



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

July 16, 2015

General Frank J. Grass
Chief, National Guard Bureau
1636 Defense Pentagon Suite 1E169
Washington, D.C. 20301-0001

Lieutenant General Stanley E. Clarke III
Director, Air National Guard
1000 Air Force Pentagon, 5C1052
Washington, D.C. 20330-1000

Dear General Grass and General Clarke:

I am writing to voice strong support for the Texas Air National Guard (TXANG) and its request for a Cyber Protection Team (CPT) in Texas, specifically located in San Antonio. As the Department of Defense searches for viable locations for these CPTs, look no further than the city known as Cyber City USA. San Antonio exceeds the established criteria for placement of these illustrious teams and is ready to take the lead in protecting against cyber attacks for years to come.

It is no secret that Texas is leading the way in many facets of the digital age. Texas ranks first for employment in the Information Technology (IT) industry and jobs in the computer equipment and software sector. In addition, San Antonio is quickly becoming a hub of cyber warfare forces with the presence of the 24th Air Force, NSA-San Antonio and the highly-skilled workforce that exists in Central Texas.

The TXANG is a logical and cost-effective means to defend America in the cyber realm. Because of the combination of the 24th Air Force and TXANG's 273rd Information Operations Squadron, along with a strong IT industry in Central Texas, the ability of the TXANG to recruit and retain cyber warriors is unmatched. The 273rd has been staffed at 134 percent of capacity for the past three years, causing the TXANG to continually turn away one to two fully qualified cyber personnel per month. These warriors — generally leaving the active component — want to

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cyber warriors is unmatched. The 273rd has been staffed at 134 percent of capacity for the past three years, causing the TXANG to continually turn away one to two fully qualified cyber personnel per month. These warriors — generally leaving the active component — want to continue to serve and protect our nation and state by serving in the TXANG but are unable to do so because there simply aren't enough opportunities. As they leave, they are taking critical knowledge and experience that could be used to protect against the next wave of cyber attacks.

Our cyber soldiers are only a part of the equation, as there are strong academic ties to cyber security in San Antonio. The University of Texas–San Antonio (UTSA) is the first Texas school designated as an NSA/DHS center of academic excellence in Information Assurance Education and Cyber Defense. The TXANG and UTSA are currently developing an executive level course in Information Assurance and Cyber Security because of this distinction.

The threat we face as a nation in the cyber realm is growing. I believe that San Antonio and the Texas Air National Guard exceed the criterion required for the placement of a CPT by having a strong local IT industry, secure facilities already in place, a vibrant recruiting and retention base and strong academic support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:jsk