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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

CHRISTIAN D. BROSE, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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August 29, 2017

Honorable James Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Mattis:

With the beginning of fiscal year 2018 quickly approaching, Congress and the White House have yet to begin serious consideration of a budget that will allow passage of appropriations bills to fund the federal government. Absent this budget agreement, no spending for any federal department or agency will be allowed to surpass the discretionary caps set by the Budget Control Act. In practice, this will result in billions of dollars in cuts to the defense budget from last year's level – cuts that the Department of Defense can ill afford at a time of diminished readiness, strained modernization, and increasing operations.

Given the limited remaining work period for both the House and Senate prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>, and the difficulties of negotiating and enacting a major bipartisan budget agreement, it is very likely that the federal government will begin the fiscal year on a continuing resolution yet again. The duration of the continuing resolution is yet to be determined. It may range from days to months. Regardless of its length, a continuing resolution will have to be at the Budget Control Act cap levels or below.

Military leaders have time and again warned members of the Senate Armed Services Committee about the negative impacts of starting each fiscal year on a continuing resolution. As the Senate prepares to consider a continuing resolution for fiscal year 2018, we believe it would be prudent to have a concrete understanding of its impacts on the military. Therefore, we ask that you provide the committee members with an in-depth list of impacts on the military--including military branches, defense-wide agencies, and combatant commands--for a 3-month and a 6-month continuing resolution. Please provide such information by September 8, 2017.

Sincerely,

  
Jack Reed  
Ranking Member

  
John McCain  
Chairman