

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 14, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of War for Industrial Base
Policy
3011 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Assistant Secretary Cadenazzi:

We write in support of the Department's efforts to modernize the Joint Force for future conflict and to field the capabilities necessary to meet evolving threats. We recognize that transformation requires difficult tradeoffs, and we support investments that improve deterrence, survivability, and warfighting advantage in the future fight. At the same time, we urge careful consideration of the strategic implications that significant reductions in Army aviation procurement and force structure may have for the defense industrial base, the organic industrial base, production capacity, and long-term military capability.

The industrial and organic base supporting Army rotary-wing aviation represents a critical national security asset that extends far beyond individual platforms. It includes prime manufacturers and a broad network of suppliers distributed across the country that sustain advanced manufacturing capabilities, skilled labor, engineering expertise, and surge production capacity, including our military's covered depots. Once eroded, these capabilities may be costly, time-consuming, or in some cases impossible to rapidly regenerate.

These considerations take on heightened importance as the National Defense Strategy emphasizes resilient supply chains, expanded defense production capacity, and the ability to sustain and surge production in a protracted conflict. At a time when the Department is seeking to strengthen the defense industrial base, reductions that destabilize critical aviation production lines or supplier networks may introduce strategic risk and reduce mobilization resilience in ways that warrant careful scrutiny. This logic may also extend to allied and partner confidence, as U.S. procurement decisions can influence foreign demand for shared platforms and, in turn, affect industrial capacity that supports interoperability and coalition readiness.

These concerns are reinforced by the continued operational relevance of Army rotary-wing aviation in both contingency operations and domestic response missions, including medical evacuation, logistics, disaster response, and support to civil authorities. Preserving the industrial and manufacturing capacity that supports these ongoing mission requirements remains an important consideration alongside longer-term modernization objectives.

We are also concerned that procurement reductions undertaken in pursuit of near-term restructuring could create downstream modernization risks. In some cases, preserving minimum sustaining production rates, warm production lines, and a healthy supplier base may help enable future modernization by retaining the workforce, engineering base, and manufacturing capacity needed to support upgrades, next-generation systems, and mobilization requirements. Premature erosion of defense production capacity can itself become a modernization risk. It may reduce mobilization resilience, weaken supplier viability, and constrain future scaling options.

We recognize the Department must balance legacy capacity with emerging capability, and we do not suggest modernization efforts should be delayed. Rather, we urge that force design decisions fully

account for industrial-base resilience, defense production capacity, and the risks associated with losing critical rotary-wing manufacturing capability before replacement capabilities are sufficiently mature or fielded at scale.

Accordingly, we request a briefing and a written report to Congress within 90 days addressing:

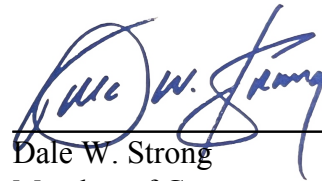
1. The Department's evaluation of the impacts of planned Army aviation procurement reductions on the defense industrial base, including supplier viability, warm production lines, and surge production capacity;
2. Steps being considered to mitigate potential losses in critical production and sustainment capabilities;
3. How the Department is assessing whether minimum sustaining production rates may be necessary to preserve strategic industrial capacity while modernization proceeds; and
4. How these decisions align with broader National Defense Strategy priorities related to industrial resilience and mobilization readiness, including any actions the Department may consider necessary to mitigate identified industrial-base risks.

We appreciate your leadership and support the Department's efforts to modernize for future conflict. Our objective is to ensure those efforts also preserve the industrial foundations and production capacity on which long-term military advantage depends, and we look forward to reviewing the Department's assessment and continuing engagement on these issues.

Sincerely,



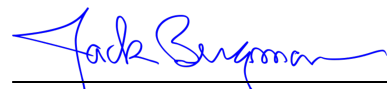
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



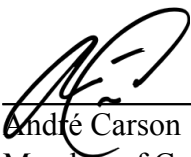
Dale W. Strong
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Robert B. Aderholt
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Jack Bergman
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André Carson
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John R. Carter
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Ed Case

Ed Case
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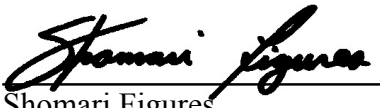
Michael Cloud
Member of Congress



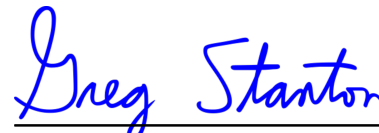
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



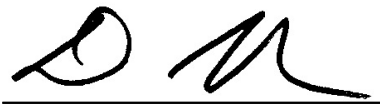
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Shomari Figures
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Dave Min
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Thomas R. Suozzi
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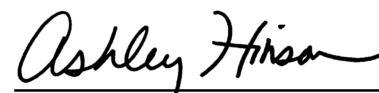
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Chrissy Houlihan
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Ashley Hinson
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Trent Kelly
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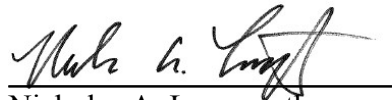
Andrew R. Garbarino
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Jake Ellzey
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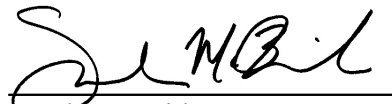
Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



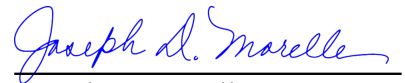
Nicholas A. Langworthy
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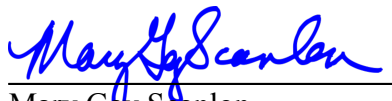
Brian K. Fitzpatrick
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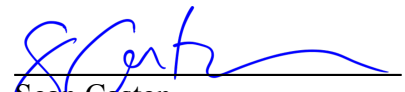
Sarah McBride
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Joseph D. Morelle
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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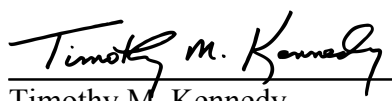
Sean Casten
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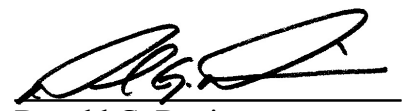
Derek T. Tran
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George Whitesides
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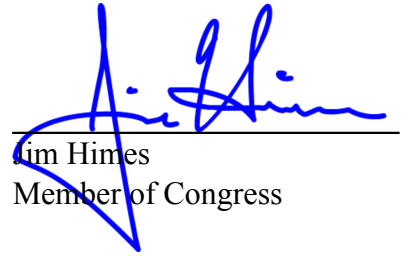
Timothy M. Kennedy
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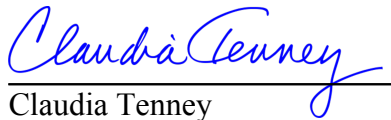
Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



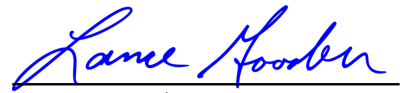
Barry Moore
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



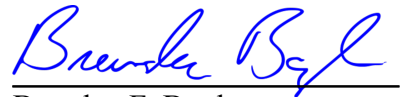
Claudia Tenney
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Lance Gooden
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