

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senate Joint Resolution 20: Relocation of the 18th F-16 Squadron Sponsor Statement

“Relating to Eielson Air Force Base and the strategic importance of retaining the 18th F-16 Aggressor Squadron in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.”

The United States Air Force recently released a proposed plan to reallocate military assets due to impending budget cuts. As part of an effort to reduce costs and achieve \$8.7 billion in savings in FY13, the United States Air Force has recommended the relocation of the 18th F-16 Aggressor Squadron from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

This move will have drastic impact on the Fairbanks economy and will reduce the operational capabilities at Eielson, making it vulnerable in future base realignment and closure rounds. The benefits and strategic importance of Eielson Air Force Base now and into the future far outweigh the negligible savings achieved by the transfer of the squadron.

Eielson is at the forefront of protecting the United States interests in the Pacific Theater and serves a critical function in reinforcing the region. It helps to secure important oil infrastructure, including the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which supplies a significant portion of the nation’s energy needs. Eielson AFB also has access to the largest joint air and land training range in the United States with minimal air space congestion and is well-suited to perform operations for unmanned vehicles and live fire exercises.

The Alaska Legislature must vigorously defend Alaska military assets for the protection of our state and nation.