

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 22, 2016

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
Office of the Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus:

We write to urge the continued support and maintenance of the Presidential helicopter fleet at the facility in Stratford, Connecticut where it has successfully been done for the past four decades. Any decision to relocate this maintenance program – dealing with helicopters which have approximately five more years of active use – must take full account of the benefits and cost savings with continuing a long-standing program, rather than beginning a new one. We strongly urge you to suspend any relocation until a thorough review of all direct and indirect costs of any relocation are made. We understand there are ongoing discussions between the Navy and Lockheed Martin to keep this work where it has been successfully performed in the past. We request the opportunity to be briefed on this decision and its merits.

The age of the fleet makes it difficult and costly to maintain, and the 85 workers dedicated to the program in Stratford, Connecticut are best prepared to meet this challenge because they have worked on these aircraft for four decades. No other facility has the standing expertise. Any other facility will require time and money to reach the same standard of maintenance, if they can ever meet this challenge. We are confident that Stratford workers are capable of continuing to complete this work – as they have done reliably and safely throughout the life of the program – with an irreplaceable level of expertise and familiarity with the aircraft that sets them apart. Any monetary differential in contracts should be weighed against ensuring timely, accurate, and expert repairs – a feat that can only be accomplished by continuing to employ those currently ready to perform the work at Sikorsky.

We urge you to continue negotiations over this maintenance work until a mutually acceptable agreement can be reached to keep Presidential helicopter maintenance where it belongs, at its historic home in Stratford. We also ask that Stratford continue to be responsible for the support and maintenance of the future VH-92 fleet, which is being developed on site and would benefit from maintenance by its original manufacturer. This program brings prestige to the facility and its workers, and bolsters Connecticut's workforce by employing its highly skilled workers at one of the state's greatest companies.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue. Thank you for your expedient consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



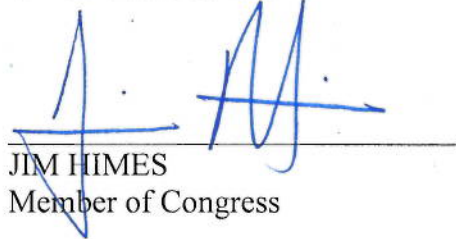
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



ROSA L. DELAURO  
Member of Congress



JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress

cc: Ms. Marillyn Hewson, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Lockheed Martin