September 16, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Stars and Stripes Funding for Fiscal Year 2021

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

We write to you today to express our support for Stars and Stripes and the exceptional reporting it provides on important military topics.

In the Department of Defense’s fiscal year 2021 budget request, the Department proposed to eliminate all federal funding for the publication. We appreciate the Department’s recent decision to reverse course and now respectfully urge the Committee to immediately appropriate the Department funding for Stars and Stripes, so that the newspaper will be able to continue publication after funding runs out on September 30, 2020.

Stars and Stripes has dutifully served not only the U.S. Armed Forces, but the American public with vital reporting on critical topics for decades. It is an invaluable resource that informs and educates while providing needed transparency and accountability as an editorially independent newspaper.

As a group of fifteen bipartisan Senators recently wrote to the Department on September 2, “Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom.” We could not agree more.

Since 2001, more than 3 million service members—including many of the signatories to this letter—have relied on Stars & Stripes as a source for information while deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. To dissolve Stars and Stripes would not only deny service members and veterans an opportunity to be more informed, it would represent an insurmountable loss in the ability of the larger military-connected community to communicate directly with our fellow service members and veterans. The benefits it provides vastly outweigh its small cost. We urge you to act fast to provide the necessary funding to continue its vital role in our national discourse.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Blue Star Families
cc: Secretary of Defense Esper, Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger of the House Committee on Appropriations