

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 31

Introduced by Assembly Members Perea, John A. Pérez, and Cook

March 12, 2012

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 31—Relative to the 144th Fighter Wing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 31, as introduced, Perea. 144th Fighter Wing.

This measure would respectfully request Congress and the Department of Defense to remain committed to maintaining the 144th Fighter Wing and the Aerospace Control Alert mission in California in order to prevent any negative impacts to Southwest air defense operations, the California economy, and the ability of first responders to protect the residents of this state.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The California Air National Guard 144th Fighter
2 Wing located in Fresno is composed of 1,046 airmen, 22 F-16
3 aircraft, and one RC-26 Intelligence, Surveillance and
4 Reconnaissance aircraft; and
5 WHEREAS, The primary mission of the 144th is to provide air
6 superiority worldwide in support of joint operations and Aerospace
7 Control Alert for the Southwest United States. This mission
8 requires the maintenance of a number of aircraft ready for
9 immediate launch to intercept air threats to the United States. The
10 California Air National Guard has the second busiest Aerospace
11 Control Alert mission in the United States behind the National

1 Capitol Region. Aircraft on alert are positioned at Fresno and
2 March Air Reserve Base at Riverside; and

3 WHEREAS, As part of the enacted fiscal year 2012 Federal
4 Budget, the 144th will begin to convert from F-16 aircraft to F-15
5 aircraft in August 2012. Aircraft conversion at the 144th Wing
6 involves replacing the F-16 aircraft with the F-15 aircraft in order
7 to provide a better platform to conduct the air superiority and air
8 defense missions. More than one-half of the support equipment
9 required for the F-15 conversion is on location, and maintenance
10 training began in May 2011. The first of 21 assigned F-15 aircraft
11 is scheduled to arrive at Fresno on August 15, 2012. The Fighter
12 Wing will have 18 F-15 aircraft by January 31, 2013, with the
13 balance scheduled to arrive by May 2013; and

14 WHEREAS, There is consideration within the Department of
15 Defense of eliminating the 144th Fighter Wing and backfilling its
16 air defense mission using aircraft, personnel, and equipment from
17 other states; and

18 WHEREAS, The initiative to divest the 144th Fighter Wing
19 would eliminate an air defense base consisting of 22 jets and
20 replace it with two out-of-state detachments consisting of 6 jets,
21 significantly increasing response time to increased threats; and

22 WHEREAS, California would lose valuable civilian support
23 capabilities and personnel trained and ready for a variety of
24 domestic emergencies. Law enforcement, fire, and other agencies
25 frequently rely on the 144th Fighter Wing's ground capabilities,
26 which include civil engineering, explosive ordnance disposal,
27 communications, aerial imaging, maintenance, logistics, and
28 medical support; and

29 WHEREAS, There would be significant operational costs to the
30 federal government associated with conducting an air defense alert
31 site for the Southwest United States from outside California. This
32 would include logistical costs to rotate personnel to their
33 assignments, as well as additional flying hours that would be
34 required to ferry out-of-state aircraft to the alert site after routine
35 maintenance. Additional costs would be incurred for maintaining
36 aircraft away from its home station, including the shipment of
37 equipment and supplies; and

38 WHEREAS, The closure of the 144th Fighter Wing would have
39 a devastating impact on the economies of Fresno and Riverside,
40 which already suffer from unemployment rates that are well above

1 the national rate. The 144th Fighter Wing employs 1,046 airmen
2 and women who have 1,642 dependents. The Air Force spends
3 over \$70 million dollars per year on the 144th Fighter Wing; and

4 WHEREAS, The proposal to divest the 144th Fighter Wing is
5 costly, places the Southwest air defense mission at risk, and
6 eliminates the ground capabilities available to support first
7 responders throughout the state and FEMA Region IX; now,
8 therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
10 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully requests
11 Congress and the Department of Defense to remain committed to
12 maintaining the 144th Fighter Wing and the Aerospace Control
13 Alert mission in California in order to prevent any negative impacts
14 to Southwest air defense operations, the California economy, and
15 the ability of first responders to protect the residents of this state;
16 and be it further

17 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
18 of this resolution to the Secretary of Defense and to each Senator
19 and Representative from California in the Congress of the United
20 States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.