



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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May 17, 2018

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Senator Reed:

The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) appreciates the work of the Senate Armed Services Committee in its continued efforts to maintain a strong national defense. As you proceed to mark up the Fiscal Year 2019 Senate National Defense Authorization Act, we take this opportunity to express our views on the key actions required to fund, maintain, sustain and modernize the U.S. Army.

Our Army requires timely and adequate resources to perform its assigned missions. The Budget Control Act of 2011, and the sequestration mechanism within it, have done deep damage to our national defense. It needs to be repealed.

While Congress has passed the NDAA for the last 57 years, it must regain focus to pass defense appropriations by the start of the fiscal year. The multiple continuing resolutions, year after year, have cost billions of dollars and greatly hindered getting necessary capabilities to our Soldiers. Repealing sequestration and urging your fellow Senators to pass appropriations bills on time would go a long way toward restoring military readiness.

Our Army needs more Soldiers to keep our deployed units at full strength. While recruiting is more challenging every year, growing the Regular Army by 4,000 Soldiers per year through FY21 is achievable. It will help ease personnel shortages, without lowering recruiting standards. For the Reserve Component, additional full-time support will help increase the readiness of our operational reserve.

Modernization was put on hold for many years as the Army prioritized resources for current readiness to meet pressing missions. As resources increase, the Army is investing in capabilities to regain overmatch. AUSA supports increasing modernization funding to close capability gaps, including those listed in the Army Chief of Staff's Unfunded Requirement (UFR) list.

The new Army Futures Command will play an important role in streamlining processes, cutting bureaucracy and unifying the lines of responsibility to improve the requirements-to-acquisition process. AUSA asks the Committee to support legislation that will speed modernization while helping the Army to be peerless stewards of taxpayer dollars.

To improve operational depth, AUSA supports increasing the authorization for at least one Army National Guard Attack Aviation Battalion to move from 18 to 24 aircraft. This will provide the interoperability with the Regular Army required, if our Army is tasked to engage in high-intensity warfare.

Finally, we believe the All-Volunteer Force requires your continued support for robust military benefits and total compensation to recruit and retain quality Soldiers during this longstanding period of high operational demands. AUSA supports the President's budget request for a 2.6% pay raise, equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) per the law. We also support the expansion of eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) to certain federal employees, e.g., National Guard technicians. Thank you for your stalwart service to our nation and your leadership in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carter F. Ham".

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