

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0512

December 9, 2021

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Del Toro:

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of the Navy. We are writing to ask that you prioritize child care needs for Sailors and Marines in the Department of the Navy's FY23 budget request. We have engaged with the Department and your predecessors on this issue, including through letters and at hearings during the FY22 budget cycle, where we have sought strong funding as well as information about ongoing efforts to improve access to child care.

We were extremely disappointed that the Navy did not include any funds for Child Development Center (CDC) military construction projects in its FY22 budget request—and not even on the Unfunded Priority List (UPL). This was especially troubling when the Navy and Marine Corps have 40 CDCs in “Poor” or “Failing” condition and thousands of children with immediate need for care on waitlists in all five of the hardest hit areas.<sup>1</sup> This must be a higher priority, as it impacts the wellbeing of servicemembers and military families, as well as the readiness of the force.

We also fully appreciate that CDC capacity is only part of the equation when it comes to improving military child care, which is why we ask that your FY23 budget request also specify additional funding for programs to increase the child care workforce as well as expand fee assistance availability. The Navy and Marine Corps must examine ways to increase recruiting and retention of child care workers that reflects the critical role they play in supporting military family readiness. Fee assistance programs will also broaden the care that is available to military families.

In addition to asking that you submit a robust request for child care funding in the FY23 budget, we ask that you provide the following information to us:

- At the start of FY22, how many children with immediate need for child care were on the Navy's and Marine Corps' waitlists?

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense, “Report to the Congressional Defense Committees on Department of Defense Child Development Programs,” 2020.

- What ongoing efforts are the Navy and Marine Corps making to decrease the number of Sailors and Marines on the child care waitlist with immediate need? What efforts are under consideration for the future?
- What efforts are the Navy and Marine Corps considering to improve the recruiting and retention of child care workers at CDCs? What was the average pay for workers at Navy and Marine Corps CDCs at the beginning of FY22, and what plans does the Department have to increase compensation for child care workers going forward?
- What is the amount of money allocated for child care fee assistance for FY22?
- How many Sailors and Marines were approved for fee assistance in FY21? How many were denied fee assistance? What was the total amount spent on fee assistance in FY21?

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. The staff contact for this issue is Brian Collins in Rep. Speier’s office ([brian.collins@mail.house.gov](mailto:brian.collins@mail.house.gov)). We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland  
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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



Andy Kim  
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Ruben Gallego  
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