

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis,

As you continue preparation of the fiscal year 2019 Budget Request for the Department of Defense, we are writing to express our interest in a dual procurement of Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers in the upcoming fiscal year.

Over the last several months, both the Department of the Navy and industry have conducted analysis to determine the feasibility of dual procurement of CVN 80 (the future USS Enterprise) and the yet to be named CVN 81. We understand that initial cost savings estimates of \$2.5 billion could be attained from a dual ship procurement when compared to single ship procurement with no additional future funding required beyond current Navy plans. We applaud the Department's willingness to examine smarter and better acquisition approaches that serve the interests of both our warfighters and taxpayers. Accordingly, if the Department of Defense concludes that these savings are attainable, we encourage the Navy to seek appropriate authorities to execute this dual procurement approach in the fiscal year 2019 budget request.

In addition to the potential cost savings, a dual procurement of aircraft carriers would enable the Department of the Navy to reach and maintain a fleet of twelve aircraft carriers more quickly than current plans. Our nation's carrier fleet is deployed worldwide and is extremely busy, with three of eleven carriers deployed and as many as seven carriers underway in recent weeks. Dual procurement of aircraft carriers will enable the Navy to better meet future combatant commander requests for aircraft carrier presence worldwide.

Finally, a dual procurement of aircraft carriers would send a strong signal to the shipbuilding industrial base about our national resolve to reach a 350+ ship fleet. With the massive consolidation of the shipbuilding industrial base over the last 25 years, the approximately 3000 remaining aircraft carrier suppliers nationwide will benefit greatly from the predictability and stability of the workload. Furthermore, we expect this approach will enable shipbuilding suppliers to create efficiencies and invest in their own businesses and therefore benefit other Navy shipbuilding programs as well.

In closing, given the potential savings available to the taxpayer, the benefit to our Navy from additional aircraft carrier force structure, and the predictability and stability to the shipbuilding industrial base, we believe the dual procurement of Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers in fiscal year 2019 should be considered. Therefore, we urge the Department to conclude its analysis of potential savings and, if validated, request all applicable authorities in the

upcoming budget request for dual aircraft carrier procurement. Thank you for your consideration and your service to our country.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott



