

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Defense appropriations bill, we request your strong bipartisan support for the Virginia-class attack submarine and the Columbia-class sea-based deterrence submarine.

***Virginia-class Submarine***

We are deeply concerned with the proposal to procure just one Virginia-class submarine in the President's proposed FY 2021 budget. In recent years, Congress has heard consistent and alarming testimony about the growing capabilities and increased undersea activity of competitors like Russia and China. For example, just last month Vice Adm. Andrew "Woody" Lewis, commander of U.S. Second Fleet, noted that he is seeing an *"ever-increasing number of Russian submarines"* deploying to the Atlantic. Admiral Phillip Davidson, commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, told Congress last March that *"My day-to-day [submarine] requirement is met by slightly over 50 percent of what I've asked for."*

Despite these challenges, attack submarine capabilities remain one of our most distinct national security advantages. We agree with Defense Secretary Mark Esper when he said that *"[w]e have to maintain that overmatch, and that means we have to continue to grow the fleet and build capabilities into each version."*

Unfortunately, our attack submarine fleet is on track to decline to just 42 boats in 2027 – a nearly 20 percent reduction from current levels. In fact under current plans, the attack submarine force will face the deepest and most prolonged shortfall below requirements of any ship type over the next thirty years. As Admiral John Richardson, then-Chief of Naval Operations, told Congress last year, *"with respect to our greatest gap between the war fighting requirement and current inventory, there's no greater need than the attack submarine fleet...it's a wide gap and it's getting wider. So, every single submarine counts against closing that gap."*

This is why Congress has strongly supported and defended the consistent two-a-year build rate of Virginia-class attack submarines. Congress has already allocated more than \$1.1 billion to support a second FY 2021 submarine, including \$200 million specifically authorized and

appropriated last year on a bipartisan basis to support sustainment of the two-a-year build rate in FY 2021. Further, an estimated 300 contracts have already been awarded to suppliers in the nation-wide industrial base in support of the submarine that was removed from the President's FY 2021 budget.

The proposal to request one attack submarine is contrary to the National Defense Strategy, the needs of our combatant commanders, and a decade of Congressional action in support of a steady two-a-year build rate to support our national security and ensure stability in the industrial base. Of note, the Navy recently ranked the restoration of the second 2021 Virginia-class submarine as its top unfunded requirement. **To that end, we respectfully request your strong support for two Virginia-class submarines in FY 2021.**

### ***Columbia-class Submarine***

The replacement for the Ohio-class submarine program, which has faithfully deterred our adversaries for over 40 years, represents a critical leg of our nation's nuclear triad and will carry nearly 70 percent of the nation's deployed nuclear arsenal. This program is the Navy's number one acquisition priority and must maintain its aggressive schedule to continue to meet the nation's strategic deterrence goals. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review reaffirmed the central role that our sea-based deterrent will play in the coming decades.

The President's FY 2021 budget requests funding to begin construction of the first boat of our Navy's Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine program. This milestone represents the beginning of a once-in-a-generation commitment to recapitalizing our sea-based strategic deterrent. Congress has provided strong support for the Columbia-class program in recent years, including innovative new authorities to ensure the efficient use of taxpayer dollars and stability in the industrial base. As a result, at the start of construction the Columbia-class program will have reached over 80 percent design completion, compared to just two percent at the same stage of the Ohio-class program.

Strong Congressional support for the program at this milestone is critical to ensuring that the Navy, the shipbuilders, and the industrial base have the support they need to ensure success in this central part of our nation's strategic deterrence. **To this end, we urge your full support for the President's budget request for the Columbia-class program.**

Sincerely,



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



JAMES R. LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress



ROB WITTMAN  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

**The Fiscal Year 2021 Support Letter for the Navy's Submarine Programs is sent on behalf of the following Members of the United States House of Representatives:**

James R. Baird  
Jim Banks  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Brendan F. Boyle  
Anthony Brindisi  
Anthony G. Brown  
Julia Brownley  
Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Bradley Byrne  
Salud O. Carbajal  
Tony Cárdenas  
André Carson  
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Steve Chabot  
David N. Cicilline  
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Ben Cline  
Paul Cook  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Joe Cunningham  
Susan A. Davis  
Madeleine Dean  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Suzan DelBene  
Theodore E. Deutch  
Mike Doyle  
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Bill Flores  
Bill Foster  
Mike Gallagher  
Ruben Gallego  
John Garamendi  
Jared Golden  
Jimmy Gomez  
Anthony Gonzalez  
H. Morgan Griffith  
Vicky Hartzler  
Alcee L. Hastings

Jahana Hayes  
Denny Heck  
Jody Hice  
Jim Himes  
Steven Horsford  
Chrissy Houlahan  
Bill Johnson  
John Joyce, M.D.  
John Katko  
Trent Kelly  
William R. Keating  
Andy Kim  
Peter T. King  
Adam Kinzinger  
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Ann McLane Kuster  
Conor Lamb  
John B. Larson  
Susie Lee  
Alan Lowenthal  
Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Elaine G. Luria  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Tom Malinowski  
Lucy McBath  
A. Donald McEachin  
James P. McGovern  
Daniel P. Meuser  
Carol D. Miller  
Paul Mitchell  
Richard E. Neal  
Donald Norcross  
Tom O'Halleran  
Jimmy Panetta  
Chris Pappas  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Ed Perlmutter  
Scott Peters

Dean Phillips  
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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
David P. Roe, M.D.  
Francis Rooney  
Harley Rouda  
Mary Gay Scanlon  
Abigail D. Spanberger  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Mikie Sherrill  
Albio Sires  
Elise Stefanik  
Steve Stivers  
Thomas R. Suozzi  
Bennie G. Thompson  
Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
Paul D. Tonko  
Lori Trahan  
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Joe Wilson  
Ron Wright  
Jennifer Wexton  
John Yarmuth