

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2017

The Honorable John Carter, Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal Allard:

In his first address to a Joint Session of Congress, President Trump enumerated the existential threats posed by foreign criminals and illegal drugs entering the United States, as well as his commitment to rebuild the military. On the same day, the Associated Press reported details on proposed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cuts to the U.S. Coast Guard in order to provide funding support to strengthen border security.

OMB's financial outline for the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard in particular is cause for serious alarm. The U.S. Coast Guard is a branch of the U.S. military—a fact that appears to have been discounted by OMB, perhaps because of the Coast Guard's unique position as the only Armed Service outside the Department of Defense. Additionally, its counter narcotics mission has a direct impact on border security and law enforcement. In fact, the U.S. Coast Guard interdicts more cocaine at sea than what is interdicted at ports of entry and among all other elements of domestic law enforcement combined. Given the Administration's efforts to strengthen our southern land border, it's likely that the flow of illegal drugs and immigrants offshore will only increase. In this respect, the Coast Guard should see a sizable budget increase to meet the President's goal of eliminating the flood of illegal drugs.

Of particular note is the proposed cancellation of a "roughly \$500 million new ship," which presumably is the ninth National Security Cutter currently under construction in a U. S. shipyard. The termination of this contract is especially disconcerting when considered alongside

the operational successes these assets have demonstrated, not to mention the hundreds of good American jobs and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that would be lost.

The concern with OMB's financial outline is that it severely discounts the value and effectiveness of the U.S. Coast Guard in drug interdiction and maritime security, and its standing as an Armed Service. Further, there appears to be a bias against the Coast Guard by career bureaucrats that threatens to undermine the Coast Guard mission and, whether intended or not, to degrade its ability to effectively conduct its mission. The U. S. Coast Guard is an Armed Force at all times, operating both overseas and domestically to ensure America's national security. They are facing similar readiness challenges as their Department of Defense counterparts, and must be included in the Administration's effort to rebuild the Armed Forces.

Given the Coast Guard's unique role among its service counterparts, it is ever more imperative that any considerations for additional funding for the U.S. military and border security do not overlook the significance and critical needs of the Coast Guard. Our recommendation is that OMB's financial outline, specific to the Coast Guard, be rejected on the grounds that, if implemented, it would serve to the detriment of U.S. national security and create exposures that will most certainly be exploited by transnational criminal networks and other dangerous actors.

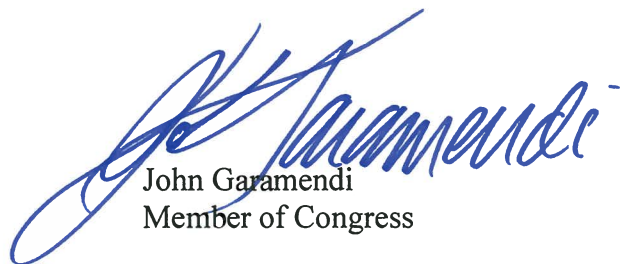
It's nonsensical to pursue a policy of rebuilding the Armed Forces while proposing large reductions to the U.S. Coast Guard budget. Without question, OMB's proposed cut targeting the Coast Guard directly contradicts the President's stated goals and should be dismissed.

The U.S. Coast Guard has, for years, operated under the realities of severe budget limitations. Preserving and strengthening America's security interests and protecting American jobs demand a fully funded U.S. Coast Guard.

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Martha McSally
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress


Don Young
Member of Congress


Joe Courtney
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Daniel M. Donovan, Jr
Member of Congress

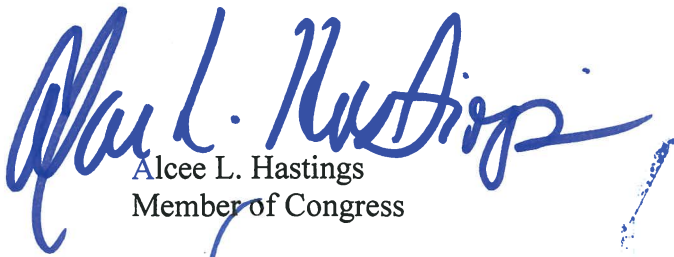

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

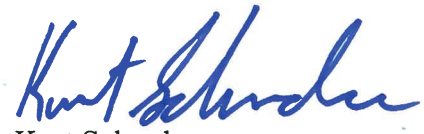

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Member of Congress


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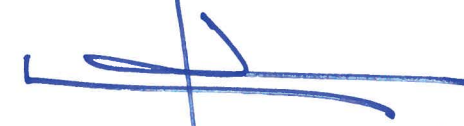

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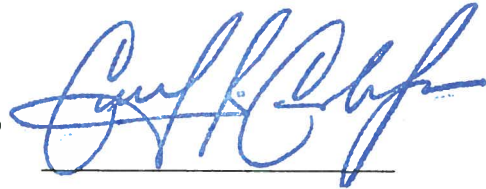
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no-6



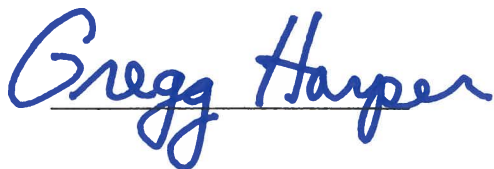
Carl H. Chaffetz



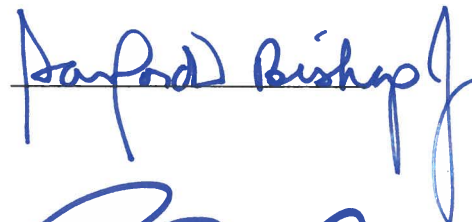
Maclean J. Burchette



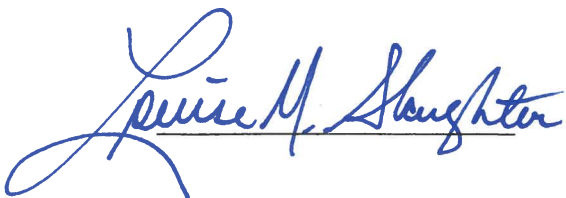
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