

Representative Ann Wagner (R-MO-02)
Testimony to the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee (HACD)
Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 1:45 p.m.

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Visclosky, thank you for the opportunity to share my support for a matter important to the U.S. Navy and national security. Ensuring the success of our missions and the safety of our troops is close to my heart as a mother. My son, a West Point graduate, is an army ranger currently serving as a captain in the third infantry division.

As I testify before you today, the USS Carl Vinson is on deployment in the Western Pacific with three squadrons of F/A-18 Super Hornets, ensuring our nation's security and providing the needed presence and deterrence that only a United States aircraft carrier and its embarked air wing can. These Super Hornets have seen their share of combat operations over the past ten years, conducting strikes in the fight against ISIS and providing air support to our troops on the ground in Afghanistan.

We have heard from past years' testimony by the Chief of Naval Operations that this unrelentingly high operational tempo of F/A-18s on the carrier decks and the delays in maintenance and sustainment of legacy fighter aircraft have resulted in a significant shortfall in tactical aircraft needed to remain mission capable. I appreciate the response by this committee in its FY17 markup to address this shortfall with new F/A-18s and F-35Cs. However this readiness challenge is far from solved, and I support the Navy's call for additional Super Hornets and for a robust sustainment plan to keep Super Hornets flying into the 2040s as a needed fix to this shortfall.

The men and women building the F/A-18 in Missouri's 2nd district are ready to deliver this solution. My constituents are fantastic and dedicated heroes who work hard to develop amazing systems that make American leadership in global missions possible. They continue to

advance the capabilities of this aircraft to combat future threats, developing a Block III Super Hornet that will complement the F-35 capabilities in the air wing of the future. They've also prepared a comprehensive Super Hornet service life modification plan to address the readiness of the strike fighter fleet.

I hope that this committee will support any FY18 request from the Navy for additional Super Hornets as well as investments in Super Hornet readiness in their markup. The men and women of the Navy have answered our call—I look forward to working with you this year to be sure that the men and women of Missouri can help answer theirs. Thank you for the opportunity to do so.