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RICK LARSEN  
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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4702

RANKING MEMBER  
COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

April 11, 2024

Dear Chair Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

As a former 20-year member of this Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on priorities impacting Washington state's 2nd Congressional District and the United States' national security.

### **Support Jet Noise Reduction Efforts**

In communities surrounding military installations, jet noise from flight operations is a frequent concern. In previous NDAAs, I have secured funding for jet noise reduction, and I have supported legislation to expand sound monitoring, reduce engine noise in private homes and reduce future training flights - all while maintaining training standards. In my district, the sailors at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island are working to reduce the impact of flight operations on surrounding communities. I request this Committee continues to support jet noise reduction research and requirements for new military aircraft.

### **Cryopreservation Pilot Program**

America's women and men in uniform sacrifice greatly. They should not have to sacrifice their dreams of having a family. I am pleased that the Department of Defense recently announced it is expanding fertility treatments for more veterans. However, Congress must do more to help veterans and servicemembers who struggle with having children build a family. Establishing a pilot program to cryopreserve gametes prior to training and deployments would enable servicemembers to choose to have a family should a dramatic injury occur. I ask that all members support this effort to help veterans and servicemembers start a family.

### **Constellation (FFG-62) Class Frigate**

The Navy's new Constellation Class Frigates, crucial in addressing the challenges posed by the pacing threat in the Pacific, play a pivotal role in safeguarding global trade routes. Regrettably, the Navy has announced a potential 3-year delay in the delivery of the frigate, a delay that could have significant implications due to lead ship problems, supply chain issues, and a shortage of skilled workers. Naval Station Everett preparing to homeport 12 frigates, any delay in the delivery schedule significantly affects the cost of preparations and crew staffing required to support the frigates at the base. I ask the committee to continue funding the construction of the Constellation Class Frigates and conduct oversight over the Navy to ensure it addresses the problems with the lead ship.

### **AI Education for Servicemembers**

The world has already seen the effect artificial intelligence (AI) can have with OpenAI's ChatGPT and the rise of deepfakes. To prepare for future wars, to improve administrative efficiency and promote the ethical use of AI, junior officers and enlisted ranks need to have access to this AI education. The DoD should encourage its servicemembers to use AI to solve problems and create efficiency, not solely to counter the "kill chain." I request the Committee require the DoD to establish an AI education program for all ranks, officers and enlisted, to ensure all servicemembers understand the concepts and ethics of AI.

### **NATO Innovation Fund**

As a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and a supporter of federal investment in emerging technology, I have long supported the NATO Innovation Fund (NIF). The NIF directly invests \$1 billion in start-ups to improve advancements and interoperability in artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, energy & propulsion, manufacturing, and space. Unless the United States is authorized to participate in the NIF, U.S. companies will remain barred from accessing the \$1 billion of existing funds raised by NATO allies. I ask the Committee to support emerging technology and NATO by authorizing the U.S. to participate in the NIF.

### **IT Modernization in the Military**

During the NDAA markup, committee members will vote digitally on amendments and the final passage of the FY25 NDAA. In stark contrast, servicemembers are still burdened with archaic paperwork, having to fill out stacks of forms to reenlist, accept orders, request duty assignments, conduct courts-martial, and check into a new unit. Existing DoD digital systems are not designed to process these tasks and remain isolated from each other, hindering the sharing of data and information that would improve workflow and records management for servicemembers. Without modern IT systems, the potential of AI to significantly enhance military operations and improve the quality of life for our servicemembers remains untapped. By investing in IT modernization, Congress can pave the way for a future where administrative tasks are streamlined, allowing servicemembers to focus on their core duties. I ask the Committee to include a provision in the NDAA authorizing funds for IT modernization for the military to improve administrative tasks and prepare for AI applications in non-battlefield environments.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my priorities for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen

U.S. Representative

Washington State, Second District