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## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

March 9, 2018

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The Honorable Steve Womack  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget  
U.S. House of Representatives  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express additional views and estimates regarding the national defense budget function for fiscal year (FY) 2019. I support the President's budget request for a total of \$716 billion in discretionary budget authority for the national defense budget function for FY 2019, because it is predicated on strategic priorities and because it will restore military readiness. That said, \$716 billion is a considerable sum. It is, therefore, imperative that Congress conduct extensive oversight to ensure proper executive branch stewardship of the taxpayers' investment.

Although enactment of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (the BBA) set appropriate discretionary spending levels for FY 2018 and FY 2019, it is not a panacea. In the wake of last year's tax cuts, the BBA established the potential for significant increases to the deficit and the national debt, and it only provided temporary shelter from sequestration. Sequestration levels remain in effect for discretionary funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. Congress must eliminate sequestration and repeal the caps imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (the BCA) to advance national interests along a broad front.

Congress must also work throughout the legislative cycle to provide fiscal stability to support cost-effective planning and decision-making. We must remember that, in addition to the harms inflicted by sequestration and the BCA caps, years of budgetary standoffs leading to numerous threatened government shutdowns, three actual shutdowns, and congressional overreliance on continuing resolutions have combined to produce debilitating fiscal uncertainty, which undermines the ability of every Federal Department and Agency to plan confidently and to expend funding for critical activities. Reinforcing fiscal stability begins with a responsible budget resolution that addresses the full spectrum of defense and nondefense-related needs.

Therefore, the budget resolution must deviate from the President's budget request and support BBA funding levels for FY 2019 for both the defense and nondefense categories of the

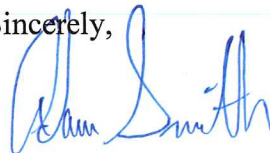
The Honorable Steve Womack  
March 9, 2018  
Page Two

discretionary budget. The BBA increase to the defense budget is justifiable in light of national security challenges, but enabling the achievement of defense priorities alone is insufficient. Congress needs to fund the nondefense discretionary accounts to the extent the BBA allows, because important federal spending priorities, including homeland security, law enforcement, emergency preparedness and response capacities, veterans' services, and foreign assistance programs also require sufficient budgetary support. Moreover, we need to reinvest heavily in sound infrastructure, research and innovation, education, health care, public safety, housing, the workforce, small businesses and many other facets of enduring national strength. National security involves much more than defense.

National security must also be maintained over the long term. For this reason, I support notional increases in discretionary budget authority beyond FY 2019. However, future growth in discretionary funding levels will necessarily depend on the existence of a budgetary environment that is conducive to such growth. In addition to eliminating sequestration and the BCA caps, Congress must increase revenues, re-establish regular order in the legislative process, dispel fiscal uncertainty, and empower economic performance to effectuate real growth in out-year funding levels.

Thank you for your consideration of these additional views and estimates. I look forward to working closely with you and with your colleagues on the Budget Committee in crafting a budget that responsibly addresses our national needs.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable John Yarmuth