

1 SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 28  
2 INTRODUCED BY E. BUTTREY

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4 A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF  
5 DEFENSE TO RECONSIDER THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE F-15C/D MISSION OUT OF GREAT  
6 FALLS, MONTANA, CONDUCT AN IMPROVED ANALYSIS BASED ON ACTUAL DATA INSTEAD OF  
7 ASSUMPTIONS, AND RECONSIDER THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONTANA AND BENEFITS TO THIS  
8 COUNTRY OF RETAINING THE F-15C/D MISSION IN MONTANA.

9  
10 WHEREAS, since the activation in 1947 of the Montana Air National Guard, Montanans have flown this  
11 nation's premier fighter aircraft from the P-51 to the F-86, F-89, F-102, F-106, F-16, and F-15; and

12 WHEREAS, in Fiscal Year 2010, the Montana Air National Guard had payroll of \$41,248,479, which  
13 supported 1,050 drill-status airmen and soldiers of which 340 members were full-time employees; and

14 WHEREAS, the Montana Air National Guard has received numerous national awards, including the Air  
15 Force Outstanding Unit Award eight times, the Spaatz Trophy, the Hughes Trophy, and the William Tell Award;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the Great Falls community is the only community in the nation to be awarded the Fisher  
18 Award from the Department of Defense recognizing humanitarian support of the U.S. military; and

19 WHEREAS, the Montana Air National Guard has honorably served this country with overseas missions  
20 four times in the past decade and is currently serving an ALERT mission in Hawaii; and

21 WHEREAS, the Montana Air National Guard's reenlistment rate is at 94% as compared with the national  
22 average of 86%; and

23 WHEREAS, Great Falls International Airport, which is home to the Montana Air National Guard, has  
24 completed environmental impact studies for aircraft noise mitigation and, using taxpayer money, is currently  
25 providing noise mitigation to surrounding homes that offsets noise levels of the F-15 and next-generation tactical  
26 fighter aircraft; and

27 WHEREAS, Great Falls International Airport lacks encroachment issues and in times of emergency could  
28 use the currently inactive Malmstrom Air Force Base runway for aircraft recovery by reactivating the runway using  
29 the Federal Aviation Administration Military Airplane Program funding, upon approval by the Air Force; and

30 WHEREAS, the Great Falls International Airport Authority currently leases space to the Montana Air



1 National Guard at the airport for a fee of \$1.00 a year in exchange for the Montana Air National Guard providing  
2 all firefighting services to the airport, which includes making available more than \$3 million in firefighting  
3 equipment and \$2 million in firefighters' annual payroll; and

4 WHEREAS, 3 years ago the Montana Air National Guard was tasked with conversion from F-16 aircraft  
5 to F-15 aircraft and completed the total conversion at a cost to the taxpayers of nearly \$80 million, including  
6 construction of a new Corrosion Control Facility, a new Operations Facility, additional space for munitions  
7 storage, and engine shop expansion. Added to that was pilot training at a cost to the public of \$55 million and  
8 maintenance training at a cost of \$3 million. The total F-16 to F-15 conversion was accomplished with savings  
9 to the taxpayers of more than \$2 million, with operational status achieved 1 year ahead of schedule; and

10 WHEREAS, the 7,000 square miles provided by the Hays Military Operations Area in northcentral  
11 Montana offers a virtually unencumbered airspace unique in its capacity to provide full-spectrum joint, combined,  
12 and integrated combat arms military training free of encroachment, electronic warfare constraints, and other  
13 restrictions that are present at other areas in the continental United States. This "National Treasure" airspace is  
14 particularly well-suited for future Air Superiority Mission training, particularly for next-generation tactical fighter  
15 aircraft that require significant airspace for their "Supercruise" capability; and

16 WHEREAS, Montana in the past has lost military missions and assets with significant impacts to this  
17 state's finances and jobs, including the base closure at Glasgow, which resulted in the loss of 16,000 residents;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, funding to maintain the F-15C/D mission in Great Falls is to end in Fiscal Year 2012, with  
20 notification already sent by the Secretary of the Air Force and the federal government that the F-15C/D mission  
21 is to be relocated from Great Falls, Montana, to Fresno, California; and

22 WHEREAS, the decision to relocate was based on an Air Force cost analysis that contains questionable  
23 information and analysis and should be reconsidered based on presentation of actual data and accurate analysis.

