

The Honorable Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson
(PA-05)

Testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
Member Hearing on Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018
Tuesday, March 9, 2017

Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities for Fiscal Year 2018 Defense appropriations. As the father of an Army Staff Sergeant who has received a Purple Heart during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and a strong supporter of our nation's defense programs, I appreciate the subcommittee's willingness to receive testimony from in-committee members.

I recognize the challenges placed before the Subcommittee and appreciate your ongoing commitment to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guardsmen and reserve forces.

For the first time in years, we have an opportunity to ensure that our military does not face a continued drawdown in force strength.

This begins with ensuring that our military continues to have the tools and equipment to get the job done. For this reason, I will be respectfully requesting funding for the C-130 In-Flight Propeller Balancing System to be increased by \$18 million from FY17 levels. This system will improve fuel efficiency, increase readiness and mission availability, and reduce maintenance costs for our nation's C-130 fleet.

I also respectfully request full funding of the COLUMBIA Class Submarine program. As the OHIO Class submarines begin to retire in 2031, it is imperative that we fund their replacement to maintain a presence around the world.

Supporting our troops when they return home from the front lines is just as important as providing them the tools they need to defend our nation.

As a former healthcare professional, with nearly three decades of experience, I would like to advocate for expanding telemedicine access for veterans. In light of recent technology advances, evolving telemedicine programs, and the authority given to the Department of Defense by Congress in support of telemedicine, I respectfully request strong financial support for both the Medical Information Technology Development Program and the Medical Technology Development Program within DOD Defense Health Programs for Fiscal Year 2018.

It is undeniable that those within the Department of Defense have demonstrated their willingness to improve the lives of military members and civilians alike. Medical research conducted within the department has led to lifesaving breakthroughs and the development of effective treatments for numerous conditions.

In order for the Department to build on previous discoveries and maintain momentum in medical research fields, it is imperative that we provide adequate funding for vital research programs.

These include the Multiple Sclerosis Research Program, the ALS Research Program, the Breast Cancer Research Program, the Ovarian Research Program, and the Peer Reviewed Orthopedic Research Program. There is no doubt that making critical investments in medical research at the federal level will improve the well-being of our nation as a whole.

While we work to assist our service men and women who are here with us, we must keep in mind that more than 80,000 American Citizens who served in the Vietnam War, Korean War, and World War II are still missing in action, according to the Department of Defense.

For those who made the ultimate sacrifice, their families and loved ones deserve no less than our greatest efforts for recovery. To continue attempts to recover our fallen heroes overseas, diligent work, planning and sufficient funding is necessary. To provide grieving families the opportunity for closure, I respectfully request that the Subcommittee supports robust funding for the Defense POW/MIA Office in Fiscal Year 2018.

In tandem with providing adequate support services to all of our servicemen and women, we must also recognize the value of encouraging innovation in the U.S. defense industrial base. The Manufacturing Technology Program, also known as ManTech, is intended to improve the productivity and responsiveness of the U.S. defense industrial base by funding the development, optimization, and transition of providing manufacturing technologies to key naval suppliers.

Specifically, in my district, The Pennsylvania State University's Applied Research Laboratory manages two ManTech Centers of Excellence, the Institute for Manufacturing and Sustainment Technologies, and the Electro-Optics Center. The work accomplished by these partnerships includes basic and applied research and technology demonstrations and the facilitation of technology commercialization. I respectfully encourage the committee to look favorably upon this request.

Finally, I would like to register my support for a diverse energy mix in American military installations abroad, including energy domestically sourced. If there are viable, cost-effective ways to utilize American energy on our bases abroad, I fully recommend we pursue these avenues.

Specifically, I recommend that the United States implement strategies to consider that all energy needs required by the Kaiserslautern Military Community in the Federal Republic of Germany be sourced domestically within the United States. Supporting our military presence abroad with American energy will not only create jobs at home, but eliminate energy-based conflicts of interest between the US and Russia.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to the issues within the jurisdiction of your Subcommittee and the Committee as a whole. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to support the needs of our military.