

**FY14 National Defense Authorization Act Testimony
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
May 14, 2013**

You have all dedicated much of your careers here in Congress to our nation's service members: active duty, reserve, veterans, and their families.

Those who dedicate their lives to the service of others truly embody the heart and spirit of America, and I thank each of you as I do each and every brave American who serves our country.

Florida is an active state in terms of military presence and is rated among those states most accommodating to servicemen and woman, as well as their families.

As you craft this year's National Defense Authorization Act, I know you will rightly be focused on warfighter wellbeing, here at home as well as downrange.

Heightened security demands on our military installations caused by an increasingly dangerous world is of utmost importance to your Committee.

Many installations still suffer from inadequate security measures, creating a recipe for disaster.

One such example of a facility in dire need of enhanced security measures is Homestead Air Reserve Base.

This installation has two entry gates to allow traffic in and out of the base, but at present one of them has been forced to close due to terrorism concerns.

The remaining gate is substandard and ill designed to function as a primary entry control point.

The single, **insufficient** guard shack is within close proximity of the base fuel storage compound and is only a **30 second drive** to the F-16 ramp which holds \$800 million in F-16 fighter jets.

It simply **fails** to meet force protection standards.

With the current and projected mission growth at the installation, Homestead Air Reserve Base provides a high visibility target for potential attacks.

Furthermore, truck inspection is currently being conducted outdoors during all weather conditions and within close proximity to the base bulk fuel storage compound.

The location for inspections is **also** extremely small and limiting when the volume of traffic is high.

Significant traffic backups have been noted up to a mile long during the high volume usage this facility regularly sees.

Overall, Homestead Air Reserve Base serves 2,700 Airmen, Soldier, Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, Customs and Boarder Protection agents, and Florida National Guardsmen who dedicate their life's work to serving our great nation.

Throughout the country there are projects like this that demand our attention.

Out there, each and every day, our servicemen and women defend the privileges, comforts and freedoms that we, as Americans, enjoy.

These brave men and women deserve the best protection we can provide.

The courage and sacrifice of our service members is unwavering, as our commitment to them must be.

I am personally committed, through my family and my voting record, to the issues affecting service members.

Our country was born of their heroic deeds, and continues to live in freedom through the vigilance of today's warfighters.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee this afternoon.