

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
H-305 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

We write to respectfully request that the Defense Subcommittee consider maintaining resources for the Department of Defense (DoD) STARBASE Program. We are deeply concerned that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has again proposed to eliminate this important and effective science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education program in the President's FY 2017 Defense Budget Request. This proposed action ignores more than 23 years of program success that has positively impacted students nationwide. We feel that the STARBASE program should, at minimum, receive continued appropriations at the same levels enacted for FY 2016.

DoD STARBASE is an effective DoD outreach and STEM education awareness program for elementary and secondary school students. It provides 25 hours of outstanding STEM instruction, along with hands-on afterschool STEM activities. Students learn the importance of STEM skills in real world situations and develop essential math and science fundamentals, while fostering positive relationships between the military bases and local communities. Strong evidence-based evaluations of DoD STARBASE participants shows significant improvement in the students' understanding, interest, and ability in math and science which has led to increased enthusiasm in pursuing STEM education. Their interest and knowledge in STEM is important to our nation's future as we need to build and sustain a highly educated and skilled workforce capable of meeting the advanced technological requirements of the Department of Defense and our modern economy.

Congress began funding DoD STARBASE in FY 1993. Since that time, DoD STARBASE has served approximately 1,000,000 students from 40 states in more than 400 school districts. DoD STARBASE is so successful that there are 25 locations on a waiting list to participate in the program.

DoD STARBASE creates an unequalled bridge between the military and STEM education with local students that is achieved through strong civilian/military leadership involvement, an engaging advanced curriculum, state of the art technology, nation-wide program standardization, a complete understanding of military culture, and assured access to military installations. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, Congress reinstated funding for the DoD STARBASE Program. Despite the continued success and strong participation rates, continued funding uncertainty threatens the future of this effective STEM education program.

Although the program's funding remains uncertain, local communities continue to support and send their students to the 59 DoD STARBASE programs located on Active, Guard, and Reserve facilities in 30 states and Puerto Rico. In 2015, DoD STARBASE provided STEM engagement opportunities for more than 62,000 students in 1096 schools in 366 school districts while employing 290 personnel. Nationwide, DoD STARBASE locations documented a total of 8,051 volunteers who contributed a total of 188,846 hours to the program during FY 2015.

DoD STARBASE is one of the primary tools DoD has in its inventory to contribute to the ongoing national effort intended to close the achievement gap with other nations, and to perpetuate our long-term security and prosperity. Therefore, we respectfully request that your committee maintain the FY 2016 enacted appropriations levels for DoD STARBASE in the DoD Civil Military account of the O&M Defense-Wide Appropriation in the FY 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,



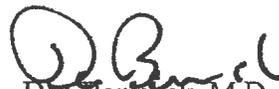
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Alan Lowenthal
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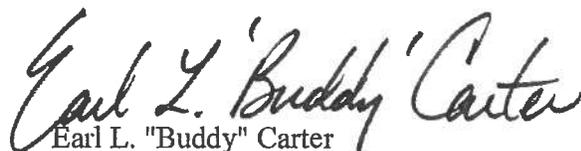
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Member of Congress



Dan Benishek, M.D.
Member of Congress



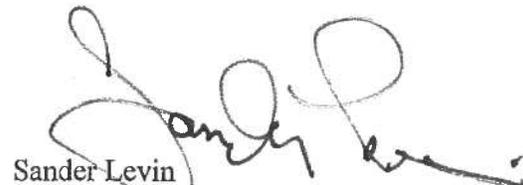
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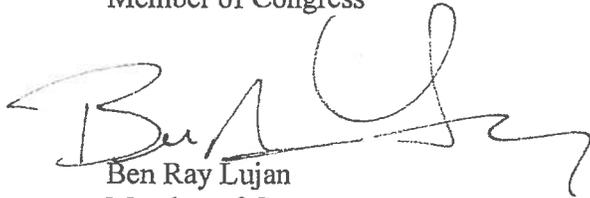
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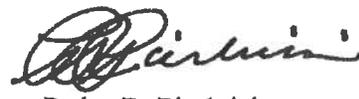
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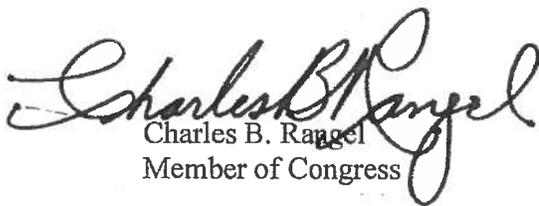
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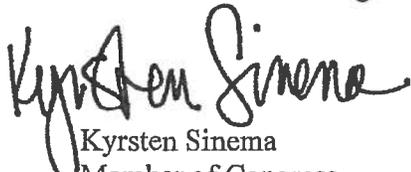
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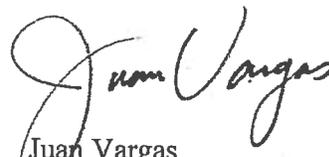
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Juan Vargas
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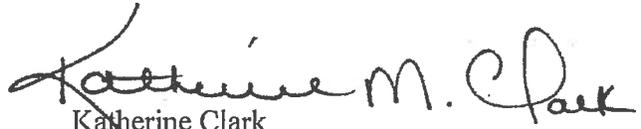
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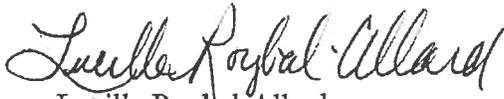
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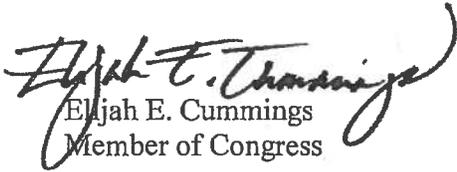
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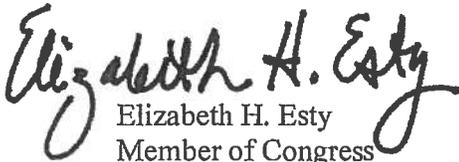
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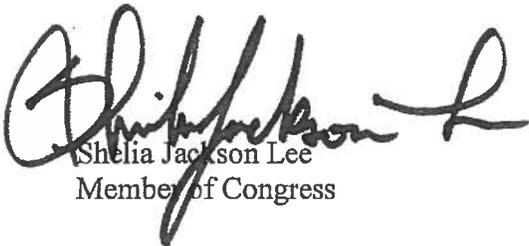
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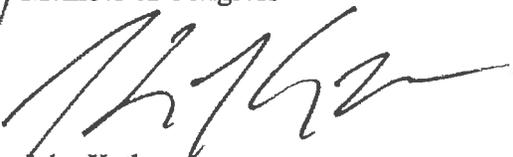
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