

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
U.S. Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC

The Honorable James M. Mattis
U.S. Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC

The Honorable Rick Perry
U.S. Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC

Dear Secretaries Tillerson, Mattis and Perry:

As you finalize the administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), we strongly urge you to consider the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) recent analysis of the increasing cost of the existing nuclear modernization plan. In light of the CBO's findings, we urge you to incorporate the CBO's analysis into the NPR process so that the review's recommendations are affordable, strictly necessary to maintain deterrence, and do not force the nation to choose between an increasingly costly nuclear modernization program and maintaining conventional superiority.

The CBO makes clear that the administration's current nuclear modernization plan is unaffordable and will reduce our ability to make necessary investments in our conventional capabilities. The CBO reported that the administration's plan will cost up to \$1.7 trillion, with inflation, over the next 30 years, with an annual cost of approximately \$50 billion in the 2030s. The agency noted that these costs would "directly compete for funding with other defense priorities," principally planned investments in our conventional systems, at a time when defense spending is likely to be constrained by long-term fiscal pressures.

The CBO also detailed options to significantly alter the existing modernization plan while still meeting our deterrence requirements. Specifically, the CBO outlined nine options that would either cancel or delay specific nuclear weapons systems, or reduce the number of deployed warheads in line with the Defense Department's 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy. The CBO also considered the possibility of forgoing modernization of select triad components without risking a failure of deterrence. Clearly the existing modernization plan is not sacrosanct.

Many of us oppose the development of new nuclear weapons and believe that the sole purpose of our nuclear arsenal is to deter a nuclear attack. In light of the CBO report, it is now also clear that developing new nuclear weapons is unaffordable, and would force tradeoffs between needed investments in our conventional capabilities. We urge you to reject calls to develop new low-yield weapons or to increase nuclear delivery systems beyond those already planned, which are simply divorced from budgetary realities.

Many of us have opposed certain aspects of the nuclear modernization plan as unnecessary and destabilizing. The CBO's report makes clear, at a minimum, that the existing plan is unaffordable and needs revision. We strongly urge you to incorporate the CBO's findings into the review process so that the NPR can offer a realistic path to maintaining deterrence.

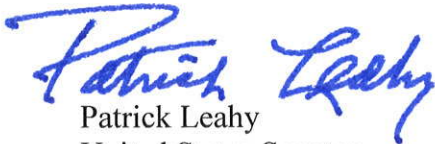
Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



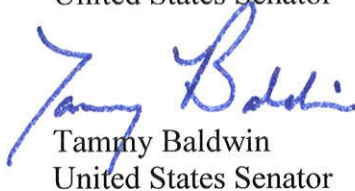
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



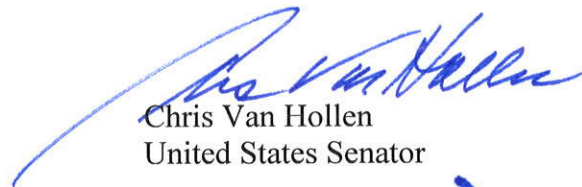
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



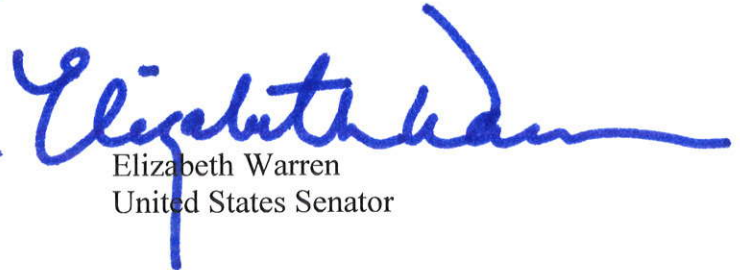
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



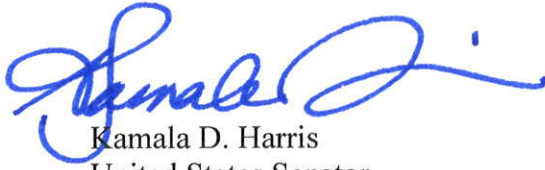
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kamala D. Harris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator