

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Calvert, and Ranking Member McCollum,

Thank you for your work to generate a comprehensive Appropriations package for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27). As you prepare to conference the FY27 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that it contains an additional \$35 million in funds for *Flight Hour Funding for the Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigades (ECABs)* for FY27.

The Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade (ECAB) employs thousands of soldiers and civilians in California, Colorado, Texas, Kentucky, Virginia, Kansas, and New Jersey. The 11th and 244th ECABs play a vital role in our Army and overall national defense, providing critical air assault, medical evacuation, heavy lift, and search and rescue capabilities for the U.S. Army Reserve. Both ECABs have deployed overseas in support of contingency operations and play an essential role in federal disaster relief. However, as part of the Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) to modernize and streamline the Army and its assets, all the ECAB units are scheduled to be deactivated by September 15, 2026. While we support Army modernization, we are deeply concerned by the deactivation of the ECABs, given that the Army has provided no recapitalization plan to ensure that the Army Reserve maintains its capabilities. Additionally, as we understand, the intended replacement capability for the ECAB missions is the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA), which will not be available until at least 2032, leaving the Army Reserve and federal disaster response without mission-critical capabilities for the next few years.

As Members of Congress with ECAB units in our districts, we have been actively working to delay the premature deactivation of the ECABs. Thanks to our efforts, the House-passed FY27 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included language to prohibit the deactivation

of ECAB units until 2031, or until the Secretary of the Army submits a recapitalization plan and comprehensive assessment on the impact of the deactivation on readiness, mission capability, and the communities where ECAB units are stationed. This language also authorized \$35 million to restart ECAB flying hours, to ensure the pilots, engineers, and civilians who support ECAB operations can continue to train. We were disappointed to see that the FY27 Defense Appropriations package did not include an appropriation of those funds, which are essential for ECAB units to maintain operational readiness while the Army develops a suitable recapitalization plan.

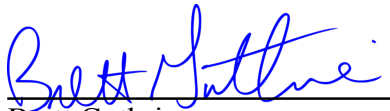
ECABs are among the safest airborne units, engaging in 6,000-7,000 flight hours per year with zero Class A flight accidents from FY20 to FY24. ECABs also offer a meaningful path for those looking to serve beyond active duty to continue their service. Eliminating these units will push knowledgeable, skilled aviators out of the force and risk military readiness.

We encourage you to include \$35 million in the final FY27 DoD Appropriations bill to restart the ECAB flying hours, so that the Army Reserve can maintain readiness, mitigate operational risk, and continue its essential mission until a suitable recapitalization plan or replacement capability can be determined.

Sincerely,



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress


Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress

Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress


Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress