Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky,

As the subcommittee prepares its Fiscal Year 2016 Defense Appropriations legislation, we respectfully ask for your support of the A-10 aircraft fleet.

The A-10 provides unmatched Close Air Support (CAS) capability, delivering firepower to save American lives when they are under fire in close proximity to enemy forces. The A-10 offers long loiter time, lethality, survivability, and the ability to strike moving targets in a complex visual fight. It can operate in rugged environments at all altitudes and under weather ceilings or with low visibility.

The A-10 also uniquely provides critical Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) capabilities, absolutely vital to ensure downed pilots do not meet the same fate as the Jordanian pilot who was captured and lit on fire by ISIS.

A-10s are currently deployed to the Middle East for CSAR and offensive operations in the fight against ISIS. They are also deployed to Europe to reassure and train our allies in CAS in the face of increased Russian aggression.

In a March 17th House Armed Services Committee hearing, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah James and Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Mark Welsh both confirmed that mothballing the A-10 was driven by budget constraints only.

Over the past several Congresses, both chambers have successfully protected the A-10 fleet from complete divestment, but the equivalent of four squadrons have been mothballed since 2012. Over $1 billion has been invested recently in the A-10 to upgrade its avionics and strengthen its wings, extending its lifespan until 2028. However, the President's Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2016 again directs the Air Force to divest the entire A-10 Fleet, starting with 160 aircraft in FY 16. This divestiture, particularly because of a lack of a similarly-capable replacement platform, puts Americans' lives at risk.

We recognize the challenges imposed by the Budget Control Act, but we believe that now is not the time to divest an aircraft that has demonstrated success in combat for decades and has saved

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lives, especially at a time when there is no suitable replacement. We urge you to reject the President's request to divest the A-10 aircraft fleet in the Fiscal Year 2016 Defense Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Martha McSally
Member of Congress

Candice Miller
Member of Congress

Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

Matt Salmon
Member of Congress

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

Trent Franks
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

Dan Benishek
Member of Congress

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

Paul Gosar
Member of Congress

Richard Nugent
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress