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May 2, 2018

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith:

In advance of next week's full committee markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19 NDAA), I am writing to urge you to support full funding for the Air Force's budget request for the KC-46A aircraft.

As you know, the KC-46 will deliver new capabilities to our joint forces, including the ability to refuel aircraft by both boom and drogue systems in the same sortie, operate safely in a much broader range of threat environments and carry significantly more cargo, passenger and aeromedical evacuation stations than legacy tankers.

After witnessing the work of New Jersey's 305th Air Mobility Wing firsthand, I can attest to our Airmen's incredible ability to maintain legacy tankers like the KC-10. However, our nation's aerial refueling fleet is under real strain, and the KC-46 will offer our Airmen, including my constituents, a better capability to fight our nation's battles and come home safely. We owe it to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who rely on American air dominance to get a more advanced and reliable platform into the hands of our warfighters as soon as possible.

With this in mind, I joined 49 of my House colleagues in sending a bipartisan letter to the House Armed Services Committee and the House Appropriations Committee Defense Subcommittee underlining our support and concern for the program.

While I have been concerned about past delays in the program, I have discussed the test and certification schedule for the KC-46 at length with both Air Force officials and industry. Both teams, even in their most conservative estimates, agree that the KC-46 will start being delivered to the Air Force this year. At such a critical time for the program, I firmly believe we should support efforts to expedite delivery and avoid contributing to any further delays.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you next week and throughout the year on the issues that matter most to our military.

Sincerely,



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress