteen percent of the Fairbanks North Star Borough which has a population close to 100,000. Eleven percent of the Borough's populace are veterans who depend on a variety of services offered by these installations. Alaska has the nation's highest percentage of veterans and service members. Fort Greely has a population of 539 which is more than half that of Delta Junction's 991; both joined together in a demanding environment and known for their principal missile defense mission. According to the Borough's economic development office, the military population comprises 38 percent or \$3.9 billion of the total economic activity throughout the region.

Over the last several years, Alaska representatives along with the Congressional Delegation have worked diligently to increase the global application and importance of Fort Wainwright, Eielson AFB and Fort Greely. Their unmatched strategic and combat capabilities are an incredible source of pride for all Alaskans and an integral part of our nation's security. Alaska's service members perform multifaceted duties not only unique to our environment, but that are also designed to minimize excessive resource requirements while maintaining the highest standards of combat readiness and participation.

Ongoing proposed military developments further signify the importance and magnitude of Interior Alaska's role in supporting National Defense. Recently, the Alaska State Legislature secured \$84 million to supplement federal funds for construction of the Tanana River Bridge to provide access to the largest multi-service training area in the United States. Respectfully, we cannot overemphasize the value of Alaska's military bases and their importance to Alaskan communities.

Thank you for your consideration and continued service.



Rep. Bob Miller



Sen. Joe Thomas



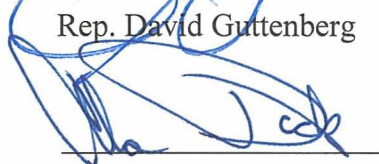
Rep. David Guttenberg



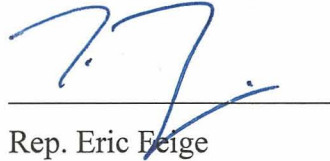
Rep. Scott Kawasaki



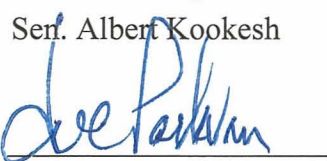
Sen. Albert Kookesh



Rep. Alan Dick



Rep. Eric Feige



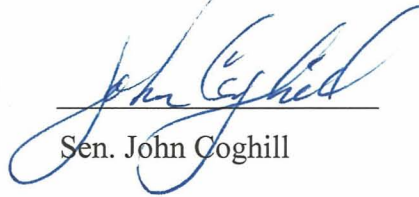
Sen. Joe Paskvan



Rep. Steve Thompson



Rep. Tammie Wilson



Sen. John Coghill

Cc:

Peter Rouse, Counselor to the President

The Honorable Governor Sean Parnell

The Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski

The Honorable Senator Mark Begich

The Honorable Representative Don Young