

## Army Secretary's Visit to Rock Island Arsenal Praised by Lawmakers

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United States Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll's recent visit to the Rock Island Arsenal has been met with strong approval from local and federal lawmakers who see the installation as essential to both national defense and the Quad Cities economy.

Driscoll toured the historic Arsenal on Monday after receiving invitations from members of Congress concerned about a proposal from the Department of Defense that could reshape Army operations. The Department has suggested merging two major commands headquartered at Rock Island: the Army Sustainment Command (ASC), which supplies

troops worldwide, and the Joint Munitions Command (JMC), which oversees ammunition plants and depots across the country. If approved, the plan could cut up to 400 local jobs.

Representative Eric Sorensen, a Democrat from Illinois, called the visit a success and said it opened the door for more honest conversations about Arsenal's future. "Now going forward, we need to make sure the Army transformation initiative does not mean that we have a loss of jobs here," Sorensen said. "Instead, it means how can we make sure the jobs and the workforce grow because now the Secretary of the Army knows our needs."

Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks, a Republican from Iowa and a 24-year Army veteran, joined Driscoll during the visit. She emphasized her commitment to defending the Arsenal's workforce and ensuring it remains a cornerstone of the region's economic health and America's military strength. "Rock Island Arsenal has always been a pillar of strength for our national defense and the Quad Cities region," Miller-Meeks said.

Senator Dick Durbin, who encouraged Driscoll to visit, also highlighted the Arsenal's vital role. "As Secretary Driscoll saw today, the Rock Island Arsenal plays an important role in ensuring our nation's military readiness," Durbin said.

Despite repeated requests, lawmakers said the Department of Defense has not provided a detailed plan outlining how the proposed merger would impact operations and employees. Senator Tammy Duckworth expressed hope that the visit would help bring much-needed clarity. "I hope Secretary Driscoll's visit to the Arsenal today offers the clarity we need so we can work together to ensure the Arsenal has the support it needs to succeed for years to come," she said.

As Congress prepares to draft the National Defense Authorization Act later this year, local leaders say protecting Rock Island jobs and capabilities remains a top priority.

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