



Dear Congress:

We are writing to express our concern that the Department of the Navy is currently underfunded and overextended, and that if we do not take action we risk a broken Navy-Marine Corps team and severe damage to the U.S. economy, our ability to support our allies, and our leadership role in the world.

Since 2001, the pace of Navy and Marine Corps operations has not slowed. Yet because the work of the Navy-Marine Corps team is out of sight, over the horizon on the vast oceans of the world, many are unaware of their work or the strain that they are under.

Years of responding to crisis after crisis and delayed maintenance and modernization is crippling the Navy-Marine Corps team. Aircraft that were designed to fly 6,000 hours are now expected to fly 10,000 hours. The Marine Corps is plagued by old equipment. Many ships have been on deployments for eight to twelve months or longer because of a backlog of maintenance on the ships needed to provide replacement.

All of this makes us concerned that the Navy-Marine Corps team will soon be unable to fulfill the missions that are vital to us as businesses, humanitarian organizations and citizens.

We urge you to support the Navy League of the United States' "America's Strength" campaign to provide a significant investment in the Department of the Navy's fiscal year 2017 budget to meet the Navy-Marine Corps team's needs. Without a significant increase in the Department of the Navy budget, we believe that the Navy-Marine Corps team will be unable to continue their critical work of protecting commerce at sea, responding to humanitarian crises and promoting regional stability.

An investment in the Navy-Marine Corps team is an investment in the U.S. economy. The uninhibited movement of trade is critical to the nation's prosperity. U.S. businesses and consumers rely on goods shipped by sea from around the world, and more than 80 percent of the world's trade is conducted by sea, with 90 percent of the general cargo carried in containers. Seventy-five percent of the world's maritime trade and half of the oil trade pass through a handful of international straits and canals. Undersea cables account for 95 percent of the world's international voice and data traffic. Protecting trade and cables and keeping shipping lanes free are important Navy-Marine Corps team missions.

An investment in the Navy-Marine Corps team is an investment in the United States' leadership role in the world. We believe that any deterioration in the Navy-Marine Corps team's readiness will have a detrimental impact on its ability to respond in times of humanitarian crisis. Time and again, from Haiti to Japan to the Philippines, the Navy-Marine Corps team has been the nation's first responder, quickly providing water, food and medical aid and supplies, and facilitating the operations of humanitarian organizations after disasters. These humanitarian efforts further strengthen U.S. ties with allies and enhance the country's reputation worldwide.



An investment in the Navy-Marine Corps team is an investment in technological research and development. The Navy-Marine Corps team is constantly on watch, testing new technologies to detect and counter threats. Navy research and development are essential to the nation's new weapons capabilities. From lasers to advanced strike fighters to electromagnetic aircraft launch systems, the Navy-Marine Corps team is on the cutting edge of new technologies.

The Navy-Marine Corps team remains at the heart of our nation's global security strategy and its focus on the Asia-Pacific region. The Navy's forward presence around the globe and its interoperability with our allies make the Navy-Marine Corps team the cornerstone of America's alliances and an essential force in our nation's ability to project power and respond to crises and conflict.

By many measures, current funding levels do not meet the Department of the Navy's needs. The Navy's fiscal year 2015 30-year shipbuilding plan clearly shows that the Navy needs \$10 billion to \$15 billion more each year to sustain a fleet and aircraft able to address current requirements, much less any expansion of Navy missions in the future. In addition, the Navy-Marine Corps team needs to "reset" the fleet after more than a decade of war operations and restore weapons inventories depleted in recent conflicts. These shortfalls all point to the need for more Department of the Navy funding.

Navy-Marine Corps team officials have admitted that the Navy does not have the funding it needs, and they have expressed concerns about readiness and the ability of current ships, aircraft and crews to respond to crises.

Now is the time to act, and we request your support.

The America's Strength campaign is supported by a broad and diverse coalition of businesses, nongovernmental organizations, aircraft manufacturers, shipbuilders, retired military officers and those who share the belief that a strong Department of the Navy is vital to the nation.

We look forward to working with you to achieve our goal of securing a significant increase in the Navy-Marine Corps team budget for fiscal year 2017.

Thank you for your continued support of the Navy-Marine Corps team.