

July 25, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

As your body moves to consider FY19 Department of Defense appropriations and with discussion of next year's National Defense Authorization Act already on the horizon, the undersigned organizations write to express our shared hope that lawmakers pursue the kind of lasting reforms that can save taxpayer dollars and keep America safe.

The undersigned organizations represent the interests of millions of Americans nationwide who are concerned about rising spending and debt. In a time of record deficits and mandatory programs that continue to strain the budget, it is critical to ensure that every dollar allocated to Defense, the largest portion of discretionary spending, is well-spent.

Specifically, we urge you to support the following principles:

- **Support Adaptable Programs & Leverage Open Architecture**

Particularly as the Department of Defense continues its digital transition, we strongly urge you to avoid outdated, analog-based programs that are narrowly tailored to one threat or scenario. Recent experience with North Korea should highlight the fact that geopolitical dynamics can change rapidly, and taxpayers and troops alike deserve systems that can be updated quickly and inexpensively to keep pace with emerging threats. Taxpayers deserve the best possible value from Defense Department IT contracts, which should stress to the greatest degree possible open competition, architecture flexibility and reprogramming ability, and capacity for future innovation. Congress can and should facilitate this culture at the Pentagon.

- **Pursue Clear Strategy and Requirements on the Front End**

Too often, programs fall behind schedule and experience cost overruns based on ambiguous, vaguely stated, and changing requirements during the development phase. Especially since some change can be expected to occur naturally over the lifetime of any program, we urge you to be as judicious with taxpayer dollars as possible, seeking to fund programs only when the agency has clearly defined the program requirements.



- **Prioritize Long-Term Costs and Savings**

We urge you to consider all new acquisitions under a realistic budget window and account both for immediate and sustainment costs as well as emerging costs as systems age out and need to be replaced.

While some savings can be achieved only with up-front costs for modernization and updates, the overall fiscal impact should always be considered.

Our organizations and the millions of Americans we represent may not agree on all issues, but together, we believe that keeping America safe requires strong finances. We believe that avoiding fewer proprietary systems and preferential earmarks are commonsense steps in that direction. It is vital that we invest in the technologies of the future and focus on keeping citizens safe while guarding the pocketbooks of the American taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Reduce Spending
Center for Freedom and Prosperity
FreedomWorks
National Taxpayers Union
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance