

AIR FORCE TO SHED 850 JOBS IN MICHIGAN



On Tuesday, the U.S. Air Force announced that cuts at the Selfridge Air National Guard Base and Kellogg Air Guard Station in Battle Creek can affect more than 850 full and part-time jobs. The new job cuts would include more than 25 percent of the Air National Guard of Michigan. The Selfridge base is expected to lose more than 700 jobs including 19 full-time military and 542 guard personnel. At least 163 technical and civil personnel would also lose their jobs. The last estimate provided by Gov. Rick Snyder mentioned last week that there was a chance of losing close to 600 full-time and part-time military jobs. However, Tuesday's announcement exceeded that prediction by more than 25% and the situation may get worse. The situation arose after the Air Force's decision to move A-10 fighter planes out of Selfridge. General Norton Schwartz, the Air Force Chief of Staff said that the cuts would help the military maintain its efficiency. He added "We made a deliberate decision to avoid a 'hollow force' by prioritizing readiness over force structure ... A smaller, ready force is preferable to a larger force that is ill-prepared because it lacks adequate resources." The Michigan National Guard has made a presentation that notes Michigan scores last in Defense Department employment adjusted for population and 43rd out of 50 in per capita defense spending. Gov. Snyder said that the cuts "basically would decimate the Air National Guard in Michigan." Snyder further said "It wasn't one state versus another state. It is between Air Guard and Air Force and we can deliver better results at a lower cost." According to Snyder the Air National Guard's A-10 unit costs only 50% of what it costs to maintain an active duty unit. "We do a much better job than the regular Air Force," he said. Representative Candace Miller called the cuts "a step in the wrong direction. I believe the cuts disproportionately hit the Air National Guard, specifically the Michigan Air Guard, and these cuts fly in the face of the administration's commitment to shared sacrifice. Recently, 49 governors and 54 adjutant generals sent communications to the Pentagon objecting to these cuts, and I will be glad to work with them to get the cuts reversed."

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