

*Rep. Vicky Hartzler (MO-04) | March 9, 2017*

*Testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense*

Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I sit before you today as a proud Member and authorizing counterpart from the House Armed Services Committee. I am here to reiterate testimony that I gave to the House Budget Committee last week because I believe so deeply in what I'm here to tell you today.

Recent reports have indicated that the Trump Administration intends to submit a budget with a defense topline of \$603 billion dollars for Fiscal Year 2018. While I applaud the President's intention to increase our military funding with a quote "\$54 billion dollar increase," **this assertion does not tell the whole story.**

The \$603 billion number is actually only an increase from the **sequestration limits** that have wreaked havoc on our military for the past seven years. **It is only a three percent increase** from President Obama's Administration proposal in the Future Years Defense Program, or FYDP, and \$58 Billion less than Secretary Gates Budget for what we really need. We need more.

You can see where on here the Trump Budget proposal is, compared to the green line which was the Gates Budget before we had the Budget Control Act passed. You can see it is behind what was projected to be needed years ago.

Our military today is facing a severe crisis. We expect our men and women in uniform, and the equipment they deploy, to be able to decisively win a current conflict and posture our forces so another enemy doesn't even think they could challenge the United States if they tried.

Yet this ability is in jeopardy:

- According to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, less than 50% of the Air Force's fighter and bomber force are able to fight and decisively win a highly contested fight against a near peer such as Russia or China. In fact, an engine **literally fell off** a B-52 bomber while training in North Dakota recently.
- According to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, of the **fifty eight** Brigade Combat Teams that our nation depends on to deploy overseas

and defend our freedoms we comfortably enjoy here, **only three** could be called upon to fight tonight. Based on current readiness levels, the Army can only accomplish defense requirements **at a high military risk**. As General Allyn stated in his testimony last month before the Armed Services Committee, if we continue down this path, “The end result is excessive casualties, both to innocent civilians and to our forces.” **We cannot allow this to happen.**

- According to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, two thirds – sixty seven percent – of our Navy’s strike fighters, the planes that are launching the entirety of the Navy’s attacks against ISIS, **cannot fly.** Sixty-seven percent.
- And, sadly, in 2015, the Marine Corps aviation deaths hit a five-year high as aircraft failed or pilots lacked adequate training hours. This is unacceptable.

Regardless of your budgetary priorities, I call on each of you to recognize that it is OUR responsibility in Congress to provide support for our men and women in uniform while **they** selflessly serve our nation.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Thornberry and Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman McCain have both laid out what the Department of Defense needs to begin “buying back” the readiness that has left our force hollow. Our military needs \$640 billion dollars to **begin** the restoration of its forces that the American people expect and need in today’s world.

If we do not meet the budget of \$640 billion for the Department of Defense, we will be short-changing our military in capabilities they need to fulfill their mission. We will impose too great of risk in air dominance, naval presence, ship recovery, facilities maintenance, ground forces, medical readiness, nuclear deterrent requirements, national security space defense, ballistic missile defense, and cyber capabilities. Each of these requirements crucial to our national security would not be met.

Our men and women in the military must stand ready to and actively fight a resurgent Russia, an emergent China, an unstable North Korea, an

unpredictable Iran, and widespread violent extremism. **The demand for our forces has never been so high, and our readiness has never been so low.**

It is within our power to reverse this. I ask you to work with me and others on the Armed Services Committee to give our servicemen and women the resources they need to build our military and keep our nation safe.

Thank you.