Bradley Byrne



Joe Courtney



Michael K. Conaway



Adam Smith



Michael R. Turner



Joe Wilson



Mike Rogers



Vicky Hartzler



Elise Stefanik



Mike Coffman




Jim Langevin



Madeleine Z. Bordallo


Jim Cooper

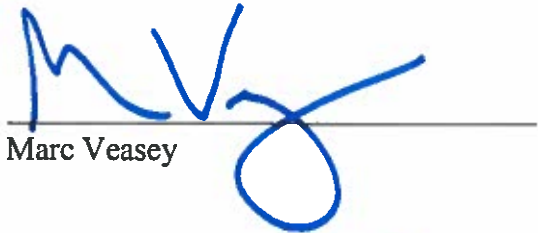

Seth Moulton

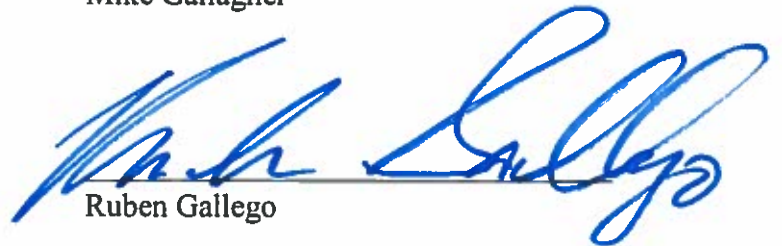

Duncan Hunter


Walter B. Jones


Donald Norcross

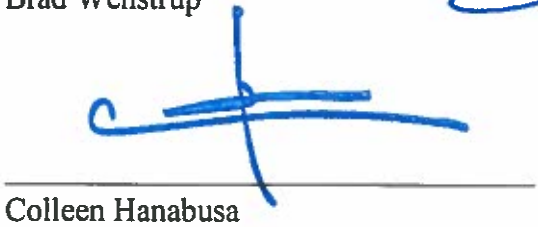

Mike Gallagher


Marc Veasey

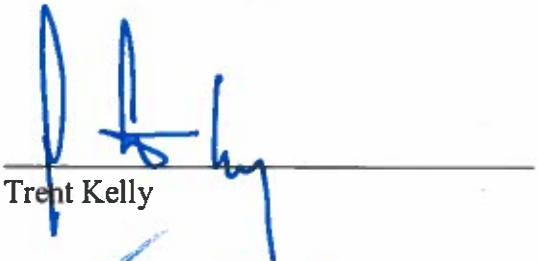

Ruben Gallego

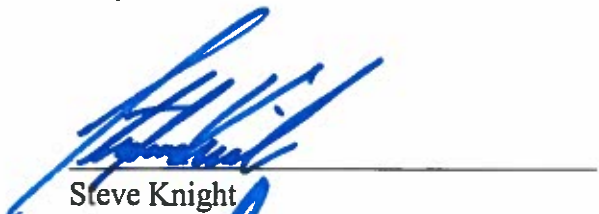

Brad Wenstrup


Rick Larsen

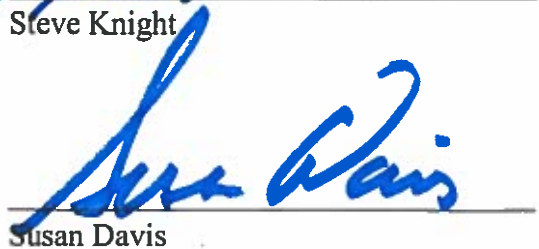

Colleen Hanabusa


Ralph Abraham


Trent Kelly


Steve Knight


Tom O'Halleran


Susan Davis

Doug Lamborn

Doug Lamborn

Salud O. Carbajal

Salud O. Carbajal

Bill Shuster

Bill Shuster

Jimmy Panetta

Jimmy Panetta

Robert Brady

Robert Brady

Austin Scott

Austin Scott

Liz Cheney

Liz Cheney

Stephanie Murphy

Stephanie Murphy

Thomas R. Suozzi

Thomas R. Suozzi

Anthony Brown

Anthony Brown

Scott Taylor

Scott Taylor

Bob Goodlatte

Bob Goodlatte

Donald S. Beyer Jr.

Donald S. Beyer Jr.

Dave Brat

Dave Brat

Tom Garrett

Tom Garrett

H. Morgan Griffith

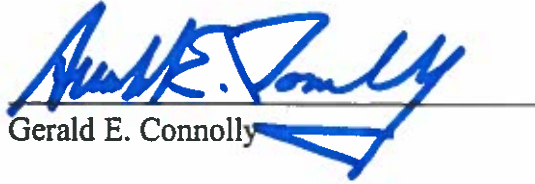
H. Morgan Griffith



Barbara Comstock



A. Donald McEachin



Gerald E. Connolly



Steve Chabot



David G. Valadao



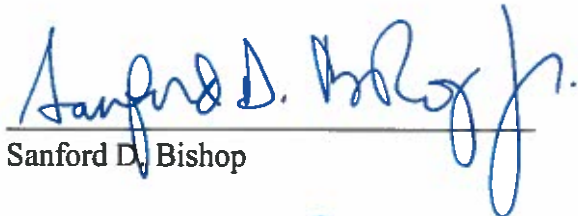
John Rutherford



Scott Peters



Bob Gibbs



Sanford D. Bishop



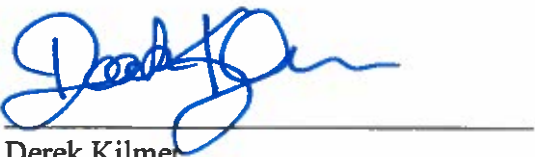
Peter King



Ann Wagner



Luke Messer



Derek Kilmer



Marcy Kaptur



Mario Diaz-Balart



Sam Johnson

Ryan Costello

Ryan Costello

Jacky Rosen

Jacky Rosen

John Culberson

John Culberson

Ed Royce

Ed Royce

Al Lawson

Al Lawson

Tom Cole

Tom Cole

Jackie Walorski

Jackie Walorski

John Larson

John Larson

Gregory W. Meeks

Gregory W. Meeks

Richard E. Neal

Richard E. Neal

Denny Heck

Denny Heck

Hank Johnson

Hank Johnson

Eric Swalwell

Eric Swalwell

Martha Roby

Martha Roby

David P. Joyce

David P. Joyce

Bill Flores

Bill Flores



Adam Kinzinger



Richard Hudson



Rosa L. DeLauro



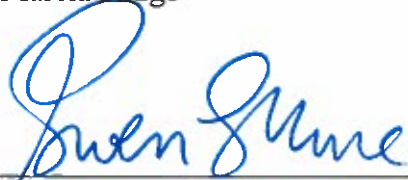
Clay Higgins



Marcia Fudge



Joyce Beatty



Gwen Moore



Dave Reichert



Daniel Lipinski



Elizabeth H. Esty



Brendan F. Boyle



Pete Olson



Tim Ryan



Mike Kelly

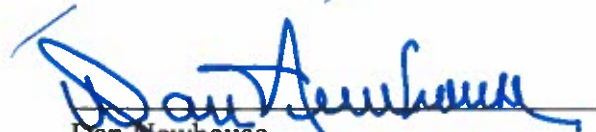


Keith J. Rothfus



Rick Crawford


Suzan K. DelBene


Dan Newhouse


David B. McKinley, P.E.


