

**Testimony of
The Honorable Patrick Meehan (PA-07)
Before the
House Armed Services Committee
Hearing: FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act Member Request Day
2212 Rayburn HOB
March 1, 2016**

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee, I want to begin by thanking you for holding this hearing. The Committee's support for our national security is second to none, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to weigh in with what I believe is a pressing national security issue.

The Marine Corps V-22 Osprey program has been involved in the most sophisticated combat operations since it became operational in 2009, including the mission that led to the death of Osama bin Laden. With its one-of-a-kind ability to land like a helicopter and fly like a plane, it offers an unmatched flexibility for the warfighter. Marine commanders will tell you that the Osprey gives them unprecedented ability to move troops and materiel around the battlefield faster than ever before.

The Osprey is constructed at Boeing's facility in Ridley Park, Delaware County and by Bell in your home district, Mr. Chairman, in Amarillo. It's purchased under a five-year contract that Congress authorized in Fiscal Year 2013. At that time, all four congressional defense committees – including this Committee – supported the contract. And for good reason. The contract saved nearly \$1 billion over single-year contracts while giving predictability to the industry to drive further efficiencies and capabilities into the aircraft. Unfortunately, the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request unexpectedly reduced the procurement of Osprey aircraft by two airframes.

Increased unit costs and termination liability could ultimately lead to additional and unnecessary costs for our taxpayers. The cut has the potential to jeopardize the workforce at the Boeing facility in Ridley – and it will take vital tools out of the hands of our battlefield commanders.

The only reason for the reduction is a budget from the White House that doesn't meet the needs of our warfighters. It's why the Marine Corps requested the two aircraft be replaced in its annual unfunded priorities list, which was submitted to this Committee after the budget release.

The V-22 Osprey has proven itself to be one of the most versatile aircraft in the Pentagon's inventory. Its success in action is a tribute to the men and women in uniform who fly the Osprey, and to the skill of the workforce in Ridley Park and Amarillo that produce it.

Congress, and your respective committees in particular, have reliably demonstrated strong support for the V-22 program. I ask that your committee continue that steadfast approach by restoring two MV-22 airframes in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget. They're a good deal for our taxpayers, they support good-paying jobs, and they're an important tool for our men and women in the field.

Thank you for your consideration.