

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2016

Congressional Conferees  
The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017  
United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Conferees:

We write regarding the conference committee for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (NDAA). As passed by the Senate, this legislation strengthens defense policy and fortifies our national security. As conference negotiations begin with your House counterparts, we urge you to ensure the Senate funding for the UH-1N replacement program remains intact in the final version of the NDAA.

Reacting to the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command's urgent calls to replace this ailing fleet of helicopters operating on national security waivers, the Air Force determined the best acquisition strategy was to use the Economy Act to enable rapid fielding of replacement helicopters. The Air Force emphasized that procuring H-60 Black Hawk helicopters off of the currently operating Army line would be the "fastest path" and the "most efficient and convenient sources to satisfy Air Force requirements."

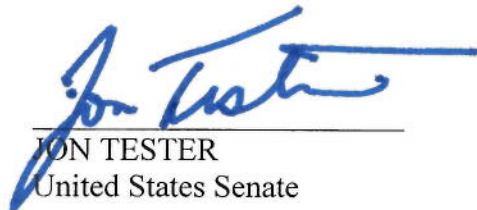
In response, the Senate Armed Services Committee supported the Air Force's proposal by including language in the Senate-passed NDAA that increases the budget request by \$302.3 million to accelerate the Air Force's plan by using these additional funds to procure eight HH-60 Black Hawk helicopters using the Army's current contract. Likewise, the House-passed NDAA included an additional \$80.0 million to accelerate the UH-1N replacement program. As such, we urge you to maintain the stronger funding authorized in the Senate-passed NDAA.

We are pleased that the Senate passed the NDAA with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, 23-3 in Committee and 85-13 on the Senate floor. By providing robust funding for the UH-1N replacement program to begin procuring Black Hawks, this bill recognizes that at a time when our nation faces unprecedented threats, we cannot afford to leave our ICBM missile fields vulnerable for several more years. We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



JON TESTER  
United States Senate



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senate



JOHN HOEVEN  
United States Senate



JOHN BARRASSO  
United States Senate



MIKE ENZI  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senate



HEIDI HEITKAMP  
United States Senate

cc: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
cc: Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid