Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, Dc 20510

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

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2026

Dear Chairmen Wicker and Rogers and Ranking Members Reed and Smith,

As the House and Senate prepare to negotiate the final Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to express our strong opposition to Section 1521(a) of the Senate Armed Service s Committee's S. 4784, which would authorize the development of two new theater-range nuclear weapon systems. We urge you to remove this provision from the NDAA during conference negotiations.

Section 1521(a) would authorize the Secretaries of Defense and Energy to initiate research, development, and production programs for two new theater-range nuclear weapons and their respective delivery systems, including a surface-launched system and an air-launched system. We are deeply concerned that these additional nuclear capabilities are unnecessary, increase the likelihood of nuclear conflict, and risk undermining existing nuclear modernization efforts.

The Trump administration's justification for the production of additional theater nuclear weapons has been to provide the President with "credible, rational nuclear options" in regional conflicts, including a potential conflict with China in the Taiwan Strait.[1] In today's nuclear landscape, there is no guarantee of a rational or limited nuclear exchange. Once a nuclear weapon is used, the risk of broader escalation cannot be credibly contained. The United States already maintains several theater nuclear capabilities sufficient for deterrence. The development of additional weapons is redundant and risks lowering the threshold for their use, increasing the danger of catastrophe in an era of increasing proliferation.

Moreover, initiating new nuclear weapons programs risks jeopardizing ongoing efforts to modernize the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is already

1 "Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium," Department of Defense, August 5, 2026. https://www.war.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4567089/remarks-by-under-secretary-of-war-for-policy-elbridge-colby-at-the-2026-united/

pursuing five simultaneous nuclear warhead programs, modernizing pit production, and exploring the development of two additional systems. There is bipartisan concern that these commitments have already placed significant strain on NNSA's resources.[2]

Congress has already mandated the limited deployment of the nuclear-capable sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N) by 2032[3]. The authorization of additional nuclear weapons programs, absent congressional debate on the underlying policy implications, risks undermining NNSA's modernization efforts and existing congressional mandates.

We are also concerned by the absence of a budgetary or strategic justification for these new weapons systems. Neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of Energy included these programs in their Fiscal Year 2027 budget requests, nor have they provided documentation supporting their necessity. Authorizing two additional nuclear weapons programs without formal requests or adequate documentation undermines established budgetary procedure and congressional oversight of the executive branch.

We recognize the critical importance of maintaining robust nuclear deterrence. However, expanding our nuclear arsenal at the expense of existing defense priorities would not strengthen our national security.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to exclude Section 1521(a) of S. 4784 from the final version of the Fiscal Year 2027 NDAA. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that U.S. nuclear policy remains grounded in strategic necessity, congressional oversight, responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources, and the prevention of nuclear conflict.

Sincerely,

Sarah McBride
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress

2 "A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the National Nuclear Security Administration: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development of the S. Comm. on Appropriations," 119th Congress, April 29, 2026.
https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2027-budget-request-for-the-national-nuclear-security-administration

3 "Nuclear-Armed Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM-N), In Focus," Congressional Research Service, January 8, 2026.
https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12084



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



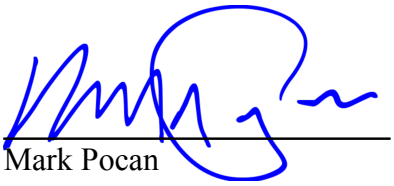
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



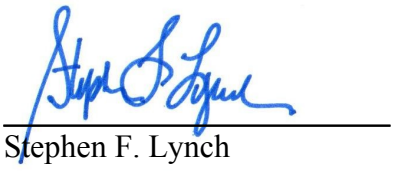
James P. McGovern
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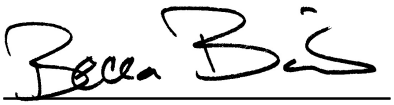
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Member of Congress



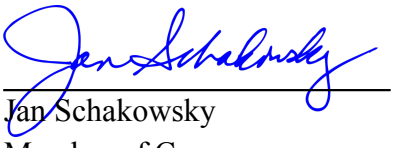
Becca Balint
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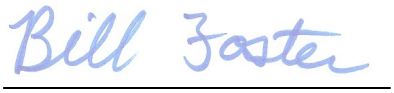
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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Paul D. Tonko
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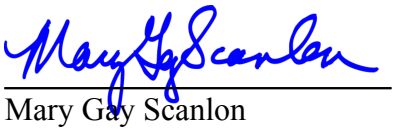
Jan Schakowsky
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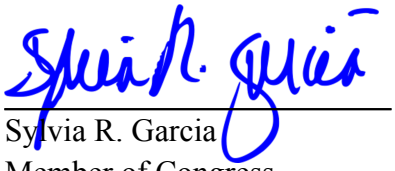
Bill Foster
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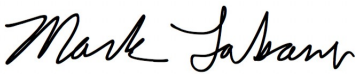
Valerie P. Foushee
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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Mark Takano
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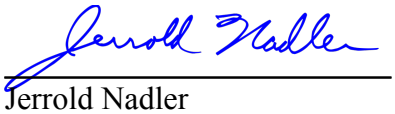
Adelita S. Grijalva
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Dina Titus
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