Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to share our concerns about the serious and ongoing threat to our national defense that has become evident in the first few months of 2012. In January, you announced a new defense strategy that if implemented would significantly weaken our defense capabilities. Additionally, the dangerous budget-cutting proposal released this week would significantly diminish our defense capabilities by slashing the Army and Marines, mothballing ships and aircraft, and requesting to shutter military bases around the country. While the *Budget Control Act of 2011* enacted some defense cuts, these new objectives would effectively cripple our national security resources.

It is with great concern that we have observed your Administration announcing its intention to request two new rounds of military base closures that will require additional expenses in a time of military spending reductions. Congress has robustly funded the military construction accounts over the last three years to accommodate the growing Army and Marine Corps. We now question whether that investment will go to waste to meet an ill-advised strategy for our national defense. Additionally, the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure is estimated to cost $37 billion to implement and the country will not realize net savings until 2018 at the earliest, well over the cost and time estimates originally given. It is entirely reasonable to expect conducting another round of BRAC will cost more than it saves in the near-term and thus will negate its value for deficit reduction. With threats around the globe and during a time when every defense dollar is scarce, what is the justification for spending on additional base closures? How does this approach make our country safer? Where is the "reversibility" in such extreme measures?

Concurrently, our men and women in the military face the threat of sequestration and another half a trillion dollar budget reduction. Members of the House and Senate have put forth solutions to prevent these draconian cuts. We are prepared to do everything possible to avoid the crippling impact associated with sequestration. Our military has already contributed nearly half of the deficit reduction measures taken to date. Not all government spending is created equal, and the Constitution is clear that one of Congress' primary duties is to provide for the common defense.

The House and Senate proposals seek to ensure our men and women in uniform have the resources and equipment they need to protect our nation. National defense is a non-partisan

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matter. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has cautioned against further cuts to our military and has even warned that additional cuts to national defense would be devastating. We must all accept that America faces a debt crisis and that reducing the debt is a national priority. However, while we must cut federal spending, we should not balance the budget on the back of our men and women in uniform. As Americans, we must stand strong for our national security while opposing ever-increasing and excessive domestic spending. We urge you to work with Congress to ensure that communities across the nation do not see increases in unemployment and a weakening of the greatest military force in the world.

Sincerely,

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Trent Franks
Member of Congress

K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress

W. Todd Akin
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Rob Bishop
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Blaine Luetkemeyer
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