



# ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3385 • (703) 841-4300

26 June 2017

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
218 Senate Russell Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) and its members, I write to thank you and the Armed Services Committee for your efforts to increase the readiness and effectiveness of America's Army in the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

As you markup the bill, please consider AUSA's top priorities:

**Repeal sequestration and the Budget Control Act of 2011**

The defense budget caps are degrading the Army's current and future readiness, adversely affecting modernization, and undermining Soldiers' confidence that their very real requirements will be sufficiently resourced. The defense budget caps must be repealed, opening the path to providing total Army – Regular Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve -- the resources required to perform its many diverse missions. Our Army has been tasked to meet continuous operational demands from the combatant commanders, rebuild after 16 years of war and modernize equipment, all while faced with a false budgetary crisis imposed by the Budget Control Act. This ineffective law is not saving money as intended, and is instead jeopardizing national security by not allowing the Army's resources to match the strategic requirements placed on the Army.

**Increase end strength**

Today's Army is the best in the world, but it is too small to meet the global demands placed on it. We applaud your committee's efforts to balance, size and position the Total Army to meet current and future strategic requirements. Stopping the budget-driven force reductions is critical in a time of increased threats and global instability. However, it is critical that the additional endstrength you authorize is also fully resourced.

**Repeal or Restructure Section 702 of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act**

While standardizing procedures and policies among MTFs is a laudable goal, placing the MTFs under the Defense Health Agency jeopardizes the foundation of the military healthcare system. MTFs are the readiness platforms upon which the Army builds the

medical capabilities required on the battlefield and at the theater of war level. Retaining the critical leadership of the Army Chief of Staff, Army Surgeon General and Army commanders is the best way to ensure the MTF's provide trained, equipped, ready forces for employment by the combatant commanders. Please continue considering organizational models and actions to achieve the committee's intent other than placing the MTF's under the direction of the civilian-led Defense Health Agency.

**Military Pay Raise**

AUSA fully supports a 2.4 percent military pay raise, as per the law. We strongly believe in the principal of pay raise comparability and the premise that service members deserve the same annual raise as the average citizen as measured by the Employment Cost Index.

**Modernization**

Over the past six years, our Army has had to sacrifice fully funding modernization efforts to fund current readiness. This endangers our military overmatch against potential threats. AUSA supports additional funding for Army modernization needs.

Though not an item specifically for the Armed Services Committee, getting back to "regular order" by beginning FY2018 with an approved budget, rather than the uncertainty of yet another continuing resolution, would go a long way to restoring confidence in the process and would yield a level of resourcing predictability which has been long absent.

Once again, thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of our Army and the security of the United States.

Sincerely,



Carter F. Ham  
General, U.S. Army Retired  
President & CEO