

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 5, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate 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:

We respectfully urge you to retain the \$11 million program increase for U.S. Cyber Command high-performance team training under Budget Activity 12D, Cyberspace Operations, as Congress completes the Fiscal Year 2027 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. Headquartered at Fort George G. Meade, U.S. Cyber Command is central to Maryland's national security community and relies on service members, civilian employees, and families throughout our state to conduct some of the Nation's most demanding and persistent missions.

As the Congressional Delegation of Maryland, we are troubled by recent public reporting describing several deaths by suicide among personnel in cyber operations and the Fort Meade community over a short period. These deaths have a severe impact on the family, friends, and wider community. 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.

Cyber personnel operate in a uniquely stressful environment. Many 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, they may be unable to discuss the sources of their stress with family members or medical professionals who lack the clearances or access to secure facilities necessary for a complete conversation. These conditions can isolate personnel, delay appropriate care, and ultimately weaken readiness, retention, and operational effectiveness.

These challenges are particularly relevant at Fort Meade, where U.S. Cyber Command, the National Security Agency, military cyber components, and other national security organizations operate within a highly secure and interconnected environment. Although Maryland has a significant network of

military, federal, and civilian health resources, traditional centralized-care models do not always give cyber personnel timely access to appropriately cleared professionals in the facilities where they work.

Congress and the Department have already recognized this gap. Congress previously directed a review of the psychological and occupational 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 U.S. Cyber Command's unique requirements by integrating behavioral health professionals with security clearances within cyber units. Nevertheless, dedicated support teams and embedded care have not been implemented consistently across the force.

The requested \$11 million would help U.S. Cyber Command close this gap by funding the FY26 NDAA provision. Embedded support would improve access to care for service members inside secure facilities, give providers a better understanding of the mission and its operational tempo, identify concerns earlier, and help commanders establish sustainable training, recovery, and resilience practices. Models used in other high-demand military communities, including special operations and remotely piloted aircraft units, and dedicated intelligence commands demonstrate the value of treating psychological health and human performance as readiness requirements. Cyber Command noted that without this funding, burnout and force degradation will increase.

This represents a modest investment compared with U.S. 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 Maryland families, disrupts operational teams, increases replacement and training costs, and reduces the Nation's ability to defend critical systems and conduct cyber missions.

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

12D CYBERSPACE OPERATIONS

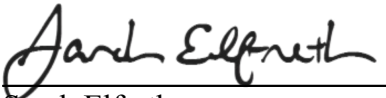
High Performance Team Training	\$11,000,000
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Preserving this funding would demonstrate Congress's commitment to the health and readiness of the cyber workforce at Fort Meade, Maryland, and across the Nation. It would also help ensure that the Department establishes an enduring system of prevention, care, and operational resilience rather than relying solely on short-term interventions following a tragedy. One loss of life is one too many. We

must do everything we can to make sure our servicemembers and everyone at the Fort has the full mental health support and resources they need, so that a tragedy like this does not occur again.

We appreciate your continued leadership and support of Maryland's servicemembers, federal employees, and families.

Sincerely,



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



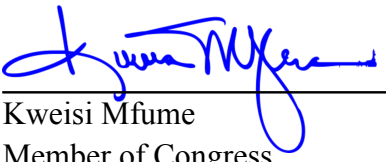
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



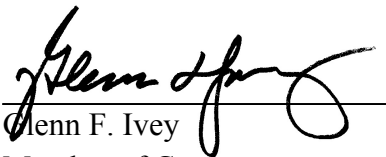
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



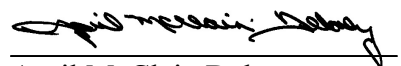
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Member of Congress



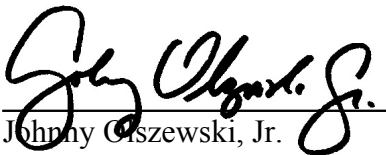
Jamie Raskin
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