

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins, and Vice Chair Murray:
As Congress completes the Fiscal Year 2027 Department of Defense Appropriations Act, we respectfully urge you to retain the \$11 million program increase for U.S. Cyber Command high-performance team training included under H.R.9495, Budget Activity 12D, Cyberspace Operations. This targeted investment would help Cyber Command build durable mental health and resilience support for the service members, civilian employees, and teams conducting some of the Nation's most demanding and persistent military operations.

Recent public reporting has described several deaths by suicide among personnel in cyber operations and the Fort Meade community over a short period. Each death is layered with unique personal and professional challenges that no single program can specifically address, however there are areas where prevention efforts have been proven effective. Nevertheless, the concentration of these tragedies within a small, highly specialized workforce demands sustained attention and an institutional response proportionate to the operational strain these personnel bear.

During the Cyber, Information Technologies, and Innovation subcommittee's recent visit, we saw firsthand that the Cyber personnel operate in a uniquely stressful environment. Many of whom are effectively "deployed in place" for two- or three-year assignments, conducting real-world operations against capable adversaries without the clear start and end points, protected recovery periods, or unit-level reconstitution cycles associated with conventional deployments. Because much of their work is classified, personnel may be unable to discuss the source of their stress with family members or with medical professionals who lack the clearances or facility access. These conditions can isolate personnel, limit timely access to appropriate care, and ultimately weaken readiness, retention, and operational effectiveness.

Congress and the Department have already recognized this gap. Congress previously directed a review of the psychological and occupation specific demands placed on cyber operators, and the Department subsequently acknowledged that existing resources did not fully meet the needs of the U.S. Cyber Command. The Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) also expanded mental health services intended to address the Cyber Command's unique requirements by integrating behavioral health professionals with security clearances within cyber units. Nevertheless, the force has not yet fully implemented recommended dedicated support teams and embedded care consistently across the force.

The requested \$11 million would allow Cyber Command to begin closing that gap by funding the FY26 NDAA provision. Embedded support would give providers a better understanding of the mission and its operational tempo, improve access to care for service members inside secure facilities, identify problems earlier, and help commanders build sustainable training, recovery, and resilience practices. Successful models in other high-demand communities, including special operations and remotely piloted unmanned aircraft units and dedicated intelligence commands, demonstrate the value of treating human performance and psychological health as a readiness requirement. Cyber Command noted that this funding could meaningfully reduce burnout and force degradation.

This is a modest investment compared with Cyber Command's broader annual budget and the strategic value of its highly trained workforce. Recruiting, clearing, and developing cyber operators takes years; losing experienced personnel harms families, disrupts teams, increases replacement and training costs, and reduces the Nation's capacity to defend critical systems and conduct military cyber operations. Including this funding will also help ensure that the Department's response is not limited to short-term crisis intervention after a tragedy, but instead establishes accountable, enduring prevention and care. One loss of life is one too many. We must do everything we can to make sure our servicemembers and everyone at NSA and Cyber Command has the full mental health support and resources they need, so that a tragedy like this does not occur again.

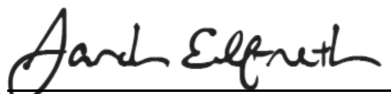
Accordingly, we respectfully request that the final Fiscal Year 2027 Department of Defense Appropriations Act retain the following program increase:

12D CYBERSPACE OPERATIONS

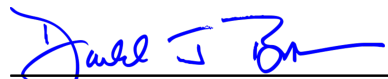
High Performance Team Training \$11,000,000

Providing this funding will signal that Congress values the health and readiness of cyber personnel as much as the technologies and capabilities they operate. We appreciate your continued leadership and your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Sarah Elfleth
Member of Congress



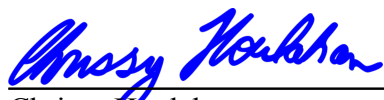
Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



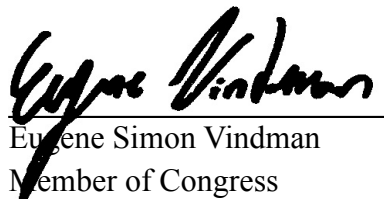
Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
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Eugene Simon Vindman
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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
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