



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

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CMC
17 Sep 24

The Honorable Jon Tester
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the impact of Continuing Resolutions (CRs) and budget uncertainty on the readiness and mission of the Marine Corps.

My recent Commandant's Planning Guidance outlines the Marine Corps' strategic priorities and objectives, continuing the momentum of our Force Design initiatives, including maturing kill webs, maturing the force, and Quality of Life efforts that together generate a ready Fleet Marine Force and enable Joint operations. The FY25 President's Budget reflects these priorities and requests the necessary funding to achieve them. However, CRs and budget uncertainty have a detrimental effect on our ability to continue to build the Joint Force's Stand-in Force while sustaining the Nation's crisis response capabilities.

When we operate under a CR, the misalignment and reduced levels of funding prevent the planned execution of our FY25 strategy-driven budget. This leads to inefficiencies and a deceleration in warfighting investment, disruption to recruiting and retention, and reductions to operation and maintenance accounts, potentially compromising our ability to respond to emerging threats. Furthermore, budget uncertainty creates instability and unpredictability in our planning and operations, leading to delays in procurement, maintenance, and training, which impact our warfighting readiness, modernization efforts, and meeting our commitments to our allies and partners.

I urge you to consider the importance of providing timely appropriations for the Marine Corps. Budget certainty – adequate, stable, predictable funding – is the single most effective way to maintain critical strategic momentum in our Force Design transformation efforts to stay in front of our pacing threat, to support our Marines and Sailors, and to fulfill our mission as the Nation's Naval Expeditionary Force in Readiness.

A similar letter has been sent to Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Chairman Calvert. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of the Marine Corps and the defense of our Nation.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E M / MS", is positioned above the typed name.

Eric M. Smith
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Copy to:
The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member