April 3, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chair  
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Ranking Member  
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin:

We are contacting you to express our strong support for the inclusion of language in the FY 2020 defense appropriations bill to provide $5 million for the Secretary of Defense to commemorate the 75th anniversary of World War II, and provide grants to state and local governments, and non-profit organizations for commemoration activities. Please note that this commemoration program and the $5 million requested appropriation was fully authorized by Congress in Public Law 115-433.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II only 558,000 remain alive. Sadly, on average, 362 World War II veterans die each day. The 75th anniversary of World War II is the final opportunity for our nation to formally thank the Greatest Generation for their pivotal role in preserving democracy — in America and around the globe.

It is fitting, proper and appropriate for the Department of Defense to take formal action to commemorate the 75th anniversary and provide modest support for commemoration activities around the country over the next three years. The formal commemoration by DoD of the 75th anniversary would mean so much to our nation’s World War II veterans and their families. Again, this commemoration program is authorized by law and should be fully funded by the Congress.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Rotondi 
Executive Director 
Friends of the National WWII Memorial

Rabbi Raphael Butler 
President and Founder 
Afikim Foundation

Peter Bunce 
President & CEO 
General Aviation Manufacturers Assn

John Cudahy 
President & CEO 
International Council of Air Shows
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Jack Pelton
CEO
Experimental Aircraft Association

Walt Fricke
Airboss/Founder/Chairman
Veterans Airlift Command

Mark Baker
President & CEO
Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association

Ed Bolen
President & CEO
National Business Aviation Association

Matthew Zuccaro
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Paul Rinaldi
President
National Air Traffic Controllers Assn.

Cc: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Members