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February 16, 2024

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Quality of Life Panel, we write to encourage you to focus significantly more attention and resources in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Department of Defense Budget request to support the quality of life of our service members and their families. Our efforts and forthcoming recommendations, expected in the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, (NDAA) will focus on improving the daily lives of especially the most junior of our service members and their families.

Our service members represent the best our nation has to offer and are central to our national security. The All-Volunteer Force has been the foundation of America's national defense for the last five decades. Yet the committee's quality of life inquiry thus far has revealed an alarming erosion of military quality of life that, if not addressed quickly, will soon place the All-Volunteer Force at risk. Reversing this decline will require a national commitment of resources to address quality of life concerns for service members and their families. Our findings revealed:

- (1) aging and poorly maintained barracks, dormitories, and single-family housing forcing servicemembers and their families to contend with mold, pests, and other unacceptable habitability problems;
- (2) military compensation, particularly for junior enlisted, continues to grow incongruent with civilian and officer pay, resulting in food insecurity economic insecurity with escalating negative impacts on recruiting and retention expected;
- (3) access to medical care remains challenging, particularly the dearth of behavioral health services for family members;

(4) a nationwide shortage of childcare workers is particularly acute in the military, especially in high-cost and remote areas like San Diego and Alaska detracting from readiness; and

(5) frequent moves and isolated locations, as well as licensure issues, continue make finding and keeping a job difficult for military spouses.

Through the FY 2025 NDAA we plan to place renewed focus on caring for our servicemembers and their families. This is a large, costly undertaking, but it is our moral and national security imperative to support those who serve. We look forward to your support as we begin developing the FY 2025 NDAA.

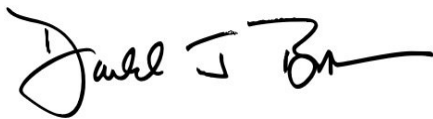
Sincerely,



Mike Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services



Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services



Don Bacon
Chairman
Quality of Life Panel



Chrissy Houlahan
Ranking Member
Quality of Life Panel

cc.

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon