The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairman Leahy, and Senator Shelby:

Thank you for your continuing support of our national security. We greatly appreciate your efforts to enact a Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations bill. Though it appears progress is being made, if Congress fails to pass a Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations bill, it will further unnecessarily delay our nation’s ability to prepare forces and field weaponry essential to deter our adversaries during this Era of Great Power Competition. Therefore, the Air Force Association (“AFA”) strongly supports the immediate passage of this critical legislation.

During his recent testimony before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, General Charles Q. Brown, Air Force Chief of Staff, argued strongly for the passage of an appropriations bill and tenaciously opposed the alternative, a year-long Continuing Resolution. General Brown unequivocally stated enactment of a year-long Continuing Resolution will have similar consequences “…to the impacts levied by the Fiscal Year 2013 sequestration, where the Air Force had to stand down squadrons and furlough civilian employees. …[I]t took over half a decade to recover from the negative impacts to readiness caused by the 2013 sequestration.” These effects were self-imposed, completely unnecessary, and, as many senior leaders argue, continue to have malignant consequences. Among the repercussions: significant delays in Air Force modernization, where the average age of the service’s aircraft is now over 30 years -- the oldest in its history.

The General also stated a year-long Continuing Resolution could “…irreversibly delay the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent initial operating capability past 2029, the Long-Range Standoff Weapon by over a year, and the conventional initial operating capability and nuclear certification of the B-21 up to a year.”
Finally, General Brown goes on to proffer what is a decisive argument.

As much as a year-long Continuing Resolution affects our Air Force fiscally, the impact it has to our rate of change is more shattering. All the money in the world cannot buy more time; time is irrecoverable, and when you are working to keep pace against well-resourced and focused competitors, time matters.

Unfortunately, the negative effects of a full year Continuing Resolution are not confined to the Air Force. Chief of Space Operations, General John Raymond stated, a full year Continuing Resolution will take away 25 percent of the funds needed to maintain, service and modernize its mission critical systems. Such an outcome means, once again, our nation will self-inflict needless obstacles on our servicemembers while our adversaries’ speed toward their goal of dominating the warfighting domain of space.

To ensure our Air and Space Forces can effectively deter or, if necessary, defeat our adversaries, the Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations bill must quickly be enacted. AFA strongly supports the immediate adoption of such legislation.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Murray, CMSAF, USAF (Ret)  
Chairman of the Board

Bruce “Orville” Wright, Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)  
President

cc: The Honorable Jon Tester  
Chairman  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510