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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

January 28, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to reiterate our strong support that the United States Navy should continue to require a naval fleet of no-less than 11 nuclear aircraft carriers.

The constant state of "surge" our Navy has operated at for the past decade is a testament to the growing demand signal from our Combatant Commanders and the shrinking size of our fleet. With the United States entering an era where our sea-services are likely to be called on to provide more presence, deterrence, and engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific littoral and across the globe, we believe now is the time to reinvest in our fleet, not look for ways to reduce its size and accept greater risk. Indeed, in a letter Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus sent to us in October 2013, he stated that a smaller nuclear aircraft carrier fleet would "deliver less forward presence, increased response time, and delayed arrivals to conflict. This force would be unable to execute the missions described in the Defense Strategic Guidance."

Last year the House of Representatives expressed its strong support for the nuclear aircraft carrier fleet by voting overwhelmingly to maintain a statutory requirement to retain 11 operational aircraft carriers by a vote of 318 to 106. There is no doubt that there is enduring bipartisan support for a robust Navy supporting a capital fleet of 11 nuclear aircraft carriers. We strongly agree with Rear Admiral Thomas Moore who stated last year that "We're an 11-carrier Navy in a 15-carrier world. The demand signal is not likely to go down any time soon."

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you on this issue and to strengthen our sea services in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee



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Member of Congress



J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress



SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress



ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress



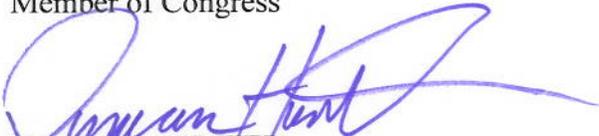
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