

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## Session

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## SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

### SJR 14: Protecting Military Personnel Cuts and Base Closures Sponsor Statement

**"I believe that in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world. I think it is the most important strategic place in the world."**

- U.S. General [Billy Mitchell](#) to the U.S. Congress in 1935

Our primary concern must always be national defense and the security of the United States and Alaska. Alaska's geographic location is of vital strategic advantage for current and future missions, force mobilization, and offensive and defensive operations, and is of strategic importance on polar air routes.

Defense Secretary Panetta recently announced that the Pentagon will seek new rounds of military base closures as part of the budget-cutting process. Over the next five years, the Army will drop from 562,000 to 490,000 soldiers and the Marine Corps from 202,000 to 182,000 marines in an effort to cut \$487 billion over the next decade. These cuts could have a devastating impact on Alaska's and our nation's security.

Alaska's military force is of great importance to our economy with 32 military installations, more than 23,000 active duty service members and more than 37,000 active family members, contributing approximately 13 percent to Alaska's economy.

During the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC), Eielson Air Force Base was originally designated for realignment. A strong community and state effort opposed the Department of Defense recommendation by pointing out the critical strategic importance of Eielson, the loss of training opportunities, and the fact that its realignment would not have produced the estimated savings DoD anticipated.

It is imperative the Alaska Legislature officially show our support for Alaska's military bases and personnel. Passage of SJR14 will send a message to the United States Department of Defense, U.S. Congress and the President that Alaska's military bases and service members are of strategic importance to the defense of our nation.