

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2016

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Carter:

We write today on behalf of members of the Armed Forces based at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, their families, and the surrounding communities that support Kentucky servicemembers. As you complete the Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Defense (DOD) budget request, we would like to reiterate that we remain deeply concerned of any effort by the Obama Administration to further reduce Army active-duty end strength. Any additional reduction could be dangerous to our national security, particularly in light of significant conflicts across the globe.

When the United States has been threatened by forces outside our borders, Kentuckians and servicemembers stationed at Army installations in the Commonwealth have answered the call to sacrifice and defend this great nation. Army active-duty end strength has already been significantly reduced under this Administration. It is our understanding that these reductions have increased the difficulty of combatant commanders to execute their missions in defense of the United States. Any further reduction of Army personnel would unnecessarily add pressure on the men and women serving as well as their commanders.

As you know, even with the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, DOD continues to face budget restrictions. While we are supportive of policies that allow DOD to examine ways to cut duplicative or unnecessary programs, we believe that maintaining a robust Army end strength is vital to the defense of this nation.

The Army installations in Kentucky provide critical services that are necessary for the national defense and security of our country. The units and personnel from

Fort Campbell and Fort Knox are some of the greatest assets to the Army and the Commonwealth itself. As you consider DOD's FY 2017 budget request to Congress, we ask that when determining the Army's active-duty end strength, you keep in mind Section 422 of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 114-92) that requires DOD to report to Congress on the force structure of the Army and include an independent risk assessment by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the ability of the Army to meet the operational requirements of combatant commanders.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



RAND PAUL
UNITED STATES SENATOR



MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR