



June 13, 2023

The Honorable Mike Rogers  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

As New Democrats, we recognize that the United States and its allies are safest when Congress exercises leadership in guiding foreign and national security policy. Every year, Congress advances U.S. national security priorities through the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The FY23 NDAA invested in our servicemembers, innovation and technology, allies and partners, readiness, and diversity to strengthen U.S. national security. We thank you for your leadership in crafting this critical legislation. To ensure the United States is prepared to meet the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the FY24 NDAA must build on last years' legislation and invest in a full range of tools to protect American lives, advance American values, and support American interests around the globe.

The New Democrat Coalition (NDC) has developed several NDAA priorities to promote the safety and prosperity of Americans and enhance the security of our allies and partners. The Coalition's priorities reflect the evolving nature of the challenges and opportunities we face, as well as a firm commitment to defending democracy and freedom around the world.

As you work to develop and advance the FY24 NDAA, we respectfully request that you work with us to include NDC priorities in the NDAA. These include:

**Continue to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity**

Ukraine is a key regional strategic U.S. partner and is a vital national security interest. Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is a threat to democracies around the world and has shined a spotlight on the urgent need for strong American leadership that promotes democracy and human rights. Putin launched a new offensive earlier this year, demonstrating his long term commitment to this war. As supplies diminish and fatigue sets in, it is imperative that Ukraine retains the support of its allies and

partners to effectively defend against Russia and preserve the rules-based international order. As such, we urge the Committee to:

- Continue critical military, medical, and humanitarian relief to Ukraine so it is equipped to repel Russian aggression and meet the needs of its citizens.

### **Prioritize climate resiliency and energy security**

The Department of Defense (DoD) is the largest consumer<sup>1</sup> of fossil fuels in the United States. Early in his tenure, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin acknowledged the national security threat that extreme weather events present and declared climate change an emergency. The DoD faces a dual climate challenge: improving our military's climate resiliency and ensuring our energy infrastructure is secure and efficient. Extreme weather hazards hold implications for international security as they exacerbate geopolitical tensions, further social instability, and disrupt global supply chains. Furthermore, these hazards have significant implications for the costs of operating U.S. military installations and equipment. In 2018, Hurricane Florence caused \$3.6 billion<sup>2</sup> in damages to North Carolina's Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. Over the last few years, great strides have been made on this issue through the DoD's Climate Adaptation Plan and the energy and installation resiliency provisions in recent NDAA's. However, more can and should be done to ensure operational capabilities. We urge the Committee to:

- Promote the development of innovative military technologies to increase energy efficiency and energy storage as well as reduce fuel consumption.
- Enhance climate literacy among DoD personnel.
- Support programs that advance our national security through their work on mission resilience, energy assurance, and risk management.

### **Support servicemembers and their families**

It is vital that we give servicemembers, veterans, and their families the compensation, training, resources, and support they need. However, insufficient affordable housing, food insecurity, and lack of quality child care and mental health resources are some of the primary quality of life issues that afflict servicemembers and their families. For example, a recent report<sup>3</sup> found that 25.8% of U.S. military personnel were food insecure in 2018. Inadequate resources for servicemembers directly impact readiness and retention so it is vital that we craft policies that help meet the needs of servicemembers and their families across all areas of their life. Furthermore, transitioning from military service to civilian life is a significant challenge that requires resources and support. While the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is currently in place, servicemembers are not benefiting from the full range of

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<sup>1</sup> ['Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War,' Crawford \(Nov 2019\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> ['Climate Change and Adaptation: Department of Defense,' Saylor \(April 2023\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> ['Food Insecurity Among Members of the Armed Forces and Their Dependents,' Asch, Rennane, Trail, Berdie, Ward, Troyanker, Gadwah-Meaden, Kempf \(2023\)](#)

services available to them. In order to address the challenges facing military personnel, we urge the Committee to:

- Advance programs and initiatives that improve housing supply and affordability, address the child-care needs of military families, reduce food insecurity, and increase awareness and access to mental health programs.
- Strengthen programs that give servicemembers the tools and mentorship they need to succeed in the civilian workforce.
- Strengthen and expand programs that promote employment of military spouses.

### **Invest in American innovation**

America's global leadership is made possible through a modern economy that fully supports our national security objectives. However, the DoD's innovation pipeline has gaps and strategic deficiencies that hinder the swift identification, development, and adoption of innovative technologies. Additionally, much of the funding that is available to support technology development is concentrated in the early stages of development. This leaves limited support for testing and proof of concept, and as a result, many technologies do not reach the adoption stage. And while we face these challenges at home, America's adversaries are investing in efforts to supplant U.S. global leadership through technological, military, and economic means. To ensure that the United States maintains its technological and strategic edge over near-peer adversaries like China, we urge the Committee to:

- Fund research, development, and deployment of emerging technologies across the innovation pipeline.
- Expand and streamline efforts to get new military technologies from the private sector into the DoD's hands.
- Develop a diverse and skilled workforce, particularly in cybersecurity.

### **Strengthen our defense industrial base and supply chains**

A healthy industrial base and resilient supply chains are critical to maintain U.S. national security objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed how fragile U.S. supply chains are across key industries such as defense, technology, energy, and pharmaceutical sectors. While there is an understanding among government and military officials that the U.S. must build more resilient supply chains for critical technologies, significant risk is still present. A recent GAO report<sup>4</sup> found that "the Department of Defense's Industrial Base Policy office does not have a consolidated and comprehensive strategy to mitigate risks to the industrial base." We must take steps to ensure our defense industrial base is not vulnerable in a shifting international security environment. As New Dems, we are focused on supporting diverse and innovative supply chain strategies, increasing opportunities for entrants,

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<sup>4</sup> ['Defense Industrial Base: DOD Should Take Actions to Strengthen Its Risk Mitigation Approach,' GAO \(July 2022\)](#)

particularly small businesses, and maximizing our production capabilities. To help accomplish this, we urge the Committee to:

- Direct DoD to create a comprehensive strategy to mitigate risks to the industrial base.

As the FY24 NDAA is drafted and marked up, we stand ready to work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to deliver a strong bill that ensures the United States retains its role as a global leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,



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Rep. Marilyn Strickland  
Chair, National Security Task Force  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Jason Crow  
Vice Chair, National Security Task Force  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Jeff Jackson  
Member, National Security Task Force  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Rick Larsen  
Member, National Security Task Force  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Ed Case  
Vice Chair, National Security Task Force  
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Rep. Jared Moskowitz  
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Rep. Sara Jacobs  
Member, National Security Task Force  
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Rep. Donald Norcross  
Member, National Security Task Force  
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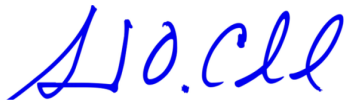
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Rep. Jennifer Wexton  
Member, National Security Task Force  
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Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Vice Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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New Democrat Coalition



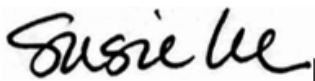
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Rep. Marc Veasey  
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Freshman Leadership Representative  
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Member of Congress  
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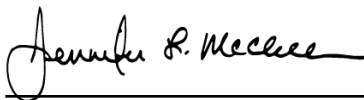
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Rep. Angie Craig  
Member of Congress  
New Democrat Coalition



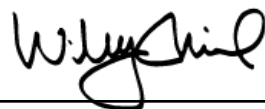
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Member of Congress  
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Rep. Susan Wild  
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