John Carter


Lloyd Smucker


Ed Perlmutter


Evan Jenkins


Brian Babin


Rob Woodall


Andy Harris, M.D.


Dina Titus


James A. Himes


Juan Vargas


Karen Handel


Kyrsten Sinema


Steve Stivers



Glenn Thompson



Charlie Crist



Bennie G. Thompson



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter



Sean Patrick Maloney



Brian Fitzpatrick



Paul D. Tonko



Cathy McMorris Rodgers



Jim Banks



Frank LoBiondo



G. K. Butterfield



Garret Graves



Darrell E. Issa



Jaime Herrera Beutler



Pramila Jayapal



Ralph Norman


Tim Walz


Steven M. Palazzo


Gregg Harper


Pete Aguilar


Lucille Roybal-Allard

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 14, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis,

As you continue preparation of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request for the Department of Defense, we write to express our support for the block buy of *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carriers. It is our understanding that the Navy and industry have been evaluating the feasibility of block-buy for CVN-80 and CVN-81, as well as the potential cost savings from such a procurement strategy. We applaud the Department of Defense's efforts to examine smarter and more efficient acquisition approaches and would actively support the Department's pursuit of a block buy of Ford-class aircraft carriers in Fiscal Year 2019.

Previous block-buys have yielded savings of several percent of the total cost of the ships when compared to annual procurements, which could be in excess of \$1 billion for two Ford-class carriers. Total savings could grow to something closer to \$2 billion if the procurement intervals between the ships are additionally shortened from five-year centers to three- or four-year centers, which would be consistent with the Navy's goal of achieving and maintaining the 12-carrier force called for in the Navy's 355-ship requirement.

In light of the increased budgetary demands placed on the Department, we believe that revisiting a proven acquisition method, one that could be executed without reducing funding for other vital shipbuilding programs, is not only warranted, but a sound investment.

As recent events in the Pacific have shown, our nation's carrier fleet is under considerable demand, with 3 of 11 deployed and 7 of 11 carriers underway in recent weeks. A block-buy of Ford-class will help the Navy achieve its objective of 12 carriers that better meets combatant commander requirements and readiness goals to sustain worldwide operations. Additionally, a block-buy would continue to signal to the shipbuilding industrial base about our nation's resolve to field a 355 ship fleet. Over the past 25 years, our shipbuilding industrial base has undergone a massive consolidation. The community, which used to tap into more than 17,000 suppliers now relies on fewer than 3,000 across the country. These remaining suppliers would significantly benefit from the predictability and stability of a known future workload. We believe the stability offered by a block-buy approach would enable suppliers to develop greater efficiencies and invest in their own businesses which would further benefit other Navy shipbuilding programs as well.

At the forefront of today's Navy is the Nimitz class carrier and Virginia-class submarine, both of which are successful products of block-buy type initiatives. As we look to the next 50 years, we believe a wise investment of our precious defense dollars would be in the time-proven acquisition method of block-buy for our next generation of aircraft carrier. Thank you for your consideration and service to our country.

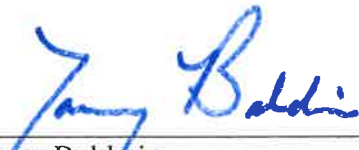
Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator



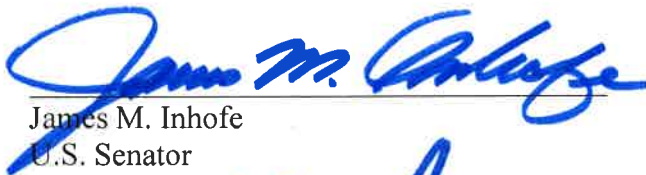
Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



Cory Gardner
U.S. Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator



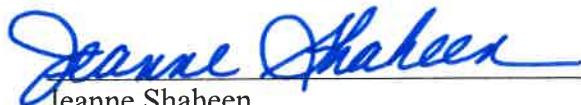
James M. Inhofe
U.S. Senator



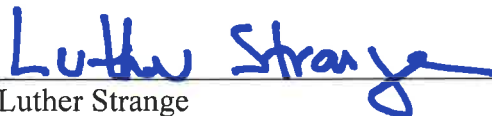
Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



Luther Strange
U.S. Senator



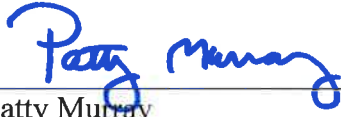
Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator



Sherod Brown
U.S. Senator



Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator



Tim Scott
U.S. Senator