

Rep. Escobar, Defense Appropriations

Thank you, Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Calvert, for hosting this Member Day hearing.

Like the rest of you, I am alarmed with how far ahead China is when it comes to investing in research and development and the new technologies they are developing for their defense capabilities. As an institution, I believe we need to heed the advice of the Department of Defense when they tell us they need to retire certain legacy systems in order to invest that funding and manpower in developing the next generation of weapons, aircraft, and more. At the end of the day, we can continue to argue over the topline number of the defense budget all we want, but if we are not committed to allocating funding appropriately and strategically, we will struggle with the pacing challenge of China.

I would like to use my time today to discuss three requests I have made for the Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Appropriations bill. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have made these same

requests for the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA and hope to see them reflected both in the NDAA and this subcommittee's final bill.

The first request is a \$10 million increase to the Army RDTE Future Vertical Lift Advanced Technology account for the purposes of additive manufacturing research for vertical lift. As the Department of Defense continues to look towards solutions for future vertical lift, additive manufacturing offers an affordable and efficient option for constructing advanced aircraft structure and the many critical platforms that will be involved. Because future vertical lift and advanced manufacturing are two lines of effort for the Army's modernization strategy, allocating funding for this would support two priorities for the Army and permit the Department to continue to see the full potential of additive manufacturing.

My second request is a \$10 million increase for the Army RDTE Long Range Precision Fires Technology for the purposes of low-cost missile technology development. As we have seen from the war raging in Ukraine, the Ukrainians have seen major success in large part due to

missile like the Javelin. However, the cost of just one of these systems can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars. I am incredibly supportive of ensuring Ukraine has the tools they need to counter the Russian invasion and allocating funding to backfill our own missile system supplies, but we also need to find alternatives to broaden our existing arsenal with cost-effective solutions. The allocation of this funding would allow the Department to engage with institutions of higher education and small to medium manufacturers to provide innovative answers to lowering the cost of manufacturing missiles

Finally, my last request is related to the Space Force University Partnership Program. I would like to thank the committee for allotting \$10 million to this program in the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus. As you all may know, this endeavor is a vital piece of Space Force's mission of maintaining a robust presence in the space domain. Through this program, Space Force is establishing strategic partnerships with nationally-recognized universities to enhance research opportunities and develop a pipeline of top-tier, diverse talent from these institutions to

Space Force. The current group of universities selected for this program have some of the best STEM and research programs in the country and include HBCUs, HSIs, other MSIs, and universities with robust first-generation student populations. Allocating \$20 million to this program for Fiscal Year 2023 will grant the Space Force to continue expanding its outreach to these institutions and begin funding the research they need to remain competitive with our adversaries.

Thank you to the subcommittee for this opportunity and consideration of my requests.