

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 6, 2017

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

We write regarding the conference committee for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (NDAA). As passed by the Senate, this legislation contains provisions that strengthen defense policy and fortify our national security. As conference negotiations begin with your House counterparts, we urge you to ensure that \$1.038 billion for 53 UH-60M Black Hawks secured in the House-passed NDAA is supported in the final version of the NDAA to address urgent Army and Army National Guard readiness concerns, while providing substantial savings by procuring at more efficient rates.

Black Hawks continue to be the backbone of Army Aviation, and its modernization strategy is incredibly important, given the wear and tear on the fleet resulting from more than 15 years of sustained combat operations and high OPTEMPO. While the President's budget request included only 48 helicopters – a reduction of 12 helicopters from what was planned last year – this could only have been a response to budgetary pressure and not of need. Earlier this year at the Senate Armed Services Committee's Army posture hearing, Army Chief of Staff General Milley confirmed that the Army needs more than 48 Black Hawks in FY 2018 "in order to flesh out and replace existing aircraft." By supporting strong funding for Black Hawks during conference, we will meet pressing readiness needs and take advantage of cost savings that benefit the Army and the taxpayers.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you on this matter.

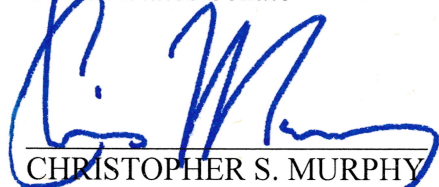
Sincerely,



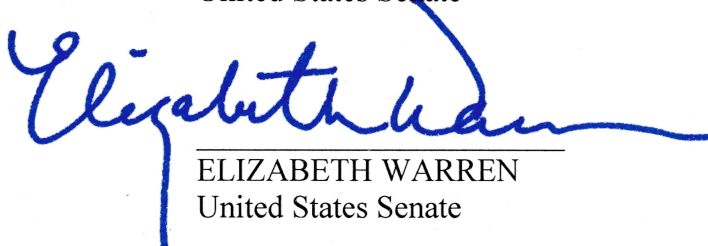
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



EDWARD J. MARKEY  
United States Senate



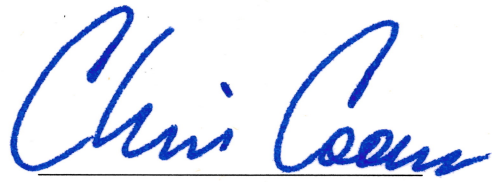
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



ELIZABETH WARREN  
United States Senate



BILL NELSON  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS  
United States Senate

cc: Chairman Mac Thornberry, House Armed Services Committee  
Ranking Member Adam Smith, House Armed Services Committee