

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

February 16, 2023

The Honorable Kathleen H. Hicks
Deputy Secretary of Defense
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

The Honorable Stacey Dixon
Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence
1500 Tysons McLean Drive
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Deputy Secretary Hicks and Deputy Director Dixon,

We write today regarding implementation of Section 1683 of the *Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) and the development of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO). AARO provides the opportunity to integrate and resolve threats and hazards to the U.S., while also offering increased transparency to the American people and reducing the stigma. AARO's success will depend on robust funding for its activities and cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community. As such, we respectfully request your assistance in securing the necessary funding and organizational support for AARO's success and longevity.

While we recognize there was an Administration request for funds in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) to fund basic operating expenses for AARO, it is facing a funding shortfall that will impede its ability to fulfill its mission. The amount outlined in the classified attachment is crucial to AARO's scientific plan, and the lack of funding for these capabilities presents a serious impediment to AARO's mission. We believe it is imperative for the Department of Defense to reprogram funds to cover this serious funding gap and it is for these reasons that we ask that the Department of Defense reprogram funds to prevent disruption to AARO's work. Without FY23 funding, AARO's ability to deliver integrated collection and analysis will fall behind schedule and be sub-optimized.

Additionally, while we understand that the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Presidential Budget Request is all but finalized, we anticipate that the request will not include necessary Research, Development, Test, and Evaluations funding for FY24. While we appreciate that the Department of Defense has been vocal in expressing its support for the resolution of unidentified anomalous phenomena, this commitment must also be reflected in funding requests provided to Congress. Accordingly, we urge you to work with Congress to ensure that AARO is funded appropriately in FY24 and that robust funding is requested for FY25.

In addition to securing necessary funding, we request a briefing from your offices on your agencies' plan to implement the dual reporting of AARO to the leadership of the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community. The *FY23 Intelligence Authorization Act* (IAA) requires that the Director of AARO report directly to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the

Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, with administrative support provided by the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security. The briefing should cover the balance between Intelligence Community and Department of Defense involvement, including how Title 10 and Title 50 authorities will be delegated to, and exercised by, the Director of AARO. We see it as essential that AARO's activities are not viewed or managed as solely an intelligence activity.

The FY22 and FY23 IAAs and NDAA's provided broad authorities for the resolution of unidentified anomalous phenomena across domains, demonstrating significant support for its mission from Congress. It is critical that the aspirations of AARO's mission are met with the resources necessary to succeed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
Vice Chairman, Select
Committee on Intelligence



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



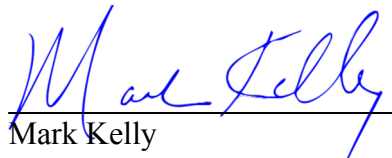
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United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
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United States Senator



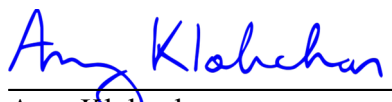
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Richard Blumenthal
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Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Cc: Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/CFO Michael J. McCord