

Defense Related Associations

October 26, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader McConnell, Leader Pelosi, and Leader Reid:

The undersigned associations and organizations collectively represent millions of American manufacturing and service workers, active duty service members, and Guard and reserve personnel who work every day to keep this nation safe and protect our vital interests. If the Budget Control Act (BCA) cap on defense spending is not raised, or if a full-year continuing resolution (CR) for FY2016 at current rates is adopted, our military will have neither adequate resources to conduct today's missions nor be ready when the next crisis strikes.

In February 2010, the Department of Defense estimated that its budget requirement for FY2016 would be \$659 billion. After a series of reductions, including a line-item sequester in March 2013 that according to Congressional leaders "was never supposed to happen," the defense budget cap currently stands at \$523 billion. This constitutes the fifth consecutive year of cuts for a military that is being asked to do more, not less, in an increasingly unstable global geopolitical landscape.

Chaos in the Middle East and aggressive military activity by Russia, China, Iran and North Korea, all pose serious national security threats to our nation, threats that require a well-trained military force with state-of-the-art equipment. Military leaders have been sounding this alarm loudly this year, and it is now imperative that Congress heeds them.

Responding to these concerns, President Obama earlier this year proposed an FY2016 defense budget of \$561 billion. This figure is \$38 billion above the current BCA caps. We appreciate the support expressed by both the House and Senate in including that additional funding in the Congressional Budget Resolution this year, and later as part of the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). However, the President vetoed the NDAA because Congress has not taken steps to appropriate additional domestic spending. The resulting stalemate has delayed enactment of a defense policy bill carrying important reforms, and caused some to suggest that a full-year CR is the easiest way out.

We urge you to seriously consider the effects of an ongoing CR on our nation's military. In addition to the deteriorating strategic environment our forces must manage, as a practical matter, removing \$38 billion in extra funding already approved by the House and Senate would cause enormous disruption of military modernization and training, and send the wrong signal to our warfighters.

Congress amended the BCA caps in 2012, providing short-term relief for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. We believe a two-year agreement covering fiscal years 2016 and 2017 would allow regular order on FY2017 appropriations bills, remove defense spending from the heightened political drama of an election year, and send an important signal to our military and our defense industrial base that Congress is able to govern despite its challenges. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to ensure that those responsible for securing our nation are provided adequate, balanced and stable funding.



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Space Foundation



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General, USAF (Ret.)
President
Air Force Association



Brian Wynne
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Association for Unmanned
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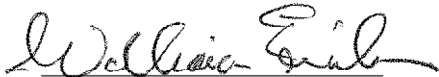
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