

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 3, 2025

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chair, Subcommittee on Defense
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair McConnell and Ranking Member Coons:

We respectfully request that you provide robust funding for the Department of Defense STARBASE program (“STARBASE”) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Defense Appropriations bill.


STARBASE plays a critical role in building a strong STEM workforce by engaging young students in fifth grade to build a strong STEM foundation that extends through middle school and high school. This foundation is crucial to the long-term success of fostering a highly skilled workforce. Since 1993, STARBASE has served more than 1.8 million students from 42 states and territories. Each year, more than 16,000 volunteers contribute nearly 195,000 hours — at an estimated value of \$6.7 million — to the program, demonstrating the strong support it receives from the communities it serves.


Located on military bases, STARBASE programs utilize military personnel as role models and leverage their expertise to provide students with exposure to real-world STEM applications and careers. This collaboration provides students with not just technical knowledge but also a sense of patriotism and pride, which is unique compared to other federal STEM programs. Given the growing emphasis on a high-tech future, programs like STARBASE are essential in preparing students for the workforce. Importantly, this program also plays a pivotal role in bolstering relationships between the DOD and local communities, assuring access to military installations while fostering awareness of military culture.

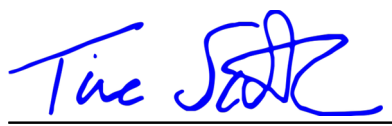
Currently, more than 90 STARBASE programs are located on military installations across the country. In FY 2025, the DOD started five new STARBASE programs: Blackstone Readiness Center, Virginia; Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico; and Warfield Air National Guard Base, Maryland. The first Coast Guard program at Elizabeth City, North Carolina is expected to receive start-up funding in FY 2025, if funds are available. With an additional 17 locations remaining on the waiting list for a program in the future, ample funding is required to sustain a highly educated and skilled workforce capable of meeting the advanced STEM needs of the DOD.


We appreciate the Subcommittee’s past support for the STARBASE program and request the Committee provide robust funding for STARBASE in Defense-wide, Operations and Maintenance, Civil Military Programs, for continued operation of the program in the Fiscal Year 2026 Defense Appropriations Bill.

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator


Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator


Mike Crapo
United States Senator


Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

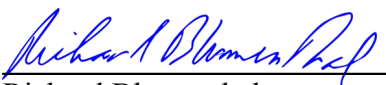

Thom Tillis
United States Senator


Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator


Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator


Jon Ossoff
United States Senator


James E. Risch
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



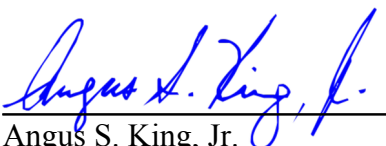
Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



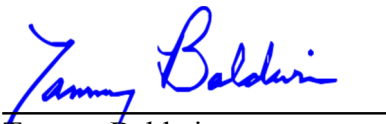
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



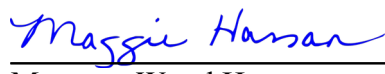
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



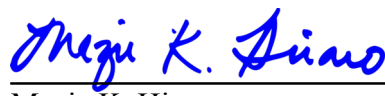
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



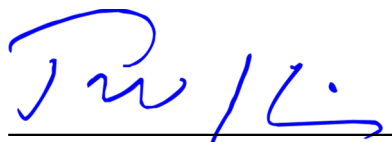
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



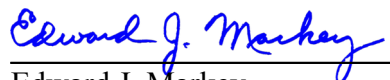
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



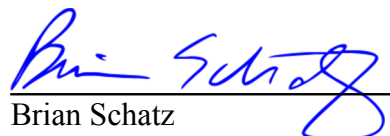
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



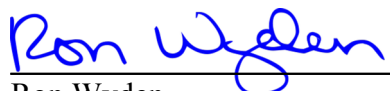
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
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Elissa Slotkin
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