



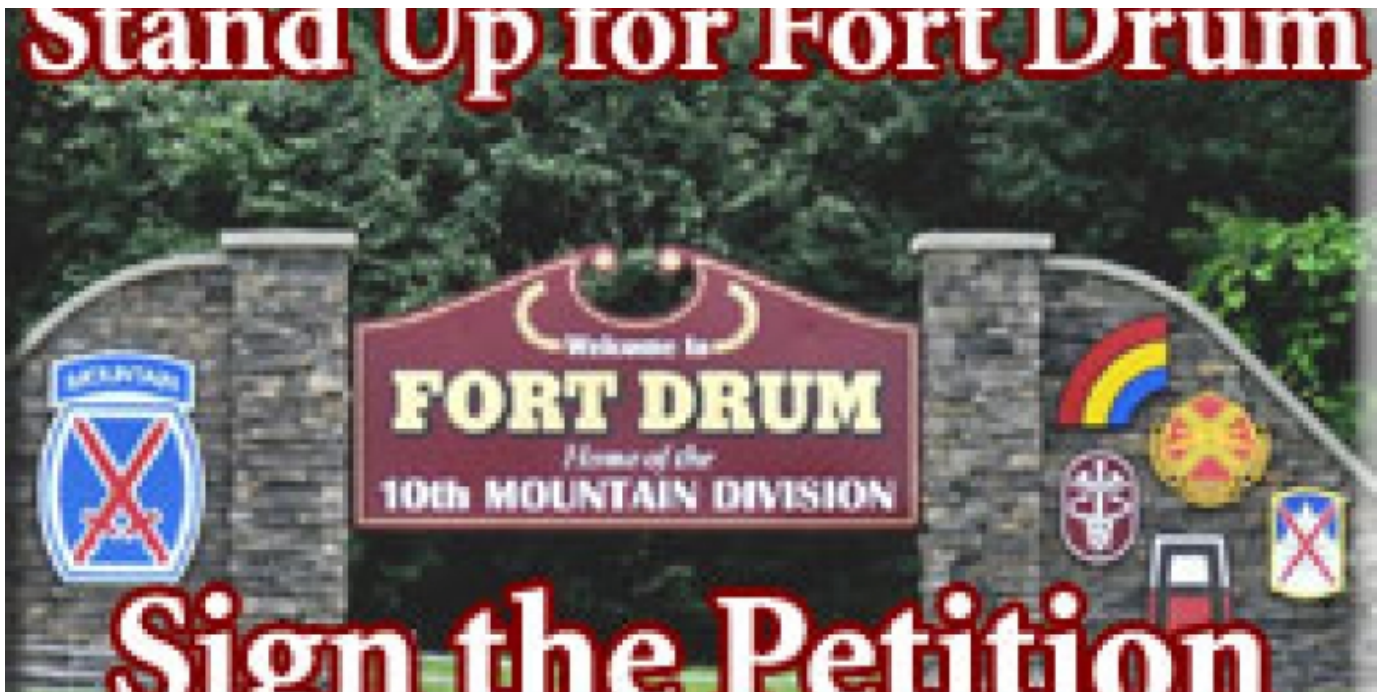
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Launches Petition in Support of Fort Drum

PATTY RITCHIE August 6, 2014

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS, MILITARY, TROOPS, VETERANS**



**Teams with FDRLO, Local Leaders as Army Considers Possible Troop Reductions**

**\*\*\*CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PETITION\*\*\***

State Senator Patty Ritchie is teaming with the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO) and other local leaders to urge people to stand up for Fort Drum by signing an online petition launched today at [www.StandUpForFortDrum.com](http://www.StandUpForFortDrum.com).

The petition follows a proposal by the Army to assess the impact of reducing troop levels to numbers not seen since the beginning of World War II. Taken across the board, the reductions could mean significant cuts at Fort Drum, the North Country's leading economic engine, which supports thousands of jobs and

pumps roughly \$1.4 billion into the local economy annually.

“Ft. Drum is a huge part of the North Country—it’s a major job-creator, a significant part of our economy and its troops and their families are not only defenders of our freedom, they are also our friends and neighbors,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I’m joining forces with the FDRLO and local leaders to help send a clear message to the Army that Fort Drum is a vital part of our region, our state and our nation. Our community has welcomed Fort Drum and now, we need to stand together to show our continued support and eagerness to help the post grow and succeed.”

Those wishing to show their support for Fort Drum can sign Senator Ritchie’s petition and share personal stories about what the post means to them on her recently-launched website, [www.StandUpForFortDum.com](http://www.StandUpForFortDum.com). The deadline to sign the petition is August 25<sup>th</sup>. Names will be added to those being collected by communities leaders and groups, like FDRLO and forwarded to the Army.

“The impacts of another loss will have very negative consequences on the local economy no matter the size,” said Carl McLaughlin, Executive Director of the FDRLO. That negative impact grows exponentially as more soldiers are reduced at Fort Drum. Fort Drum is our areas most important anchor institution and economic engine, any loss is significant.”

“We at the FDRLO support the many initiatives of Senator Ritchie that support keeping Fort Drum whole and on its current mission.”

As the State Senator representing Fort Drum soldiers and their families, Senator Ritchie has been working diligently to raise awareness of the post. For the past three years, she has hosted “10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day,” an event held at the Capitol to familiarize Albany with the critical role the post plays.

In addition, Senator Ritchie also led an effort to include \$2 million in additional State Budget funding to protect Fort Drum and other military installations from defense cutbacks. Last year, she was able to access that fund to preserve farmland bordering the post, which serves as a “buffer zone” for military training areas, as well as to support health care initiatives in surrounding communities.

Most recently, she rallied a bipartisan group of 85 State Senators and Assembly Members from across the state, joining them together to support Fort Drum. In April, the group signed on to a letter sent to Governor Cuomo, encouraging him to enlist the support of leaders in Albany, New York City and Washington, D.C. to fight for the post. [Click here](#) to view the letter.

Home to 38,000 soldiers and family members, Fort Drum is the largest Army installation north of North Carolina and east of the Mississippi River. In addition, the post also employs nearly 5,000 civilians and supports tens of thousands of jobs off base to bolster the North Country economy. According to a recent economic impact study, it was estimated that Fort Drum pumped more than \$1.4 billion into the local economy last year