

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Daniel P. Driscoll
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Secretary Driscoll,

We write to you to express our grave concern over the Army's proposed restructuring of its acquisition enterprise. We are aware that the Department of the Army is currently considering a proposal to dramatically reshape its acquisition offices and workforce by transitioning the 12 current Program Executive Offices (PEOs) to seven Capability Executive Offices (CEOs). This would damage the Army's ammunition acquisition efforts and would have a devastating impact on Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey where that effort is managed. There is no other DoD installation with the same uniquely experienced and qualified staff in arms and ammunition. Moving these missions to other installations would inevitably lead to reduced lethality and poorer weapons being delivered to our soldiers.

We are particularly concerned about the proposal to weaken the current Joint Program Executive Office for Armaments and Ammunition (JPEO A&A) at Picatinny and convert it into the CEO for Ammunition. JPEO A&A is not only responsible for the research and development, acquisition and life-cycle management of all conventional ammunition for the Army, but also the acquisition of conventional ammunition for the other services as well. This has allowed it effectively to oversee the management of the entire ammunition life cycle, ensuring that munitions we develop meet the needs of our soldiers, are properly included in Army budgets, and can be produced and acquired at sufficient volume.

The proposed establishment of the CEO would strip many of the key functions from the JPEO A&A that have made it so effective since 2002. First, the Army's proposal would shift approximately \$500 million a year in research and development work for ammunition currently overseen by JPEO A&A to other CEOs spread across the country. Second, the acquisition of all armaments, including mortars, artillery, and precision fires, would be transferred to other CEOs. Third, all sustainment efforts for the Army's ammunition and armaments would be transferred to the CEO for Sustainment. Combined, this would lead to nearly \$1 billion less in funding for Picatinny Arsenal and the loss of approximately 1,000 jobs. We believe that stripping these key functions from the JPEO A&A would hurt innovation, increase the amount of time it takes to field systems, and reduce the number of Army systems entering wide-scale production.

The Army's proposal to establish a more limited CEO for Ammunition would return the Army to a less effective acquisition model that was proven to be ineffective for decades. Before the Army centralized the acquisition and life cycle management of all Army ammunition into the original PEO for Ammunition in 2002, three separate components were responsible for different parts of the ammunition acquisition process. This led to poor coordination and duplication of work as cooperation between the three organizations was entirely voluntary. The Army's proposal to have multiple CEOs manage different aspects of the ammunition life cycle would essentially recreate this failed system from the 1990s and before. It would lead to a significant breakdown in coordination and likely lead to the duplication of work as multiple CEOs concurrently seek and develop similar munitions. This means that the Army's proposal would lead to wasting more money than the current acquisition process.

Additionally, breaking apart the ammunition life cycle enterprise goes against Congressional intent. In the 1990s, Congress directed multiple studies on the inefficiency of the Army's ammunition acquisition process. The Fiscal Year 1996 National Defense Authorization Act required the Army to commission a study, which was ultimately conducted by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory on the Army ammunition enterprise. That study found that having multiple organizations responsible for the development and procurement of ammunition was ineffective and duplicative. In 1997, Congress then commissioned the Government Accountability Office to review whether the Army was complying with the recommendations on the previous year's study. Ultimately, this Congressional focus on the Army's inefficiencies led to the centralization of ammunition development and acquisition in 2002 with the establishment of the first PEO for Ammunition. Returning to the previous acquisition and life cycle management structure runs against the previous work of Congress to increase efficiency.

Moreover, the Army's proposal will deepen the valley of death for procuring ammunition and weapons, leading to more wasted taxpayer dollars. We agree that the Department of Defense's (DoD) current acquisition process is bloated and inefficient. A prominent inefficiency with the current system is the so-called valley of death, the gap between the research and development of systems and them entering widespread production and acquisition. While the Army's proposal claims it will lead to the increased development of weapons and ammunition, this is false. JPEO A&A currently oversees conventional Army ammunition from cradle to grave. This means that the individuals responsible for the research and development of ammunition and those responsible for producing and procuring it are co-located and report to the same commanding officer. This allows JPEO A&A to account for likely production, procurement, and sustainment concerns with a system during the research and development phase. This seamless management of arms and ammunition means that JPEO A&A is far more effective at getting systems across the valley of death. Moving the research and development of arms and ammunition to other

offices will lead to less coordination and fewer systems entering production. Given the current constraints on the Army's stockpiles and industrial base, this would cripple Army modernization.

Further, the Army's proposal would move responsibility for ammunition and armaments development to organizations and installations without an established expertise in those areas. Picatinny is home to more than 6,000 military and civilian personnel and leads the research, development, acquisition, and lifecycle management of advanced conventional weapons systems and ammunition. The Arsenal has supported the Army's mission for over two centuries, playing a vital role in the success of the U.S. military in both wartime and peacetime operations. The Picatinny workforce has unique experience in successfully developing advanced arms and ammunition that cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. For example, the Arsenal is home to the Army's Armaments Graduate School, which provides post-graduate education in science and engineering fields critical to weapons development. Moving key functions of the JPEO A&A to other installations would cripple the Army's development pipeline for weapons specialists and lead to fewer scientists and engineers receiving the specialized training needed to develop advanced arms and ammunition..

Additionally, the Army will lose thousands of years of collective work experience in arms and ammunition by transferring those 1,000 jobs from Picatinny to other installations. While some individuals may choose to transfer if given the opportunity, it is unlikely that a significant number would move. Implementing the Army's proposal would effectively gut the Army's ammunition and weapons acquisition workforce without a pipeline to replace those employees. There are few individuals with the technical experience and training required to develop weapons and ammunition for the Army, so there is no ready pool of engineers and scientists at other installations to backfill these positions. Simply put, replacing the experience and specialized knowledge of these 1,000 employees is impossible. This loss of knowledge and experience would inevitably lead to the slower development of new systems and inferior products being delivered to our soldiers. This is the exact opposite outcome the Army proposal seeks to achieve.

Given the urgent nature of the matter, we request that you provide us a briefing no later than August 1, 2025, that includes further details on the Army's acquisition reform proposal, an update on the status of the proposal's approval, and answers to the following questions:

1. What analysis was done to determine that breaking apart the responsibilities for the JPEO A&A would increase efficiency?
2. What are the goals of the Army's proposal and how did it determine breaking apart the JPEO A&A would accomplish those goals?
3. How much will the Army's proposal cost?

4. How many civilian positions and contracts would be eliminated by implementing the Army's proposal?
5. How did the Army consult with local communities and Congress in developing this proposal?

We urge you to not break apart the mission of JPEO A&A and distribute it to other installations and organizations. Until this briefing occurs and Congress is properly consulted, we request that the Army not approve its acquisition reform proposal.

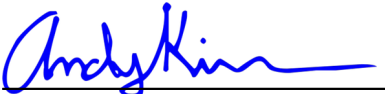
Sincerely,



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



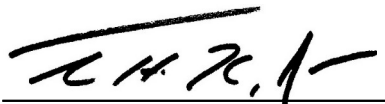
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
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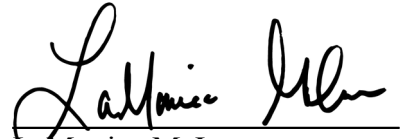
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