

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 14, 2026

The Honorable Hung Cao
Acting Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Cao:

We write to express deep concern for the personnel and material readiness of the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) and request information on the ship's deployment and future. The Lincoln and her crew have been deployed for more than 8 months, twice extended and still performing at a high level under constant combat conditions. The carrier deployed from San Diego on November 21, 2025, and was originally scheduled to return from deployment in May. Carrier crews are always prepared for extended deployments at sea due to potential operational requirements. However, this crew has been extended multiple times and is still deployed in a combat zone 3 months after their originally scheduled return date – with no anticipated redeployment date in sight. Furthermore, the Lincoln has reportedly only pulled into port twice since deploying, once in December 2025 and a second time for a one-day port call in July 2026. This 208-day period without pulling into port was a modern-day record and uncharted territory for a Navy aircraft carrier and her crew.¹ We recognize the severe logistical challenges that come with operating in a warzone. We also note that these challenges, including the inability to make port calls as frequently and the increased mental strain on sailors in a war environment, should be foreseeable and actions should be taken to mitigate the effects to the extent possible.

Like the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) before it, the Lincoln's extended deployment is accompanied by deeply troubling reports about sailors' mental health and living conditions. These reports are not political conjecture; they come from sailors' worried family members. Numerous sailors have reportedly attempted to jump overboard, in an escalation of challenges the Ford faced. In one instance, the wife of one of these sailors initially received a call from the carrier's ombudsman but has not received more information from the Navy in the last few weeks.² Other family members have sounded the alarm on food shortages or quality issues since April. These concerns reached fever pitch at an August 6 townhall in San Diego, where they were raised by family members of the Lincoln's crew to Acting Secretary Cao and other Navy leadership. Navy leadership took the appropriate step in meeting to address families' concerns, but there remains more to be done to ensure that the families and the public have faith that these sailors are being taken care of and that the Department is appropriately managing the fleet and its readiness for Operation Epic Fury.

The Ford and Lincoln's successive overextended deployments and subsequent challenges have become a pattern in the Administration's handling of its war against Iran. As of August 13, the USS George Washington (CVN-73) is reported to replace the Lincoln at some point in the future.³ The reported conditions on the Lincoln, following so soon after the reported conditions on the Ford, leave both Congress and the public concerned that the Department is not adapting quickly enough to the conditions in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, nor taking the appropriate steps to mitigate the continued challenges in our fleet. As such, we

¹ MS NOW, "[Moldy showers and no soap: Military families are outraged by conditions on USS Lincoln](#)", August 5, 2026

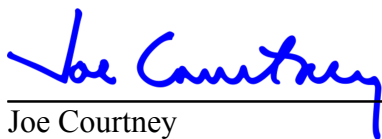
² Navy Times, "[Multiple USS Abraham Lincoln sailors have tried to go overboard amid extended deployment, families say](#)", August 11, 2026

³ Wall Street Journal, "[U.S. Sending Fresh Aircraft Carrier to Middle East Amid Iran War Strain](#)", August 13, 2026

urge the Department to continue communicating with these sailors' families and the appropriate congressional committees, and we respectfully request the following information:

1. What additional resources is the Department providing for sailors who are serving under more difficult conditions on extended deployments?
2. What additional measures are being taken to ensure the safety of sailors who may be struggling with their mental health while on extended deployment?
3. What measures did the Department take to mitigate the effects caused by foreseeable strain on standard replenishment procedures in a contested or combat environment?
4. What specific measures did the Department take to overcome unanticipated resource strains caused by adversaries in the CENTCOM AOR?
5. What methods of communication can family members and the public anticipate the Department will use to share information about conditions or other developments on board? Does the Department plan to use the same methods for future extended deployments for Operation Epic Fury, if applicable?
6. At time of writing, does the Department consider there to be a food shortage or chronic hygiene issues on the Lincoln during this stage of deployment?
7. What lessons learned, related to either personnel or material readiness from the extended deployment of the Ford, were put into practice to mitigate strain on the Lincoln personnel?
8. What new procedures, both for personnel and material readiness, can be informed by the extended deployments of the Ford and the Lincoln and how may they be implemented for a potential deployment of the George Washington or other carriers facing lengthy deployments?
9. What lessons learned, related to the Ford's post-deployment, can be put into practice when the Lincoln returns for its maintenance availability?
10. If the George Washington shifts to CENTCOM to relieve the Lincoln, what are the Navy's plans to maintain its current force posture in INDOPACOM?

