



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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May 11, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
Armed Services Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Smith:

The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) is grateful for your leadership in the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to maintain a strong national defense. Sufficient investment must be made in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in support of the Army's "People First" strategy, readiness, and modernization priorities – to support the Soldiers and families who sacrifice so much and as the Army (Regular, National Guard, and Reserve) is vital to national security. As you work on the NDAA, we offer a few recommendations for your consideration.

We believe it is essential for the Army and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have the resources it needs to counter growing threats and to ensure the continued excellence of the all-volunteer force. Thus, we request that you authorize funding at least at the level included in the President's FY 2024 Budget Request and add additional resources to support the Army's unfunded priorities, speed Army modernization, support Army and DoD infrastructure, improve both the organic and defense industrial base, and help mitigate inflation.

AUSA applauds your commitment to our Soldiers, Army families, DoD civilians, and Soldiers for Life. As you know, providing appropriate compensation is an important incentive for recruitment and retention – particularly as recruitment remains a significant challenge. AUSA supports inclusion of at least a 5.2 percent pay increase for service members, and a similar increase for DoD civilians, as well as resources to soften the impact of inflation and improve recruitment. We support provisions to enhance the quality of life for Soldiers and their families such as improvements to childcare, spouse employment, safe and healthy housing, and healthcare for Soldiers and families. We want to ensure that there are sufficient TRICARE providers to guarantee that beneficiaries receive the best care possible in a convenient and timely fashion. Authorization of robust funding for Impact Aid to assist schools and families will help ensure that military children receive an excellent education at off-installation schools.

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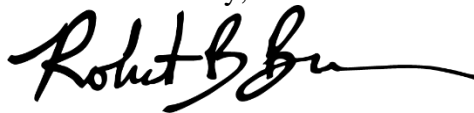
AUSA hopes that H.R. 1282/S. 344, the Major Richard Star Act, will be included – a long-held AUSA priority – to ensure eligible Soldiers for Life receive full compensation. Further, we appreciate your dedication to combatting death by suicide and improving the availability of behavioral healthcare and encourage you to include H.R. 3011, a bill that would work to improve mental health resources across DoD. We also commend your focus on eradicating sexual assault and harassment. These are top Army “People First” priorities, and we support continued attention and efforts along with additional resources.

As threats to our nation grow, the need to continue to modernize and strengthen readiness is apparent. AUSA requests your continued support for the Army’s core modernization priorities to enable future capabilities and support for the Army’s training and sustaining priorities to assure near-term readiness – this includes a strong and expandable organic industrial base. Inclusion of multiyear procurement authorities provide planning and budget stability, along with flexibility and cost-savings for the Army and the industrial base. While the Army undergoes its most significant modernization effort in four decades, it continues to answer the nation’s call domestically and across the globe. It rapidly surged forces to Europe in the wake of Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine, while providing key contributions in the Middle East and Indo-Pacific as part of the joint force to counter the continued malign activities of Iran, the remnants of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and an increasingly aggressive China.

With Congress’s increased focus on the Indo-Pacific, we highlight the Army’s enduring importance to American interests and security, and to that of our allies and partners in the region. As our nation faces the multifaceted challenges posed by an increasingly capable and hostile China, and advances made by North Korea, in particular; the Army retains the capacity to provide ground-based deterrent capabilities, facilitate and sustain joint operations, train allies and partners, and maintain stability in the region. It is clear, the Army must be properly resourced to meet its mission in the Indo-Pacific and around the globe. Indeed, a ready and capable Army is indispensable to national security.

Thank you for your continued service to our nation and consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert B. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Robert B. Brown
General, U.S. Army, Retired
President and CEO