

Testimony of Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon
House Armed Services Committee Member's Day
May 5, 2021

Chair Smith and Ranking Member Rogers, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today to discuss priorities for the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. I appear today to respectfully request the Committee's continued support for the CH-47F Block II Program.

I proudly represent Pennsylvania's 5th District, which is home to the production facilities of the Army's Chinook helicopter, and many of the hardworking men and women who build the best heavy lift helicopter in the world. The Chinook manufacturing facility is a critical regional economic engine that employs over 4,400 people in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. Across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Chinook program has 36 suppliers, supports approximately 6,000 jobs, and provides an estimated \$1 billion per year in annual economic impact. Nationally, the Chinook program supports more than 20,000 jobs across 38 states and provides our national manufacturing base with an annual economic impact of approximately \$2 billion per year. Additionally, the Chinook is essential for heavy-lift capability for every Active Army Division, 24 states in the Army National Guard, and 2 states in the Army Reserve. The Chinook program represents the best of American manufacturing and deserves our continued support as our nation builds back from the coronavirus pandemic.

While there are future vertical lift modernization programs underway, there is no heavy lift modernization program to replace the critical capability the Chinook provides to the United States Army and 19 of our allies around the world. As you know from your oversight of our Armed Services, the Chinook will remain the heavy lift helicopter for the Army into the 2060s. The F Block II modernization program will allow the Chinook to fly at higher altitudes, fly in hotter temperatures, and lift more weight. By the Army's own analysis, the F Block II program would save the Army more than \$3 billion compared to all modernization alternatives. With the first five CH-47F Block II aircraft authorized by the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, as well as funded in the Fiscal Year 2021 defense appropriations bill, the Block II program is modernization that is happening right now, and the program is on track to start delivering advanced heavy-lift capability to the Army in 2024. Developmental flight testing for the CH-47F Block II continues, and the F Block II has met all key performance parameters. I understand the Army's leadership has finally stated that they will comply with the NDAA and place the first five aircraft on contract this fiscal year. I will be watching closely for that contracting announcement.

We all know the history of the F Block II program. Certified by the Army to Congress less than four years ago as a critical modernization priority, the Army then changed its mind and

abandoned the F Block II program, putting the Chinook at a distinct competitive disadvantage and placing thousands of jobs and advanced heavy-lift capability at risk. The Army simply did not deliver on its commitments to support the Chinook program. It is unwise for the Army to walk away from the Block II program, and that is why it is so important for Congress to follow up on its actions in Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 and continue its support for the program.

For Fiscal Year 2022, I ask that you support an additional \$140.9 million to procure the second five CH-47F Block II Low Rate Initial Production aircraft, an additional \$52.2 million in Advanced Procurement to procure nine CH-47F Block II aircraft in Fiscal Year 2023, an additional \$28.7 million in RDTE funding for F Block II development, and directive report language for the Army to execute the CH-47F Block II modernization program.

In closing, the Chinook is critical to the Army, my district, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and, as you can see from the bipartisan Member letter that I led with Congressman Mike Bost, the Chinook is important for workers and service members across the nation. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and the entire Committee, thank you for your strong support for, and commitment to, the CH-47F Block II program, and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.