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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

TESTIMONY OF CONGRESSWOMAN GWEN MOORE ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry,

Thank you for this opportunity to talk about priorities for the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

I represent the 4th Congressional District of Wisconsin which is also home to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing which consists of 10 KC-35 aircraft and associated personnel. I appreciate the hard work that the men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard do to protect their communities, our state, and our nation, no matter how many times they are called upon. Therefore, it is critical that the FY 2020 NDAA provide the necessary resources to ensure that these men and women can do their jobs. I want to particularly express ask you to authorize two projects included in the President budget, along with another funding authorization, that I believe will help the men and women of the 128th ARW do their jobs and ensure increased mission readiness of that critical unit.

Air National Guard, Operations and Maintenance Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization Account

I urge you to meet the President's authorized request in FY 2020 for the Air National Guard, Operations and Maintenance Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization account. Among the projects this request would fund is a long sought after renovation of the Operations Building (Bldg. 522) at the 128th ARW. This project is funded at \$7.8 million in the President's request.

The existing operations building was built in 1970 and is inefficient in space utilization and building systems. Much of the current square footage is unusable and many of the building materials are outdated and inefficient. This is not an isolated story when it comes to the state of critical ANG facilities across the country which is why providing at least the President's request is so vital.

This particular project will completely remodel office and operation space in the outdated operations building, replace the roof, HVAC and electrical systems, and provide backup power generation, as well as a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) for classified workspace and information storage.

According to the Air Force, if this project is not funded, the building systems will continue to deteriorate requiring increased maintenance actions and costs to continue operating. Meanwhile, much of the square footage will remain unsuitable and underutilized, also affecting mission readiness.

Again, I urge you to meet the President's full request for this ANG account so that this, and other important projects across the country can occur.

Additionally, I urge you to provide an increase in funding, beyond the President's request, for the Air National Guard, Operations & Maintenance Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization account. It is my hope that these additional funds would be prioritized for projects that may help Air National Guard units increase access to additional fuel storage at Air National Guard POL Facilities by allowing them to tap national fuel pipelines that may be located nearby (within 2 miles of the ANG facility).

At the 128th ARW, such a project would help provide a secure second delivery method that would ensure the 128th verified strategic missions could continue from home station uninterrupted should the primary method of receiving fuel be disrupted.

Such a move has multiple benefits including increasing the effectiveness and mission readiness of the 128th ARW by allowing them access to millions of additional gallons of fuel storage for a relatively small investment, reduce the threat to fuel supplies that are mission critical, and which may help reduce environmental impact by reducing the number of tanker trucks that have to travel to this facility and enable greater resiliency for execution of State and Federal Air National Guard missions. Additional funding will allow such important projects to move forward, increasing mission readiness at minimal additional costs to the taxpayers.

Defense Logistics Agency, Military Construction

I also urge you to support the President's requested FY 2020 for military construction projects at the Defense Logistics Agency. Again, that request includes \$25.9 million for a long over POL Facilities Replacement at General Mitchell international Airport. This project has been in the ANG future years plan for several years now and is much needed.

This project is needed because the existing facility is one of the oldest operational systems within the U.S. Air Force, much less the Air National Guard. It was built in the 1960's and due to its age, most mechanical and electrical equipment is well beyond their service life and many repair parts are no longer available, which is an issue since this building is vital to the Air Refueling Wing's mission. The deteriorated condition of the fuel equipment is expected to worsen and increase the risk of mission failure. Additionally, the operations area of the building is severely undersized and the facility was not designated to accommodate the current staffing level of 13 simultaneously.

The much needed new facility would provide the 128th ARW with an adequately sized, functionally configured, environmentally compliant, and reliable system to refuel its fleet of 10 KC-135 aircraft and supporting vehicles.

Hostile Environment at the National Capital Consortium's Psychiatry Residency Program

Further, I continue to be concerned about reports of racial and other hostile comments and environment at the National Capital Consortium's Psychiatry Residency Program (PRP). Given the need to increase diversity of this and other medical profession workforces in the military, I hope you agree that we must send a strong message that leadership of this program must not tolerate a hostile environment.

While efforts have been made to address the "undercurrent of discrimination" that the program's ombudsman found a few years ago, much more needs to be done given that a more recent investigation found that hostile comments continue to be made in this program. Therefore, I urge the inclusion of a Sense of Congress that would make clear that:

- Racial, gender, or other forms of discrimination or harassment should not be tolerated within the PRP or any other military health profession training program;
- PRP leadership should maintain a workplace free from unlawful harassment and discrimination by setting the tone that such conduct is not acceptable; ensuring that all such complaints are thoroughly investigated; ensuring that violators are held accountable; and that victims are protected, and not retaliated against,

Inequities in the Military Justice System

Finally, I remained concerned about inequities in the military justice system where racial minorities may receive stricter discipline, including discharge characterization, than those of other groups, even for the same offense. It is critical that the Committee and Congress continue to receive the information needed to determine whether such inequities continue to exist and to explore options to address it.

Therefore, I urge you to include language in the FY 2020 NDAA calling for the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study to determine whether character of discharge and reenlistment codes are being assigned equitably among all members and whether the status of members of the Armed Forces as members of a protected class under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 increases the likelihood of harsher penalties, including other than honorable discharges, for such members.

It is critical that such a report include, at a minimum, the following information covering at least the last ten years in order to provide an opportunity for adequate analysis:

- The character of discharge members receive upon separation from the Armed Forces.
- The types of reenlistment codes members received.
- Any other information the Secretary determines appropriate to understand any disparity among the characters of discharge members of different races receive upon separation from the Armed Forces.
- If the Secretary determines that members of the Armed Forces who come from a protected class under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are more likely to receive a discharge under conditions other than honorable than other members of the Armed Forces—the reasons the Secretary determines why any such disparity exists and whether substantially similar infractions result in consistent conditions of discharge and reenlistment codes.

Again, I thank you for your consideration of these requests.