

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2014

Representative Mac Thornberry
Vice Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6035

Representative Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6035

Dear Vice Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your ongoing effort to review and reform the Department of Defense's acquisition system. The New Democrat Coalition's National Security Task Force is dedicated to ensuring our nation has the strongest tools to safeguard our national security, including maintaining the best-trained, best-equipped, and most capable fighting force in the world. Since our August 13 letter, we have given this topic considerable thought, engaged with our partners in the public and private sectors, and reflected upon the lessons learned from previous reform initiatives. We hope that our feedback positively adds to your effort and further solidifies our national security.

Our five acquisition principles are:

- **Bring an End to Sequestration** – Above all else, the harmful across-the-board cuts imposed due to sequestration must be ended. We need to agree on a comprehensive, balanced, long-term fiscal plan that will allow us to end these harmful cuts, and work to create the opportunity to make informed strategic decisions that put our nation on the path to success and our budget on the road to fiscal responsibility.
- **Make the Government a Better Customer to Business** – Our national defense is directly tied to the innovation that is generated within the private sector. Maintaining a capable and diverse industrial base can only be done if business is treated as a partner in success rather than an adversary. While we must always be responsible to the taxpayer, we must create opportunities to minimize an overbearing bureaucracy that has failed to adequately communicate with or learn from other marketplace actors.
- **Empower and Grow the Workforce** – Acquisition professionals are essential to ensure that we meet our acquisition needs. Unfortunately, our overburdened and undereducated workforce is hard pressed to meet the demands of the Department. We should correctly define the Department's need for acquisition professionals, its size, and a reasonable workload and establish a goal to meet that need. Moreover, with such a young acquisition workforce, we should provide acquisition professionals training and education opportunities, so they are ready for the challenges we face.
- **Improve Management, Administration, and Accountability** – The environment in which acquisition professionals work is just as important as their education and workload. It is

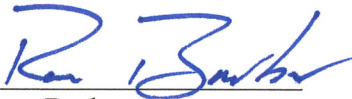
difficult for acquisition professionals to understand and navigate the dynamics and intricacies of particular marketplaces that today's complex requirements demand. Providing enough time for smart and informed business decisions to be made, and aligning acquisition professionals into communities that concentrate on particular marketplaces and requirements should lead to improved outcomes.

- Culture Change for Long-Term Success - The culture of the Department's acquisition professionals is ripe for improvement. While there are no perfect or immediate answers to this challenge, careful study, industry / government cooperation, and the application of best practices should set a better course.

As sub-categories to these five principles, we have compiled a list of specific recommendations that we respectfully provide for your consideration. We believe that these innovative ideas represent opportunities for success in a wide range of topics, and if adopted and taken together, would result in the improvement of our acquisition system. With a stronger acquisition system, we can ensure that our service members and support personnel have the equipment, technology and assistance they need to do their jobs while providing the greatest value to the taxpayer.

Again, thank you very much for your leadership and for the opportunity to participate in this effort.

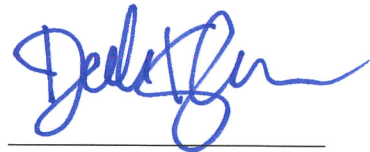
Sincerely,



Ron Barber
Member of Congress



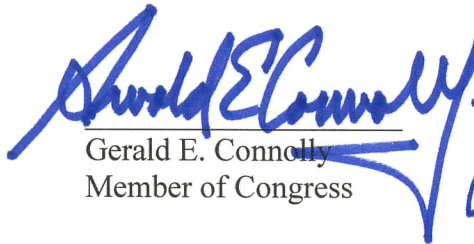
Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



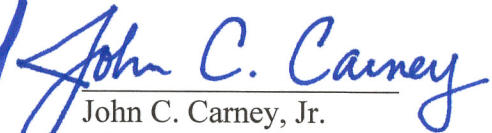
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



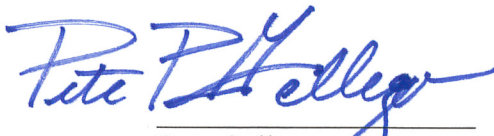
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



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Pete Gallego
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Denny Heck
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Scott Peters
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