Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Cantor, & Majority Whip McCarthy:

As new members of Congress who ran on a shared goal of fiscal conservatism and a strong national defense, we write in support of crafting a budget resolution for fiscal year 2012 that meets our commitment in the *Pledge to America* to provide for a "robust defense."

We support efforts by this Congress to find common sense ways to reduce costs at the Department of Defense and ensure every dollar spent is spent in the best interests of the taxpayer. Ridding the Department of waste, fraud, and abuse and reinvesting those savings to benefit the warfighter will not only allow us to maintain the strength of our force but also meet our commitment to scrutinize every dollar in the federal budget.

As the *Pledge* states, we are a nation at war. We are also a nation facing a number of other critical national security challenges. The ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the threat posed by a nuclear Iran, widespread unrest in the Middle East, threats to our ally Israel, nuclear brinksmanship from North Korea, and the rapid growth of China's military all demand a continued robust investment in our military strength and our national security.

All of these challenges will be met by a fighting force that has been under the strain of two wars for almost a decade. From replacing aging ships to upgrading equipment carried by our troops in the field, we face continued modernization costs to ensure our warriors have the capability to respond to current and future threats. We must prevent any action that would lead to a "hollow force." Given the totality of these threats to our national security and the current strain on our force, we believe the President's budget request for national defense is currently insufficient, representing a reduction in baseline funding for our national security over the next five years.

As a country, we've been down the path of hollow forces and peace dividends before. Since the 1960s our spending on defense as a percentage of our gross domestic product has declined. Underfunding our defense requirements will lead to shorter dwell times and a smaller force. It will leave large gaps in our ship inventories and our fighter aircrafts. It would put our servicemen and women and their missions at risk.

With these concerns in mind, as the House Budget Committee drafts the House Budget Resolution for fiscal year 2012, we write to encourage your support for funding our military and related national security programs above the President's request level. Unlike much of our budget, these programs are the sole responsibility of the federal government and not the States. Moreover, it is a constitutional responsibility assigned to Congress.

Sincerely,

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Scott Rigell
Member of Congress

Bobby Schilling
Member of Congress

David McKinley
Member of Congress

Jim Renacci
Member of Congress

Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress

Jon Runyan
Member of Congress

Mo Brooks
Member of Congress

Tim Scott
Member of Congress

Allen West
Member of Congress

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Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Trey Gowdy
Member of Congress

Tom Marino
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Dennis Ross
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Rich Nugent
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Jeff Duncan
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Chuck Fleischmann
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Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Kristi Noem
Member of Congress

Ann Marie Buerkle
Member of Congress

Rick Berg
Member of Congress

Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress

Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress

Cc: Chairman Paul Ryan, House Budget Committee

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