

**Charlotte, NC** - This afternoon, US Rep. David Price (NC-04) will speak publicly at the hearing for the North Carolina portion of the regional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission hearing in Charlotte, North Carolina. The hearing is designed to gather input and hear concerns from affected communities regarding the Department of Defense (DoD)'s recommendations that are being evaluated by the BRAC Commission.

Price will make a public statement criticizing the DoD's recommendation to close the Army Research Office (ARO) in the Triangle. Among other things, Price will highlight that the ARO has a close and productive relationship with neighboring universities and research organizations in Research Triangle Park, and that its location has proved to be of tremendous advantage to the Army's research operation as a whole.

The text of Price's statement to the commission, as prepared for delivery, is below:

"Members of the Commission: I am David Price, member of the House of Representatives from North Carolina's Fourth District, the proud home of the Army Research Office (ARO). I want to welcome you to North Carolina and thank you for your tireless efforts over these many weeks to devise a base closure and realignment plan that puts our military and our country at maximum strength.

"I come to you today with an urgent and earnest request: look very, very carefully and critically at the Department of Defense's proposal to relocate the ARO to Bethesda, Maryland. I believe that you will conclude, as I have, that this is a bad idea. I want to assure you that I am speaking not merely as the Research Triangle area's representative in Congress, as proud as I am of the Triangle success story and the ARO's part in it. My main focus – and, I'm certain, yours as well – is rather the quality of the research ARO generates and its payoff for our defense capabilities.

"The possibility of including ARO in consolidation plans has been considered and rejected in previous BRAC rounds and other reorganization efforts. Fortunately for the soldiers who rely on cutting-edge technologies to maintain battlefield superiority, the quality of research has always trumped any minor financial savings or the desire to tidy up an organizational chart.

"Now we have a new proposal, put forth under the mantra of "co-location." What we hope to convince you of here today is that ARO already enjoys the co-location that matters most. Co-location with NC State University, Duke University, the University of North Carolina, and other research organizations gives ARO intellectual synergy, joint appointments, collaborative projects, an enhanced ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest program managers, and the opportunity for those managers to keep an active hand in research. Why would anyone want to uproot these highly productive personal and institutional connections? The supposed gains of bureaucratic ARO co-location with the Navy and Air Force research offices in Bethesda cannot hold a candle to the co-location ARO already enjoys.

"ARO's 114 employees have ready access to, and daily interaction with, world-class researchers and institutions. I don't know where this could be replicated – certainly not in the proposed new location. ARO professionals work with entrepreneurs seeking innovative applications for emerging technologies. They work with top-flight universities – professors and students – on an astounding array of research endeavors. In fact, almost half of the research managers are involved in active research projects with universities in the area. Co-locating the military's premier research organization in a heavily bureaucratic environment would uproot all that, and many of the most creative research managers would choose no doubt to leave the ARO rather than move. It would run counter to the primary purpose of a research organization, damaging the very fiber of innovation and creativity.

"We have staked our national defense on building a smaller, quicker, more lethal force than our foes. Our technology advantages provide our forces huge tactical advantages. Technology is transforming the battlefield; collection, dissemination, and interpretation of information allows our forces to operate with speed and efficiency; our weapons have previously inconceivable power and accuracy; and medical advances are saving thousands of lives that would have in the past been lost. Maintaining collaboration and synergy on cutting-edge technology is the life blood of a research organization, and research is the lifeblood of the modern military.

"I would simply conclude by saying 'don't mess with a good thing.' The ARO is a premier research organization, performing its mission admirably. I urge the Commission to analyze carefully the role its present location plays in that performance. If you do that, I am confident you will keep ARO exactly where it is."

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