

**No. R-503. Joint resolution supporting the assignment of the F-35 aircraft to the Vermont Air National Guard.**

(J.R.H.51)

Offered by: Representatives Audette of South Burlington, Atkins of Winooski, Baker of West Rutland, Bissonnette of Winooski, Brennan of Colchester, Canfield of Fair Haven, Condon of Colchester, Courcelle of Rutland City, Crawford of Burke, Donaghy of Poultney, Donovan of Burlington, Evans of Essex, Fagan of Rutland City, French of Shrewsbury, Gilbert of Fairfax, Higley of Lowell, Hubert of Milton, Jerman of Essex, Johnson of South Hero, Krawczyk of Bennington, Krebs of South Hero, Lenes of Shelburne, Lewis of Derby, Martin of Wolcott, McFaun of Barre Town, McNeil of Rutland Town, Morrissey of Bennington, Orr of Charlotte, Peaslee of Guildhall, Peltz of Woodbury, Potter of Clarendon, Savage of Swanton, Shand of Weathersfield, Shaw of Pittsford, Till of Jericho, Toll of Danville, Turner of Milton and Waite-Simpson of Essex

Whereas, since 1946, the Vermont Air National Guard in South Burlington at the Burlington International Airport (BIA) has been home to the 158th Fighter Wing, and for approximately 20 years, it has hosted the F-16 jet combat aircraft, long considered one of the United States Air Force's (USAF's) premier fighter planes, and

Whereas, the Vermont Air National Guard is an essential component of the BIA's administrative operations providing approximately \$2 million annually in fire protection services as well as emergency response support, and

Whereas, the Green Mountain Boys of the Vermont Air National Guard proudly "maintain the highest caliber of trained personnel and equipment to accomplish the USAF mission of 'Fly, Fight, and Win,' " and

Whereas, although a highly respected and venerable aircraft, the lifespan of the F-16 is close to its conclusion, and during the next decade, the more technologically advanced F-35 is scheduled to replace the F-16, and

Whereas, the USAF has narrowed the potential bedding sites for the F-35 to 11 locations nationwide, and only three, including South Burlington, are National Guard fighter wings, and

Whereas, the USAF will make a final determination where to station the F-35 in 2011, and deployment will probably not occur until several years later, and

Whereas, residents of South Burlington and other affected municipalities have expressed concerns about the noise that the F-35 might cause, and

Whereas, although the USAF is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on the F-35, including local noise impacts, this study will not be completed until later in 2010, and

Whereas, Vermont Air National Guard Lt. Col. Chris Caputo, the local F-35 project manager, has commented that the F-35 takeoffs could possibly be quieter than those of the F-16, as the older plane relies on external fuel tanks compared to the stealth-shaped F-35 which is equipped with interior fuel tanks that enable it to take off at a lower throttle setting, and

Whereas, an EIS completed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida did document high F-35 noise levels; however, they reflected that use of that base as a training facility where repeated high speed landings and takeoffs occur, and

Whereas, unlike at Eglin, the more restrained airport protocol of the Vermont Air National Guard will mean that more advanced training

maneuvers are conducted in remote areas of northern New England and upstate New York and not over the more densely populated areas of Chittenden County, and

Whereas, an acoustic analysis of the F-35 conducted at Edwards Air Force Base in California recorded only slightly higher decibel levels for the F-35 in comparison to the F-16, including: flying at 1,000 feet and at 160 knots at full throttle — but without its afterburner — the F-35 generated 121 decibels compared to 114 for the F-16; at minimum throttle, the F-35 was recorded at 94 decibels compared to the F-16's 89, and

Whereas, responding to noise concerns of the South Burlington City Council, Brigadier General Steven Cray noted that the Vermont Air National Guard has decades of experience and an excellent heritage of working with neighbors on fighter jet noise problems and would continue this tradition with the F-35, and

Whereas, although there are noise issues related to the prospect of a new, and more technologically advanced, F-35 fighter jet being stationed at BIA in South Burlington, the Vermont Air National Guard is working to address neighbors' concerns, and

Whereas, the general assembly is confident that with its tradition of excellence in training and commitment to accomplishing its mission, the current F-16 workforce will be able to adapt its skill set to meet the technical needs of the F-35, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly looks favorably upon the permanent assignment of the F-35 fighter jets to the Vermont Air National Guard's base at Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly supports the Vermont Air National Guard's transitioning to the next generation of aviation technology, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly encourages collaboration among the Vermont Air National Guard, the city of South Burlington, and other affected municipalities to identify and address environmental, health, housing, and workforce concerns, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to United States Air Force Secretary Michael Donley, Vermont National Guard Adjutant General Major General Michael Dubie, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.