

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express concern about a delay in establishing the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia. In response to the Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) recommendation on improved and consolidated high-threat training programs and facilities, the State Department reported to Congress in February 2013 that, "After an extensive site search, the General Services Administration and the Department will complete an Environmental Impact Statement for the project at a National Guard facility in Fort Pickett, Virginia, by spring 2013."

We were surprised to learn that the final Environmental Impact Statement, set to be released in April 2013, has been postponed and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has asked the State Department and the General Services Administration (GSA) to conduct a study for an alternative training location at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia.

The search to locate a FASTC to train our personnel assigned to high-threat posts is a critical priority that has been in development for over four years. This process has already taken far too long, particularly with the Benghazi tragedy highlighting the need for additional training to protect our diplomatic and government personnel serving overseas. This lengthy and thorough process considered over 80 sites to find the ideal location for a FASTC with particular emphasis on the requirement to be located in proximity to the other federal agencies and units that work side-by-side State Department personnel at our Embassies and posts overseas. Fort Pickett was selected in a highly competitive and transparent process as the site best suited to meet operational requirements and provide synergistic training for the State Department's diverse and growing needs.

To begin another search at this point, plus vet and start another EIS process, inserts a level of risk to our State Department personnel that is not acceptable. The result would likely be a similar judgment that a new site lacked the requirements of the other locations that were not selected in the original search, which included competition with other government agencies for limited housing and training space, a lack of required training ranges, and failing the requirement to be in reasonable proximity to the State Department and other units including the Marine security guard training at Quantico, Virginia. To reverse the decision now and conduct a thorough assessment of other sites, like FLETC in Glynco, GA, would further delay this project for several years.

As members of the Senate Committee on the Budget, we have a deep understanding of current budget constraints and also want to ensure the taxpayer is getting the best and most cost-effective training facility for our State Department personnel. Further delay will likely cost the taxpayer more in the end, as the project could at a minimum incur a 3% construction cost inflation for each year of delay, and lose a significant amount of project funding that is scheduled to expire in FY2015. We also do not think a further delay is consistent with Benghazi ARB Recommendation #17, which was to design new training integrating high threat training and risk management.

We both feel fortunate to have traveled to many of America's embassies abroad and witnessed firsthand the sacrifices of U.S. personnel in dangerous parts of the world. Their commitment, courage

and professionalism in representing the interests of America overseas is invaluable. Further delay on this project does a disservice to the men and women of the State Department.

We strongly encourage you, in coordination with GSA and OMB, to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement and move forward immediately on a FASTC project at Fort Pickett. We stand ready to help the Administration in any way that we can to ensure that the men and women of the State Department receive the training they deserve. And we are both confident that you share this goal.



MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator



TIM Kaine  
United States Senator

Cc: Sylvia Burwell, Director OMB  
Dan M. Tangherlini, Acting Administrator GSA