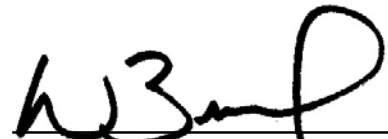
Sincerely,



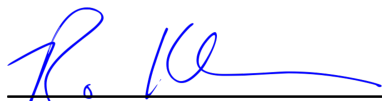
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



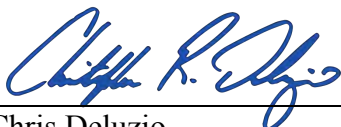
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



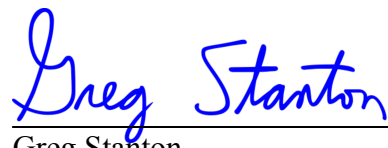
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



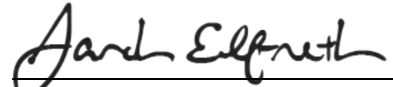
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



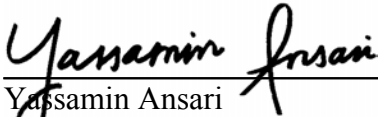
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



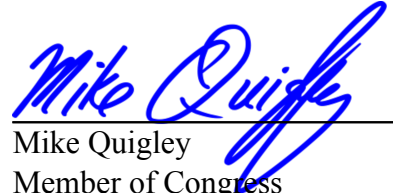
Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



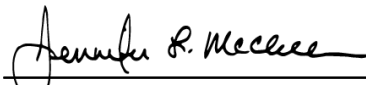
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



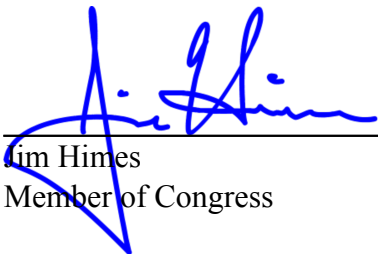
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



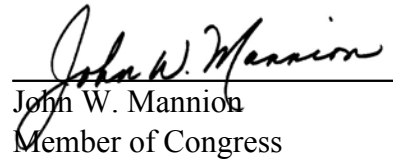
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



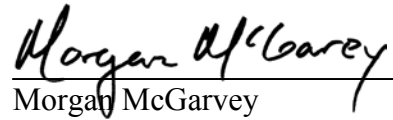
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



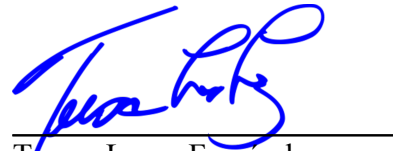
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



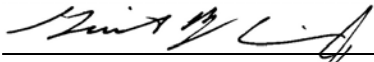
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



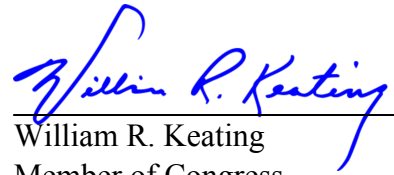
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



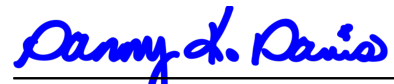
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



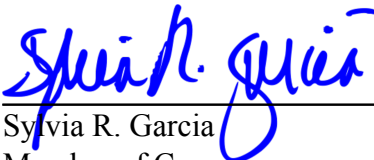
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



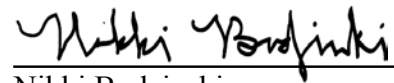
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



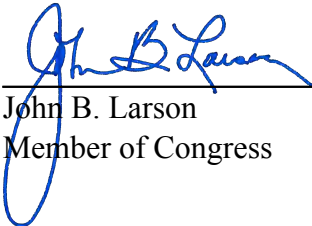
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



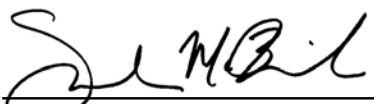
Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



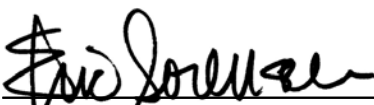
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



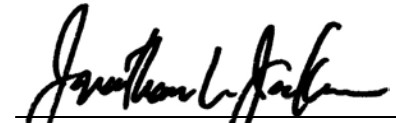
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



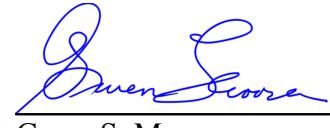
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



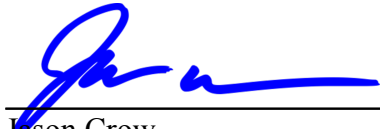
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



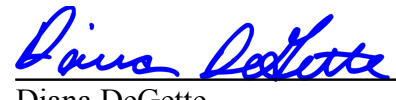
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



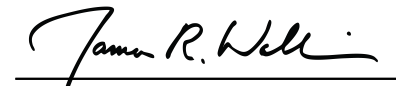
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



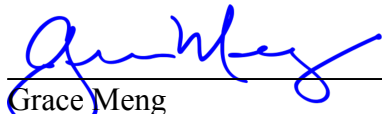
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Gabe Amo', written above a horizontal line.

Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Thomas R. Suozzi', written above a horizontal line.

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jim Costa', written above a horizontal line.

Jim Costa
Member of Congress