Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, Leader Pelosi, and Leader Schumer:

The Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) represents more than 340 companies from across the aerospace and defense industry, a thriving sector that embodies the best of our nation. Our innovative and technologically advanced companies, and the 2.4 million patriotic employees at the heart of their work, contribute more to a positive U.S. trade balance than any other manufacturing sector. They propel technological breakthroughs, enhance the safety of flying families, sustain American leadership in space, and supply American and allied forces with the equipment necessary for their safety and security.

We remain concerned that final FY18 appropriations, without repeal or substantial alteration of the discretionary spending caps introduced by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), could undermine our collective commitment to strengthening military readiness. As the Secretary of Defense said in a recent letter to Congress, “No enemy in the field has done more to harm the warfighting readiness of our military than sequestration.” The House and Senate Armed Services Committees strongly support FY18 funding levels well above the BCA caps and in his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, President Trump endorsed funding national defense at $700 billion in FY18. If Congress acts soon and decisively on finalizing FY18 spending including a statutory repeal or revision to the BCA, it will positively assure that the Defense Department avoids a sequester for the first time since April 2013.

Critical non-defense programs in the federal budget also benefit directly from stable and timely funding. The Federal Aviation Administration, for instance, is responsible for approving new aircraft technologies that help our manufacturers and innovators compete in a growing worldwide market for commercial and general aviation aircraft. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration maintains and enhances our global leadership through initiatives in science, exploration and aerospace technology. These non-defense programs are vital to our economic prosperity and to our ability to maintain a vibrant and robust aerospace and defense industrial base. They should not be penalized by sequestration’s arbitrary cuts or the uncertainty that accompanies continuing resolutions.

We strongly support your efforts to finalize FY18 spending levels, repeal or raise the BCA caps, and keep the promises made to our military and our American workforce.

Sincerely,

David F. Melcher
Lieutenant General, USA (Ret.)
President & CEO
Aerospace Industries Association

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