

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510


Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We urge you and the conferees to retain Section 1767 of H.R. 6395, the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. Sec. 1767 is the result of a bipartisan effort to modernize the real-estate management of the Army's sprawling properties and will help the Army become a more effective fighting force.

Section 1767 would authorize a proof-of-concept: a public tool that catalogs unused real estate across the Army's installations. With this tool, authorized users could query a database for vacant or otherwise surplus space that they could transition towards more productive use. Rather than spending more money on new construction or land purchases, governmental agencies could expand into places with pre-existing infrastructure; vetted private-sector or academic organizations could work and research alongside the bright men and women of the United States Army. Formerly empty plots could witness the birth of new synergies and collaboration.

If successful, this pilot program could quickly be adopted across the Department of Defense, turning a small investment now into potentially millions of dollars in savings later. Until then however, countless acres and buildings sit idly by across the enterprise. As responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, we must capitalize upon these untapped resources. We thank you for your work so far on this year's National Defense Authorization Act, and we look forward to working with you and your Committees on finding ways to make the military more efficient.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

List of Signatories

Congressman Dave Loebsack
Senator Richard J. Durbin
Senator Tammy Duckworth
Senator Charles E. Grassley
Senator Joni K. Ernst