Member Day Testimony from Congressman Steve Cohen (TN-9)

House Committee on Appropriations Defense Subcommittee

May 19, 2022

Chairwoman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present my priorities for the Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Appropriations bill. I appreciate your consideration of the following programmatic requests which will improve military technology, advance medical research, and increase diversity in STEM fields.

I request an increase of $17.65 million above the President's request for the Navy Research Development, Testing and Evaluation (RDT&E) Force Protection Applied Research program. This program plays a critical role in developing technologies associated with a wide variety of naval platforms such as surface, subsurface, terrestrial, and air. An increase to this account would allow for the funding of projects such as a Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) Degraded Environmental Flight Facility and a cavitation project to better understand and address cavitation erosion.

SUAS are rapidly becoming a common tool for missions involving intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in both military and civilian domains. However, current sUAS platforms are often constrained to operate in relatively benign environments whereas mission needs may require more robust operations in conditions such as in high winds, rain, dust, fog, and other obscurants. Missions may also require operation in GPS denied environments. Current laboratory

and operational testing capabilities struggle to adequately imitate GPS denied or degraded environments. A sUAS Degraded Environmental Flight Facility would provide the Navy with new operational testing capabilities of sUAS platforms in conditions that simulate real-world degraded environments.

Cavitation research is also of critical importance to the Navy, as cavitation reduces the performance of combat ships and other vessels by causing significant surface damage and, in turn, driving up the cost of repairs and part replacement. A project funded by the Force Protection Applied Research program to study cavitation erosion of naval propulsors, control devices, and surfaces would help reduce costs, enhance vessel design, and improve naval and industry shipbuilding to address cavitation erosion.

Additionally, an increase of $5 million to the Army RDT&E Air Platform Applied Research would allow the continuation of a project on Multiple Drone, Multiple Sensor Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities. The use of multiple drones with large area coverage electro-optical and infrared sensors for initial target detection coupled with multiple drones with interrogation sensors (acoustic, magnetic, electric field, vibrometry, seismic, etc.) can provide the Army with organic battlefield situational awareness. The interrogation sensors can differentiate decoys from real targets and detect real targets under camouflage, and which can lead to more effective targeting. The University of Memphis, which is located in my district, is becoming the primary research center for the study of multi-drone and multi-sensor warfare capabilities and technology development (sensors, deployment concepts, integration, and testing). Advanced drone ISR technology will enhance the Army's capabilities to develop new

system concepts and tools for using multi-drones in early battlefield situational awareness that will increase force protection and improve threat detection.

I also request a funding level of $10 million for the Army RDT&E's Military Burn Trauma Research Program. Previous funding under this program has established the infrastructure, education, and leadership to support rigorous multicenter clinical trials on burn outcomes at hospitals across the nation and foster collaboration among military and civilian burn surgeons and researchers. I strongly believe that continued funding for military burn research is critical to ensuring that we are providing the best possible care to our wounded service members.

Beyond these RDT&E research programs, I appreciate your consideration of robust funding for health care research under the Department of Defense (DoD). Medical discoveries funded by DoD research do not solely benefit our men and women in uniform. They also typically have broad application for the civilian population. I encourage you to provide robust funding for the DoD Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP). My home county of Shelby County has one of the highest incidence rates of breast cancer in Tennessee, at a rate higher than the national average. Similarly, I support $50 million for the DoD Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP) and $20 million in funding for the DoD Pancreatic Cancer Research Program through the Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP), as the rates for these cancers in Shelby County are in line with the national average. I also encourage you to provide $8 million for the Bladder Cancer Research through the DoD's CDRMP. Bladder cancer is the seventh most commonly diagnosed cancer and is estimated to be the most expensive cancer to

treat over a lifetime. Funding for these programs will lead to important medical discoveries and improve health outcomes.

Finally, I request your support for $100 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Institutions Program. This program fosters interest in STEM fields students at HBCUs and other Minority-Serving Institutions, such as LeMoyne-Owen College in my district, by connecting them with real-world experiences.

Thank you again for your leadership on the Subcommittee and for considering my requests. Should you have any questions, please contact Craig Dulniak in my office at craig.dulniak@mail.house.gov or 202-225-3265.