

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
115 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Durbin:

Recent budget caps and numerous continuing resolutions have placed a considerable strain on the Department of Defense. The recent National Security and Defense Strategies, Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, and the FY19 President's Budget Request are significant steps in the right direction to restore readiness, eliminate maintenance backlogs, and modernize equipment for the Department of Defense.

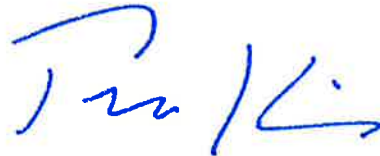
In an effort to ensure that the Department can responsibly allocate and obligate Fiscal Year 2018 funds with only half of the fiscal year remaining, we urge Congress to provide the Department with greater spending flexibility for the remainder of this fiscal year. As such, we request that the Appropriations Committee consider exempting the Department of Defense from statutory limitations on obligating funds in FY18. With proper congressional oversight, two different exceptions could help alleviate pressure for the Department. An exception to policy for the "80/20 Rule" or the 1-year limitation for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) accounts could give much needed flexibility to the Department.

Either of these two exceptions will ensure that service secretaries will have the flexibility to obligate funds in an efficient manner to restore readiness and execute the National Security and Defense Strategy.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



David Perdue
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Michael Rounds
United States Senator