United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 3, 2019

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Acting Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Russell Vought
Acting Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Mnuchin, Acting Chief of Staff Mulvaney, and Acting Director Vought,

The Administration's efforts last year to pass the Department of Defense (DOD) appropriations bill on time allowed our military for the first time in a decade to be properly funded without the use of a continuing resolution (CR). Given that success, we respectfully but strongly encourage you to work with us to avoid a CR for FY 2020 that would delay the implementation of the President's National Defense Strategy (NDS) and increase costs.

In nine of the last ten years, the Pentagon started the fiscal year under at least a three-month CR. However, it has never operated under a CR for a full year. While some members of the Administration have suggested a yearlong CR as a viable path forward, this must be avoided. Under these draconian conditions, the DOD would be incapable of increasing readiness, recapitalizing our force, or rationalizing funding to align with the NDS. Additionally, while there has been some debate about the use of anomalies, which adjust spending in certain accounts, to mitigate the implications of a yearlong CR; we believe this is not a realistic solution. Historically, anomalies have been used to make small changes and have not comprehensively changed prior year funding directives. Accordingly, it is clear that a yearlong CR, even with anomalies, will not properly implement the President's NDS.

More specifically, a yearlong CR locks in the previous year's funding, while preventing DOD from reprogramming funds and rationalizing its budget effectively. Consequently, this would force DOD to execute a budget over three years old, based on the priorities of the Obama Administration that was designed to largely combat insurgency. This will effectively delay implementation of President Trump's NDS by a full year, and constrain DOD from affording the 3.1% pay raise for our men and women in uniform. As for readiness, a yearlong CR would reverse much of the improvement we have made over the last two years. Military training and equipment readiness would all be significantly reduced, resulting in a less lethal fighting force. Additionally, our military depots would be prevented from hiring and retaining the highly trained workforce necessary to maintain our existing vehicles, tanks, ships, and aircraft. Finally, a CR

would delay key recapitalization efforts, creating capability gaps by not replacing military platforms well past their useful life, while decreasing our ability to deter threats from Russia and China.

Furthermore, the historical debate between domestic and defense discretionary spending is a false predicate. Since the 1974 Budget Act became law, Congress has used 186 CRs. We believe these CRs cause our military's maintenance, procurement and operating costs all to skyrocket. This means that any perceived savings realized from a CR will be dramatically offset by the additional expenses that DOD will be forced to absorb due to uncertainty and inefficiency. It is short-sighted for Congress and the administration to squabble over discretionary spending levels, which are not the main drivers of our debt, all the while ignoring the runaway cost increases of our mandatory expenses.

As the world continues to become more dangerous, the American people rightfully expect their representatives in Washington to put aside political differences and do their jobs. Simply put, our adversaries do not handcuff their militaries with funding gimmicks like continuing resolutions — nor should we.

Sincerely,

David A. Perdue
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

Johnny Isakson
United States Senator

James Lankford
United States Senator

Jerry Moran
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

CC: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby

Senate Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey

House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger