

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
SD-122 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
SD-122 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Durbin:

We are writing to urge you to once again continue funding the Department of Defense STARBASE Program. We are deeply concerned that once again, the Office of Management and Budget has proposed eliminating this important and effective STEM education program.

The STARBASE Program allows fourth and fifth grade students to participate in a 25-hour hands-on curriculum where they solve scientific challenges related to aerospace. Students learn the importance of STEM skills in real world situations and develop essential math and science fundamentals, while fostering positive relationships between military bases and their surrounding communities.

Since its inception in 1991, over 825,000 students have benefited from the STARBASE Program. Last year, 45,000 students from 900 schools in 300 school districts participated in the program. In fact, the program is so successful that 25 sites are on a waiting list to participate in this effective program.

The STARBASE Program has created positive relationships between the U.S. military and local communities. Students are taught on the base and given important exposure to the military and the rigorous science it both conducts and uses in its daily operations. These types of programs are important for maintaining constructive civilian-military relationships on bases across the nation and ensuring that bases are not isolated from the communities surrounding them.

Student assessments show that the majority of students made significant gains in scientific knowledge, such as atmospheric composition, and increased their confidence in science and math. Students who participated in STARBASE demonstrated an increased enthusiasm for continuing to pursue STEM education.

In 2014 and 2015, Congress reinstated funding for the STARBASE Program. Despite the incredible success and strong participation rates, continued funding uncertainty threatens the future of this effective education program.

Therefore, we respectfully request that STARBASE funding be restored to adequate levels in the FY 2016 Defense Appropriations Bill.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



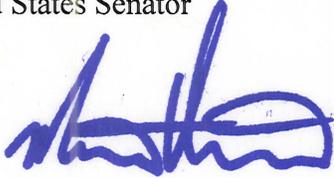
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



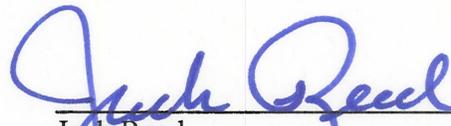
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator



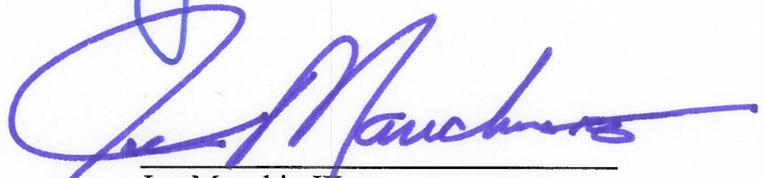
Al Franken  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

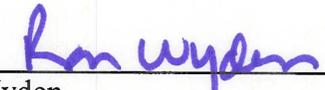


Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



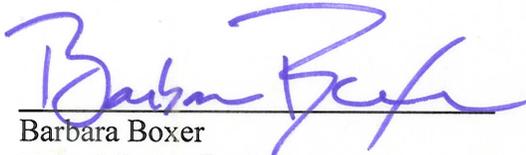
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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator