

Congressman Joins Federal Suit over Loss of Guard Planes

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HARTFORD, CT – Congressman John B. Larson joined the federal lawsuit filed today regarding the seizure of Connecticut's Air National Guard aircraft.

The lawsuit was brought by Attorney General Richard Blumenthal on behalf of Gov. M. Jodi Rell and the state of Connecticut. The lawsuit lists as defendants Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

"This is a matter of principle, of law, of Connecticut's security, and we will not stand by for Connecticut to be rendered the only state in the nation without an active air defense," Larson said. "We intend to fully press our legal standing and carry this fight as long as far as necessary to ensure that our planes and our enlisted personnel stay where they belong. These men and women joined the Connecticut Air National Guard because they wanted to serve their state as well as their country. We will not deprive them or our state citizens of that service."

Larson added, "Seizing our Air National Guard's aircraft is a gross abuse of federal power and overreaching application of eminent domain. I am fully behind our Governor, our state's commander and chief. These are as much her troops and her equipment. She is responsible for the day to day protection of our state and its citizens. Unless she says they go, we're going to make sure they remain."

Larson expressed confidence that Friday's ruling by a federal judge striking a National Guard's reassignment or reallocation without the governor's consent bolsters Connecticut's case.

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