

KURT SCHRADER
FIFTH DISTRICT, OREGON
SCHRADER.HOUSE.GOV

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND TECHNOLOGY

The 117th Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

2431 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
202-225-5711
FAX: 202-225-5699

530 CENTER STREET NE
SUITE 415
SALEM, OR 97301
503-588-9100
FAX: 503-588-5517

621 HIGH STREET
OREGON CITY, OR 97045
503-557-1324
FAX: 503-557-1981

May 5, 2021

Dear Chairman Adam Smith and Ranking Member Mike Rogers,

Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and the other members of the committee for this opportunity to share some of my priorities as you begin your work on this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

My focus while serving in Congress has always been about putting our country on a better financial footing. I have supported efforts that invested in our country but always looking for ways to not saddle future Americans with the cost. We all know that one of the areas ripe with opportunity for streamlining and modernization is the Pentagon budget. There are countless reports and white papers outlining huge areas of potential cost savings. This could be merging redundant offices, rethinking their IT departments, updating the acquisition process for new technologies, and so many more. Now I haven't supported every NDAA during my time, but I have been proud of the work this committee has done over the past few years to rethink defense spending without sacrificing readiness capabilities. I want to see the committee continue this bipartisan work to effectively use the large amounts of taxpayer dollars that go towards our defense.

In that same vein, I was impressed with the President's skinny budget and the elimination of the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund. This program has endured for far too long and been used contrary to its original purpose far too often. I hope that the committee will make this necessary change and get rid of it this year or at the very least begin a transition process.

A more parochial concern for me, and I don't want to open any old wounds here, but I want the committee to know the impact that Tricare changes have had on my constituents. My district is lucky to have a large population of veterans. But the changes made to Tricare have been completely unfair to them just because they happen to live in a state without an active military base. They bear the brunt of increased costs without any thought of relief. I don't have any solutions on this topic, but I want to offer my support to work with you all to find a way forward that doesn't penalize my constituents.

Let me end my statement by thanking the committee and your staff for working with me on my amendments over the past few years to help educate service members about their financial rights while serving. This issue came to my attention when I read an article in a local paper about a veteran fighting against an illegal foreclosure that occurred while he was actively serving. Since that time, I developed many different pieces of legislation to get to the root of this problem to protect our service members. The fear of dealing with financial matters should not be on their minds while actively serving our country in a theater of war. That's why Congress passed SCRA (pronounced like sick-ra) to give these men and women peace of mind. The work that your staff has provided helped to hone these amendments and to get them included during conference negotiations with our Senate colleagues.

I want to thank you again Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers for this opportunity to brief the committee. I wish you all nothing but good luck as you craft the FY22 NDAA. I hope that this year's version continues the bipartisan tradition that we have seen for the last 60 years.

Sincerely,



KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress