September 5, 2018

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman, Defense Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-104, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter J. Vislosky  
Ranking Member, Defense Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Vislosky,

We write to express our support, within the conference process, for maintaining the level of funding provided within the House-passed fiscal year 2019 defense appropriations bill for US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), which will fund the initial operational capability (1,141 units) and expedited procurement of AN/PRC-161 Handheld Link 16 close air support capability radios.

This equipment directly connects US ground forces to air support forces and enables coalition force interoperability. These radios allow our warfighters to call in real-time air support and shorten the artillery time to target from minutes to seconds while increasing precision and reducing collateral damage. Seconds and meters matter on a battlefield, and it is not an exaggeration to suggest this capability will save lives and increase our military’s accuracy.

These radios have successfully passed all required tests and exceeded all expectations in effectiveness, suitability and survivability in a number of operational exercises, including the US Army’s Network Integration Evaluation (NIE) of July 2017, which is the Army’s largest operational exercise that tests and evaluates systems and capabilities and serves as the centerpiece for modernization.

Because this technology was initially developed as part of a commercial application outside of normal Department of Defense (DoD) requirements and budget processes, it has outpaced typical developmental timelines. However, this technology has proven that it can be immensely beneficial to our warfighters, and with this additional funding we can ensure it’s in the hands of our servicemen and women as quickly as possible.

Our shared goal is to improve our military’s readiness posture, and this game changing capability will ensure our incredible special operations forces will have the state-of-
the-art tools they need to do their job effectively. We greatly appreciate your attention and support for this important matter.

Sincerely,

Anthony G. Brown  Rob Woodall  Scott Peters
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

John K. Delaney  Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress  Member of Congress