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October 25, 2018

Dr. Heather Wilson
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 23010

Dear Secretary Wilson,

Thank you for your prompt response to my October 2, 2018 letter regarding the Air Force's purchase of water-heating cups. While I appreciate the straightforward answers to my questions about how many cups have been purchased and why the cost has increased so dramatically, your response prompts further questions.

In my previous letter, I asked what cheaper alternatives had been explored, and if this water-heating cup was truly necessary. In your reply, you indicated that the Air Force is exploring ways to use 3D printing and other technology to cut costs on spare parts, and conducting a review of procurement to identify overpriced items. Your response does not indicate if alternatives to this specific water-heating cup have been explored or discovered. The expenditure of \$326,785 in the last two years to buy 391 cups – or an average of \$836 per cup – seems excessive, unreasonable and wasteful, especially when commercially available technology, such as a thermos, would seemingly serve the same purpose at a fraction of the cost.

In addition to the response you provided to my previous letter, information related to the purchase and use of these water-heating cups was provided to the media. In the future, I would appreciate that information related to my inquiries that is provided to the press also be provided directly to me.

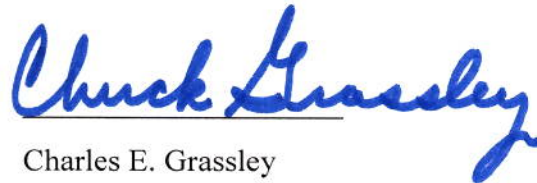
Therefore, a response is requested to the following questions:

- 1) The Director of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs noted to Fox News that the Air Mobility Command is no longer purchasing these cups.
 - a. Is it true that the Air Force will no longer purchase water-heating cups, even in situations where a broken cup cannot be repaired using 3D printing?
 - b. What could the Force use to provide Airmen with hot coffee and other beverages or food items in lieu of the water-heating cups, and why wasn't this option previously selected?

- 2) Your previous letter indicated that a new Rapid Sustainment Office was created in July 2018 for the purpose of finding ways to “develop and deliver parts at a fraction of the costs using traditional manufacturing.” You indicated this office will also “complete a review to proactively identify items [the Air Force] may self-produce or other overpriced parts [the Air Force] need[s] to stop buying without impact to the mission.”
- a. When do you expect the results of the review of overpriced spare parts to be completed?
 - b. When the results of the review are available, I respectfully request that I be provided with those materials.

I applaud the efforts by the Airmen at Travis Air Force Base who noticed wasteful spending, and took it upon themselves to come up with a better solution. However, when I see the prices the Air Force is willing pay for a toilet seat lid and coffee cup, I remain concerned that there are not adequate protocols in place to prevent reckless spending on parts from the start. A response is requested to these questions by no later than November 9, 2018.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary