

Testimony of the Honorable Chaka Fattah, Member of Congress
House Committee on Armed Services
May 8, 2013

Chairman Mckeon, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you for your support of youth mentoring organizations serving on military installations. It is through organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and The First Tee that the children of service members receive the care and guidance they need. Therefore, as you begin consideration of the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act, I ask that you ensure that these organizations have continued access to these installations and the children that they serve. Such access, which is at no cost to the Federal government, is critical for The First Tee to carry out its character development program.

The First Tee was founded in 1997 for the purpose of instilling life skills in young people through the game of golf. Since that time, The First Tee has served 7.6 million participants and engaged 12,000 active volunteers. The program operates in all 50 states and throughout the world.

In 2008, The First Tee received \$3 million from Congress to operate on 100 installations in the United States and 20 installations overseas. On these installations, The First Tee promotes integrity, confidence and perseverance—values the military itself esteems. As a result of The First Tee's work, the children of service members receive the help and support they need to become productive citizens and leaders in American society.

Although this organization's federal funding will soon cease, The First Tee would use private funds, not taxpayer dollars, to operate on military bases. As such, The First Tee would only need permission from this Committee to do so. Therefore, I ask that this Committee ensure The First Tee's continued access to military installations for the purpose of administering its leadership training program. Thank you.