

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2502

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
H-405, The United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our Nation's most pressing national security matters. We ask that you take into consideration the recent demands placed on Naval tactical aviation as you consider the President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2017.

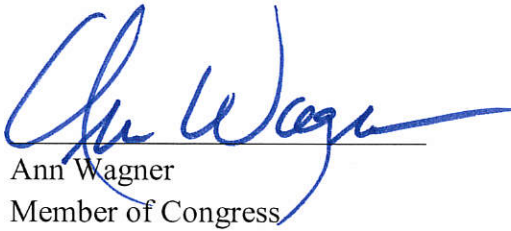
The Fiscal Year 2017 budget highlights the growing stresses on and demands for United States Navy tactical aviation. Ongoing wartime operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have greatly increased the operational tempo of our tactical aircraft, particularly that of our carrier-based F/A-18E/F Super Hornet fleet. In this budget, the Navy took steps to address its shortage of operational aircraft – commonly referred to as the tactical aviation shortfall. Specifically, the budget request includes two F/A-18E/F Super Hornets in the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) to replace training and operational losses. Also, the Navy included funding to extend the service life of older, legacy Hornet aircraft to help address the inventory that is perpetually “out of reporting” due to maintenance and high flight hours.

These actions taken to address the tactical aviation shortfall are not enough. That is why the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) has provided Congress with an “unfunded requirement” request for 14 additional Super Hornets above the President's Budget. Last year, the previous CNO testified to a shortfall of 36 Super Hornet aircraft, and that shortfall still remains. Given the critical capability that the Super Hornet provides for ongoing wartime operations, any shortfall is dangerous to the Navy's ability to project force throughout the world.

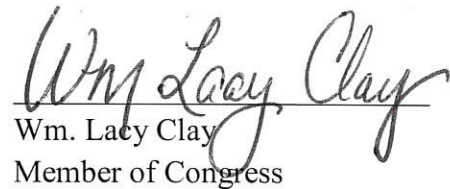
In years past, your committees have been incredibly responsive to the warfighter's most pressing needs. The Navy's budget and its unfunded requirement request demonstrate how important tactical aviation is to its mission, and the Super Hornet is providing that critical capability today at the most affordable cost. We ask that you add 14 F/A-18E/F Super Hornets to the President's Budget to address the tactical aviation shortfall and the warfighter's needs.

We look forward to working with you throughout the year on this issue. Thank you for consideration of our request.

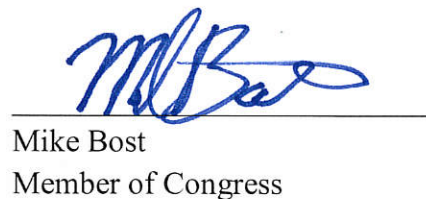
Sincerely,



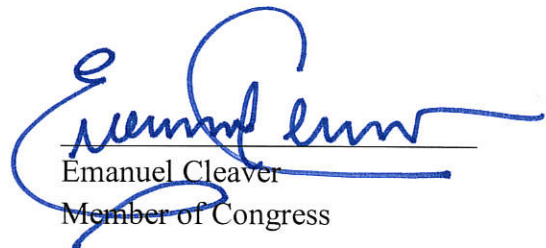
Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress



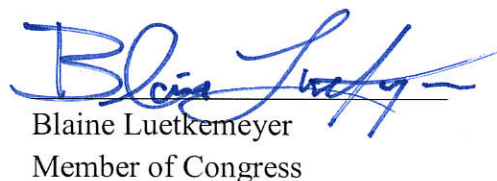
Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress



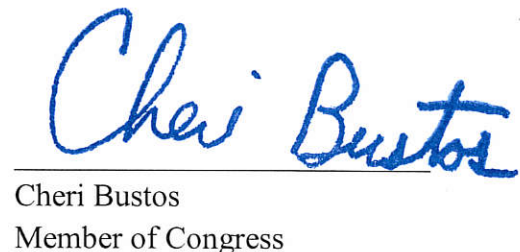
Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress



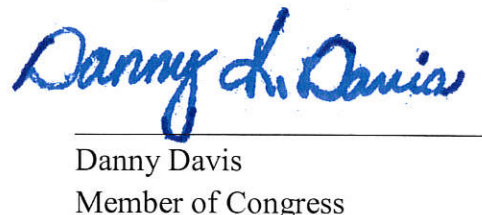
Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



Danny Davis  
Member of Congress



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Sam Graves  
Member of Congress



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Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress




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Jason Smith  
Member of Congress



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Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



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Billy Long  
Member of Congress