

Rep. Roger Williams  
Member Day Testimony  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
March 9, 2017

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Visclosky, Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for allowing me to testify before you today about some of my priorities for the FY'18 Department of Defense Appropriations bill.

But first, Madam Chair, I would like to congratulate you on your chairmanship of this prestigious subcommittee. The funding of our nation's military and national security could not be in better or more capable hands – I am proud to call you my friend.

The single most important duty for Congress is to provide for our national defense. Our troops deserve to have the resources they need to be the very best in the world and to protect our country and our way of life. As a Member of Congress whose district includes Ft. Hood, I know that “The Great Place” is the gold standard for the Army, the Department of Defense and our nation's overall national security posture. It is my hope that this subcommittee will aggressively fund our military personnel and pay account to cover the base requirements as well as OCO/GWOT requirements. I oppose any troop reductions and fully support an additional pay raise for our troops.

I want to express my support for the F-35. As the only 5th generation aircraft in production I would urge this subcommittee to support an investment in F-35 production tooling to ensure that the program can support full rate production of 80 F-35As, 36 F-35Bs and 30 F-35Cs in 2021. The investment required is \$16.4 million per jet. In order to help address the critical need to maintain air superiority and support a ramp up to full rate production, I urge the committee to support a production ramp of 60 F-35As, 24 F-35Bs, and 12 F-35Cs in FY18. This production ramp would continue to restore the previously planned F-35 procurement. To address readiness of the fleet and ensure as more aircraft become operational that the correct spares are available, I encourage an investment in spares that would support \$272 million to improve spares performance, and another \$562 million for additional spares procurement in the FY18 budget. Readiness investment in spares is required to ensure that we can keep these 5th generation aircraft flying. More than 200 aircraft are flying today. The program supports more than 1,400, suppliers, more than 45,000 direct jobs and another 125,000 indirect jobs in the US.

I also support the third multi-year procurement for the V-22 Osprey. It is my hope that the committee consider the \$1.25 billion dollars already saved by the

first two multi-year procurements over year-to-year procurement pricing. Identified requirements for additional aircraft by all of the services should be incorporated into this multi-year procurement plan to the maximum extent possible so that aircraft's unit cost is the lowest possible. Not only does this contribute to further savings for the US taxpayer, but also makes the aircraft more affordable to our foreign partners, thus helping sustain our critically important aerospace industrial base.

Madam Chair, our country is facing unprecedented threats here at home and abroad from radical Islamic terrorists, Russia, North Korea and China to name a few. As you make the difficult funding decisions for the FY'18 Department of Defense Appropriations bill, it is my hope that you ensure we have the strongest and most effective military to keep our country safe. Thank you again for allowing me to testify before you today. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.