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ALASKA

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August 25, 2025

Senator Scott Kawasaki  
Co-Chair  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
State Capitol Room 119  
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Andrew Gray  
Co-Chair  
Joint Armed Services Committee  
State Capitol Room 118  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Kawasaki and Representative Gray,

Over the past several weeks, the congressional recess has taken my team and me across Alaska, meeting with servicemembers, military leadership, and various stakeholders to better understand the challenges and opportunities we face together. I was grateful to receive your invitation to the August 28 meeting of the Joint Armed Services Committee (JASC), but unfortunately, I will be unable to join you in-person.

Your work on the JASC continues to be a vital force in advancing Alaska's strategic role and supporting our servicemembers and veterans. I value the opportunity to share updates on our recent efforts and to hear your perspectives on where we can align our priorities moving forward.

In the Senate-passed FY26 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, I secured significant funding to strengthen Alaska's military installations and support our servicemembers. This includes \$406 million in programmatic funding for a Joint Integrated Testing and Training Center (JITTC) at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), a new base supply complex for the Air National Guard at JBER, and a new barrack at Fort Wainwright. I also delivered targeted investments through Congressionally-directed spending for projects identified by the Department of Defense as priorities that went unfunded in the President's budget request, including \$45 million to complete the runway extension at JBER, \$6.7 million to continue the planning and design for a new dormitory at Eielson Air Force Base, and \$7.7 million to begin planning a new dining facility at Fort Wainwright. Over the course of the past several fiscal years, I have also consistently secured additional facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization funding for facilities subject to Arctic and extreme cold-weather conditions to ensure that the infrastructure that we have already built is properly maintained and updated. These projects will enhance operational readiness, improve quality of life, and ensure our bases remain state-of-the-art.

We all seek to do more for Alaska's veterans. The MilCon – VA bill funds the grant programs to assist states in the construction of State Extended Care Facilities and Veterans Cemeteries, and fully funds VA mental health, telehealth, gender-specific care for women veterans, homelessness

prevention, and rural health programs. It also strikes a deliberate balance in funding for care and services for veterans at a VA facility and for those who seek community care services. I included report language directing the VA to improve benefits eligibility education for veterans in communities without a direct road connection to a VA facility, and once again included my provision allowing care-sharing agreements between Alaska's Federally Qualified Health Centers and Alaska Native Tribal health organizations. These investments reflect my ongoing commitment to ensuring that our veterans receive the care, benefits, and respect they have earned.

In the Senate Appropriations Committee-passed FY26 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, I secured critical investments to strengthen our national defense, bolster Arctic readiness, and take care of the servicemembers stationed in Alaska. This bill fully funds the \$21.6 million Alaska Flyback program, which covers the cost to provide servicemembers with one flight home to help alleviate the unique hardships associated with being stationed in Alaska. In 2023, we demonstrated that helping servicemembers in Alaska maintain strong connections with their families and support systems contributed to greater individual resilience and enhanced their quality of life. While the previous iteration was framed as a year-long pilot program, the continuation of the program in FY26 will provide military leaders with more flexibility in how they choose to implement it.

To support the continued development of our nation's Arctic warfighting capabilities, the bill delivers \$7 million for Arctic Medical Evacuation and Treatment Systems, \$1.2 million for snowmobiles for Naval Special Warfare teams, \$7 million for Cold Weather Layering Systems for special operations forces, and a \$5 million boost for DoD Regional Centers, to include the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. Additionally, it provides \$40 million for facilities sustainment and modernization across Alaska's bases, \$6 million for an advanced threat simulator at JPARC, and \$4 million to expand launch capabilities at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Poker Flat Research Range.

The Alaska delegation also secured funding to strengthen America's air defense and cyber capabilities. We fought to restore funding for the E-7A Wedgetail program—identified as the replacement for the aging E-3 Sentry fleet, including those in Alaska—after the President's budget proposed terminating the development program. For cybersecurity, it provides \$7.5 million to continue the Air Force's Cyber Operations for Base Resilient Architecture (COBRA) program, which defends critical cyber terrain, and \$8 million to procure a cyber resiliency system for the F-22 aircraft to detect threats within both the aircraft and its weapons supply chain. These investments ensure our servicemembers have the tools, technology, and infrastructure they need to defend our nation—while keeping Alaska at the forefront of America's defense strategy in the Arctic and beyond.

Alongside these efforts, I continue to meet with senior Department of Defense officials to underscore Alaska's strategic role as America's premier power projection platform. I've consistently advocated for the resources our servicemembers and veterans deserve, because with the highest number of veterans per capita and a critical military footprint, Alaska's defense community is foundational to our national security. Their mission and their well-being remain central to my work. This includes efforts such as securing proper resourcing for the 18th Fighter

Interceptor Squadron, which plays a frontline role in responding to Russian airspace incursions; working to expand our special operations footprint and capabilities in the Arctic, where readiness and presence are increasingly vital; establishing a forward operating location for the Air Force in Alaska to extend our range of operations into the Arctic, and ensuring the completion of the Port of Nome Modification Project to provide the United States with its first Arctic deep water port I also remain committed to working with this administration and our allies to provide the United States Coast Guard with the icebreaking fleet it needs to advance our interests in the Arctic.

In addition, Alaska has hosted a number of key defense leaders this summer, including Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Christopher Grady, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of U.S. Northern Command and NORAD General Gregory Guillot, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment Dale Marks, and Acting Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Kevin Lunday. Meeting with and supporting these visits has been essential to ensuring that Alaska's strategic importance is fully recognized at the highest levels of our defense establishment. Your continued partnership makes a real impact on what we're able to accomplish together.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for being such strong advocates for Alaska's military community. I look forward to our next opportunity to work side by side.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Murkowski", with a stylized, flowing script.

Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator