

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed,

We are writing to request your support in the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act for Stryker Vehicles. The Army's FY18 Unfunded Requirements List includes a request for continuation of the Stryker Lethality upgrade that provides substantially greater combat power by replacing the existing .50 caliber remote weapons station with a far more capable 30 mm cannon and unmanned turret. The Army has also requested funds on its FY18 Unfunded Requirements List for continuation of the upgrade of Stryker to a Double-V Hull (DVH) and incorporation of upgrades to regain off-road mobility, improve engine and electrical power, and provide a digital network backbone.

Stryker is the Army's most versatile and deployable combat vehicle. It is the foundation of the Army's nine Stryker Brigade Combat Teams that include 10 different mission packages based on the Infantry Carrier Vehicle. Stryker is the largest and most modern combat vehicle fleet in the Army, providing survivability and mobility during 21 unit deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Each Stryker Brigade has roughly 330 vehicles.

The Stryker Lethality upgrade came about as a direct result of an Operational Needs Statement from the Army's senior commander in Europe in 2015 responding to instability in Europe and his conclusion that Stryker was out-gunned by the ground combat vehicles that he was intended to deter. The Senate led the effort in Congress to meet this need in the FY16 National Defense Authorization Act, leading to the funding for the initial set of 83 Stryker Lethality vehicles and the production of the first prototype vehicle only 15 months after contract award. The program continues to meet its aggressive goals and is on schedule to field all of the 83 up-gunned vehicles by June 2018. Without further action from Congress in FY18, additional Stryker vehicles with Lethality enhancements for further brigades will not be fielded until nearly four years later in 2022. The capability gap in lethality the first set of vehicles was funded to address has not been closed. Eight additional Stryker Brigades lack the increased lethality the 30mm cannon provides. Given instability in Europe and in Asia, we cannot afford to wait four years before upgrading more Stryker vehicles with the lethality enhancement that match the forces they may face.

In 2010, the Army began upgrading Stryker with an advanced Double-V Hull that increases survivability against Improvised Explosive Devices, mines and other underbody threats. The Army has now fielded three Stryker Brigades equipped with DVH and is in the process of fielding a fourth brigade with this crucial enhancement that has been combat proven to save soldiers' lives. The

fourth DVH Stryker brigade now in production is also the first set of vehicles to incorporate the improvements designed to keep the vehicle ahead of its competition by increasing both engine and electrical power and an upgraded suspension that has been taxed as weight has been added to the original design. It makes little sense to stop production of this set of crucially-needed vehicles after two-thirds of the brigade has been funded.

In addition to these operational needs, the FY18 budget request would stop funding Stryker production and then seek to re-start funding for production in fiscal year 2019, including a multi-year production break for Stryker lethality vehicles. This assumes the Army's out-year budgets are not constrained or impacted by shifting priorities. This broken and uncertain funding commitment could cause significant disruption to the Stryker industrial base, including the hundreds of Stryker suppliers across the country, while the Army has made clear their need to depend on this industrial base in the future.

Based upon these concerns, we respectfully request that you include fully fund a second set of Stryker lethality vehicles and completion of the DVH upgrades on the 4th Stryker Brigade in the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman



Gary Peters



Sherrod Brown



Lindsey Graham



Dan Sullivan



Debbie Stabenow



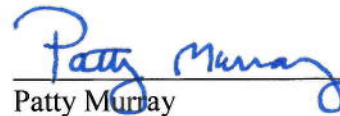
Marco Rubio



Bill Nelson



Tom Cotton



Patty Murray



Robert P. Casey, Jr.