

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 31

Introduced by Assembly Members Perea, John A. Pérez, and Cook
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Alejo, Allen, Ammiano,
Atkins, Beall, Block, Bonilla, Bradford, Brownley, Buchanan,
Butler, Charles Calderon, Campos, Carter, Cedillo, Chesbro,
Conway, Dickinson, Donnelly, Feuer, Fong, Beth Gaines, Garrick,
Gatto, Gordon, Grove, Hagman, Halderman, Hall,
Roger Hernández, Hill, Huber, Hueso, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones,
Knight, Lara, Ma, Mansoor, Mendoza, Mitchell, Monning, Morrell,
Pan, Portantino, Silva, Skinner, Smyth, Solorio, Swanson, Torres,
Valadao, Wagner, Wieckowski, Williams, and Yamada)

March 12, 2012

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 31, as amended, 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

1 aircraft, and one RC-26 Intelligence, Surveillance and
2 Reconnaissance aircraft; and

3 WHEREAS, The primary mission of the 144th is to provide air
4 superiority worldwide in support of joint operations and Aerospace
5 Control Alert for the Southwest United States. This mission
6 requires the maintenance of a number of aircraft ready for
7 immediate launch to intercept air threats to the United States. The
8 California Air National Guard has the second busiest Aerospace
9 Control Alert mission in the United States behind the National
10 Capitol Region. Aircraft on alert are positioned at Fresno and
11 March Air Reserve Base at Riverside; and

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

23 WHEREAS, There is consideration within the Department of
24 Defense of eliminating the 144th Fighter Wing and backfilling its
25 air defense mission using aircraft, personnel, and equipment from
26 other states; and

27 WHEREAS, The initiative to divest the 144th Fighter Wing
28 would eliminate an air defense base consisting of 22 jets and
29 replace it with two out-of-state detachments consisting of six jets,
30 significantly increasing response time to increased threats; and

31 WHEREAS, California would lose valuable civilian support
32 capabilities and personnel trained and ready for a variety of
33 domestic emergencies. Law enforcement, fire, and other agencies
34 frequently rely on the 144th Fighter Wing's ground capabilities,
35 which include civil engineering, explosive ordnance disposal,
36 communications, aerial imaging, maintenance, logistics, and
37 medical support; and

38 WHEREAS, There would be significant operational costs to the
39 federal government associated with conducting an air defense alert
40 site for the Southwest United States from outside California. This

1 would include logistical costs to rotate personnel to their
2 assignments, as well as additional flying hours that would be
3 required to ferry out-of-state aircraft to the alert site after routine
4 maintenance. Additional costs would be incurred for maintaining
5 aircraft away from its home station, including the shipment of
6 equipment and supplies; and

7 WHEREAS, The closure of the 144th Fighter Wing would have
8 a devastating impact on the economies of Fresno and Riverside,
9 which already suffer from unemployment rates that are well above
10 the national rate. The 144th Fighter Wing employs 1,046 airmen
11 and women who have 1,642 dependents. The Air Force spends
12 over \$70 million dollars per year on the 144th Fighter Wing; and

13 WHEREAS, The proposal to divest the 144th Fighter Wing is
14 costly, places the Southwest air defense mission at risk, and
15 eliminates the ground capabilities available to support first
16 responders throughout the state and FEMA Region IX; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
19 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully requests
20 Congress and the Department of Defense to remain committed to
21 maintaining the 144th Fighter Wing and the Aerospace Control
22 Alert mission in California in order to prevent any negative impacts
23 to Southwest air defense operations, the California economy, and
24 the ability of first responders to protect the residents of this state;
25 and be it further

26 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
27 of this resolution to the Secretary of Defense and to each Senator
28 and Representative from California in the Congress of the United
29 States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.
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32 **CORRECTIONS:**

33 **Heading—Coauthors—Page 1.**

34 **Text—Page 2.**
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