

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2013

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
H-149, The Capitol Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you enter any conference negotiations for the Fiscal Year 2014 Defense Appropriations bill, we respectfully request your continued support for the Air Force's Combat Rescue Helicopter (CRH) program at the House passed funding level of \$333.5 million, \$60 million below the President's request.

As you know, the CRH program will replace the aging HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters with the latest technology modified to meet this highly specialized mission. The combat search and rescue helicopters are some of the highest utilized assets in the entire military. The legacy fleet has saved thousands of lives over the last decade and repeatedly proved the vital nature of this mission. The age and high operations tempo of the current fleet of helicopters, however, has made them costly to maintain and challenged mission readiness rates. Two unsuccessful Air Force efforts to recapitalize the legacy fleet have exacerbated this situation and prolonged the use of these more than thirty-year old assets.

The Air Force developed an effective acquisition strategy centered on a technically acceptable, best value selection which is likely to protect it from the protests that have doomed past acquisitions. The Air Force's CRH strategy of utilizing a fix-price incentivized contract will allow it to affordably recapitalize these helicopters in a budget constrained environment. This mission is too important to allow arbitrary budget pressures to thwart what former Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Moseley called a "moral imperative".

Accordingly, we applaud the funding level you provided in the House bill and urge you to remain steadfast in support of the House's position in conference as the significant cuts levied against the program by the Senate would likely terminate the program outright given the competing budgetary demands faced by the Air Force. In addition, to ensure the Air Force supports CRH in its future budget submissions, we request the conference include language directing the Air Force to continue to fully budget for the program so that the combat search and rescue fleet can be successfully recapitalized in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress



AUSTIN SCOTT
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY H. BISHOP
Member of Congress



RICHARD L. HANNA
Member of Congress



WILLIAM L. OWENS
Member of Congress



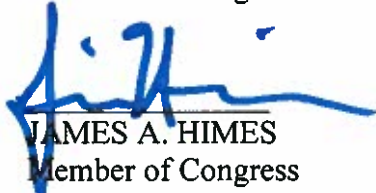
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