24  
25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

26 That the Montana Senate questions the assumptions made and the accuracy of the analysis used in  
27 making the decision to relocate the F-15C/D mission out of Great Falls to Fresno, California, and requests a  
28 reconsideration of the decision based on further analysis and documentation regarding what truly is in the best  
29 interest of Montana and federal taxpayers. The following should be included in the documentation:

30 (1) alert status impacts using three aircraft rather than the five aircraft used in the previous business case

1 analysis;

2 (2) inclusion of the costs of pilot training for Fresno pilots converting to F-15 aircraft;

3 (3) inclusion of the costs for backfilling alert missions during the conversion from F-16 to F-15 missions  
4 in Fresno;

5 (4) exclusion of costs already incurred in Great Falls for MILCOM (military communications)  
6 improvements;

7 (5) inclusion of the costs of an upcoming 18-month environmental impact study that must be conducted  
8 in the Fresno area because of a change in mission;

9 (6) inclusion of the cost of noise mitigation efforts and activities that will need to be undertaken in Fresno  
10 related to F-15 noise issues, including the costs of buying and demolishing homes that already have undergone  
11 taxpayer-funded noise mitigation for past missions but that now stand in what are considered unacceptable noise  
12 contours for the F-15;

13 (7) inclusion of the costs of replacing VORTAC and TACAN systems in Fresno; and

14 (8) inclusion of the costs to fix clear-zone requirements for munitions in Fresno. The current munitions  
15 facilities have active commercial taxiways in the explosive potential areas, and resolving this issue may add  
16 considerable costs.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate ask the Secretary of the Air Force to stay the  
18 decision to relocate the F-15C/D mission to Fresno while a federal investigation is underway regarding a limited  
19 number of pilots and commanders within the Fresno Air National Guard and completely reconsider the decision  
20 if convictions are obtained based on the investigation.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate protests the projected loss of 200 jobs of  
22 drill-status members of the National Guard, which is a projected result of a conversion from the F-15 to a C-27J  
23 Spartan aircraft mission. The loss of jobs includes the loss of 75 to 100 full-time National Guard employees, which  
24 means a loss of \$9 million to the National Guard payroll a year, not including or considering the loss of spouse  
25 or other family member employment in Montana. The financial loss also has a ripple effect on lost revenues from  
26 medical payments and economic activities. Further, incorporation of the new C-27J mission is estimated at \$15  
27 million, including a new corrosion control facility and a nose dock to be added to the large hangar building in  
28 Great Falls. In addition, pilot training costs of \$20 million and maintenance training costs of \$3 million will be  
29 charged to taxpayers. While the new rugged military airlift platform can be configured for troop, medevac, or cargo  
30 transport, the C-27J aircraft has no firefighting or fire suppression capability.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate requests reconsideration of the decision made  
2 by the Secretary of the Air Force that included expenditures of \$80 million to convert the Air National Guard in  
3 Great Falls to the F-15C/D mission but now transfers that mission to Fresno, California, with an additional  
4 expenditure of \$40 million projected in Montana to convert and modify these same new facilities for the C-27J  
5 mission and a projected need for much greater expenditures to convert and modify F-16 facilities and training for  
6 the F-15C/D mission in California. The Montana Senate further protests the loss of taxpayer dollars spent over  
7 the last 3 years on a fighter mission that is to be relocated, particularly during weak economic times, with reduced  
8 Department of Defense budgets.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate considers the loss of jobs, loss of local and state  
10 revenues, plus the associated diminution of taxes related to loss of the F-15C/D mission, even with the addition  
11 of the C-27J mission, to be catastrophic to the economy in Cascade County and to all Montanans.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate recognizes the rich and honorable tradition in  
13 Montana of piloting fighter aircraft in defense of our great nation and that Air Force modernization of the F-15C/D  
14 aircraft with Active Electronically Scanned Array radars and new efficient and more powerful engines is likely to  
15 allow the F-15C/D aircraft to operate safely and effectively through at least 2025, as determined by full-scale  
16 fatigue testing.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the national treasure of the Hays Military Operations Area, which  
18 supports unencumbered aircraft use, is at risk of being lost if the F-15C/D mission is moved from the State of  
19 Montana.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate considers Montana to be a growth area for  
21 Unmanned Aircraft System technology, flight, evaluation, and testing as well as an ideal training ground for  
22 unmanned aircraft systems and aircraft mitigation and defense training and that Montana's growing unmanned  
23 aircraft system industry, if used in conjunction with a retained F-15C/D mission and ground-based radar in  
24 Montana, could be key to addressing threats to the airspace and national safety of the United States posed by  
25 unmanned aircraft systems.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate is concerned about possible reductions in  
27 firefighting services or equipment at the Great Falls International Airport provided by the Montana Air National  
28 Guard in exchange for a \$1.00 lease, a service that has been of great value to citizens that fly commercial aircraft  
29 into Montana.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate considers issues of encroachment and munitions

1 safety to be nonproblems in Montana but still unresolved in California.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Senate protests the appearance of a penalty against  
3 the Montana Air National Guard and the State of Montana when a fighter mission is transferred out of Montana,  
4 after numerous awards, a transition from the F-16 to F-15 fighters under cost and ahead of schedule, intense  
5 community support, unmatched reenlistment success and employee retention, and great and effective leadership  
6 at the local and state levels, to Fresno where portions of the Air National Guard are under an investigative cloud  
7 for fiscal improprieties.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to Secretary  
9 Robert Gates at the Department of Defense, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, Montana's Congressional  
10 Delegation, and the Governor, urging them to do all within their authority to retain the F-15C/D mission at the  
11 Montana Air National Guard 120th Fighter Wing as a measure of fiscal responsibility and safety for the people  
12 of Montana and the United States today and into the future.

13 - END -