

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 5, 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  
728 Hart Senate 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, we urge you to ensure that Sections 6208 and 6215 concerning the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative of the Senate-passed NDAA are included in the final version of the NDAA. This bipartisan effort builds on the Senate's strong and sustained support for Ukraine by adding key authorities and capabilities to the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

The Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative remains a crucial tool established by Congress to counter Russia's continued military aggression in eastern Ukraine, and we fully support the \$500 million authorized in this year's bill – \$350 million above the President's request. Sections 6208 and 6215 expand the type of U.S. support permitted to be delivered to our Ukrainian allies, provide greater flexibility in obligating security assistance funds, and offer greater detail on the aid conditionality for certifying Ukrainian progress toward key defense institutional reforms. The provisions provide new types of security assistance, including naval capabilities, which were significantly depleted as a result of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. It also authorizes the United States to provide air and coastal defense radars, naval mine and counter-mine capabilities, and littoral and coastal defense craft to the Ukrainians.

Furthermore, Section 6215 provides a new funding authority for the treatment of wounded Ukrainian soldiers in DoD military treatment facilities, as well as authorizes the training and education for Ukrainian healthcare specialists to provide continuing care and rehabilitation services for their soldiers. Currently, Ukrainian soldiers are able to come to the US to receive treatment at DoD military treatment facilities through the Secretarial Designee program when Ukraine cannot provide the necessary care in country. While nearly a dozen Ukrainian soldiers have been treated through this program, funding is not guaranteed and is often unaffordable for the Ukrainian government. As such, this provision will provide access to life saving care through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative to cover the cost of not only medical care, but the costs associated with treatment such as transportation, housing, and meals.

Now, more than ever, the United States must send a strong signal to Russia that we remain resolute in our desire to hold Russia accountable for its illegal annexation and continued military aggression in eastern Ukraine. Sections 6208 and 6215 of the Senate-passed FY 2018

NDAA assist our Ukrainian partners in their fight against Russian aggression, and we urge you to ensure these important provisions remain in the NDAA. We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you on this matter.

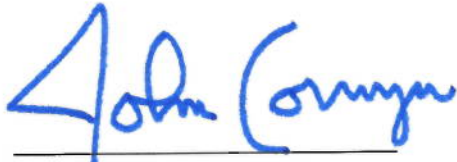
Sincerely,



Rob Portman  
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn  
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
U.S. Senator

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