

MASSACHUSETTS TO FIGHT MILITARY CUTS



A downsizing plan was announced Tuesday but the Defense Department but Massachusetts Lt. Governor Tim Murray said that the state will do all it can to save each military job. The plan for a nationwide military job cut was submitted to Congress this week. Murray and members of a task force aimed at protecting jobs in the military met at the Massachusetts Statehouse to talk about the proposed job cuts. "It did not come as a surprise, but what was a surprise were the numbers," Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Carter, commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard, said. Three percent of the Massachusetts Air National Guard will be lost this year, which accounts for 241 personnel. Carter said that the Air National Guard makes up only six percent of the Air Force budget across the country. "We're of high value to the governor to any domestic emergency or any other consequence the Guard over the past several years has been called out for, whether it's a tornado, a snowstorm, or a water main break," said Carter. "You name it. The Guard is necessary for response to those kinds of incidents." The majority of the 241 guardsmen will be losing their jobs but Carter did say a couple of them would be transferred. Hanscom Air Force Base will be affected by the cuts, which is located in Bedford. Others to be affected include Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Otis Air National Guard Base and Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield. "We're going to prepare for the worst and work for the best," Murray said. "How do we make the case that the guard is a huge plus in terms of value, cost value, to the Air Force." Right now there are no members of the Guard at Hanscom but the base is facing the reduction of 55 active duty military personnel, according to the proposal. From those positions, 45 belong to the Band of Liberty. This military group has been operating in New England since 1978. "It is different than losing that same number that is managing weapons systems, which would say something different about how the Air Force perceives the mission here," said Charles Paone, a spokesman for Hanscom. "At the same time, they are active-duty military members living in the area and that is their job." Hanscom has to shed 108 civilian jobs in fiscal 2013 as well. These were announced in 2011. "We've been on a civilian hiring upswing," said Paone. "Obviously, budgets being what they are, that trend had to be reversed." Hanscom will also face a budget cut ranging from 10 to 15 percent, which translates to \$17 million or \$26 million. "We're prepared to fight for every job, but we're also clear-eyed that there are going to be cuts in the budget," Paone said.

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