

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 24, 2020

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing today in strong opposition to your decision to undermine programs that advance our national security and support jobs in Wisconsin. This month, you announced that you would be taking funding appropriated by Congress for Army vehicle and Navy shipbuilding programs that support jobs in Oshkosh and Beloit to fund an ineffective southern border wall. To add insult to injury, your recently released Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request cuts funding for these same programs. These cuts threaten our national defense and undermine jobs in Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest.

For generations, the manufacturing sector in Wisconsin has been at the heart and soul of our nation's defense. During World War II, Wisconsin produced dozens of submarines for the U.S. Navy with more than 7,000 men and women in Manitowoc working around the clock to build some of the best submarines in the Navy. Beginning in 1938, Wisconsin manufacturer Fairbanks Morse Engine in Beloit delivered hundreds of engines to power the US Navy submarine fleet – an accomplishment that is now being recognized by the naming of a future Navy warship as the "USS Beloit." And in November 2008, when the government issued an urgent request for an answer to the crippling threat of advanced Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) in Afghanistan patriotic workers in Oshkosh delivered the M-ATV to Afghanistan within a year and a half. No other major piece of military equipment was fielded as quickly since World War II.

I recognize the need to modernize the military to meet future threats, in particular those coming from Russia and China as outlined in your National Defense Strategy (NDS). However, no strategic document anticipated 18 years of conflict in the Middle East prior to 9/11. In the early years of this ongoing war, a lack of capable armored vehicles forced servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan to line the flood boards of their trucks with sandbags and weld scrap pieces of metal onto their vehicles as makeshift armor. Due to the threat posed by even rudimentary IED technology, one of the most dangerous jobs in the military during these conflicts were Army and Marine Corps "Motor Vehicle Operators," the military's truck drivers. In response, the military made the decision to prioritize the modernization of many Wisconsin-made life saving programs like the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) and the Family of Medium Tactical Wheeled Vehicles (FMTV).

The funding that you diverted to the southern border wall would advance our national security. In fact, on February 21, the Missile Defense Agency requested from Congress an additional \$30 million for the HEMTT as an "unfunded priority" under your budget. Whether fighting insurgencies or future great power conflicts, the military will need upgraded and highly capable tactical wheeled vehicles such as the HEMTT, FMTV and Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) to effectively and safely transport troops, fuel, ammunition, and other supplies. Divesting in the HEMTT and FMTV and buying less JLTVs than planned will force the military again to move personnel and equipment across current and future the battlefields from vulnerable positions, possibly against a far more advanced enemy. As Secretary Esper has said previously to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, "Clearly, we need to have

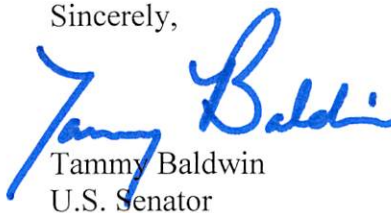
the means by which to move soldiers around the battlefield or supplies, whatever the case may be.<sup>1</sup> A generation of veterans fought, died and lost limbs in vehicles that were unable to stop IEDs and paid the price for our inability to predict the future.

Congress added \$101 million to the HEMTT account last year to allow industry to continue meeting minimum sustaining rates (MSR) in order to avoid having to shut down production lines or lay off workers. Diverting that money to the wall along with proposed cuts in this year's budget is exerting harmful and unnecessary pressure on the industrial bases supporting HEMTT, FMTV and JLTV. Your Fiscal Year 2021 budget cuts HEMTT by \$67 million below MSR, FMTV by \$86 million below MSR and proposes buying 681 less JLTVs than planned. Funding for these accounts support over 3,300 jobs in Wisconsin and hundreds of more suppliers across the Midwest. The HEMTT industrial base consists of 369 suppliers contributing to \$319.2 million in economic activity through the first four months of fiscal year 2020. The FMTV industrial base is comprised of 336 suppliers representing \$365.9 million in economic activity through the same period. Around 56% and 60% of these industrial bases are small businesses—many of which only supply for these programs—and approximately 17% across both sectors are Women Owned, Small Disadvantaged, Veteran Owned, or HUBZone businesses.

Similar to the Wisconsin manufacturing capabilities that proved to be dependable in resolving the threat of IEDs in Iraq, men and women of Beloit, WI are building the largest and most powerful diesel engines in North or South America in order to propel our US Navy ships. Amphibious ships such as the LHA (Landing Helicopter Assault), which is being cut by \$650 million in an effort to divert money to the southern border wall, are particularly critical in countering the threats posed by countries like Russia and China. The cancellation of the LHA acquisition, and the 6 large diesel engines on this ship, will cause severe and unnecessary pain to the more than 100 Wisconsin workers that build these engines.

You promised the people of Wisconsin that Mexico would pay for your ineffective border wall. However, you are once again making American taxpayers fund it and you are taking funding away from Wisconsin manufacturers that strengthen our national defense and create jobs. I urge you to reverse this harmful decision and work with Congress to provide sufficient funding for programs that support our national security and maintain the industrial workforce we need to ensure our servicemembers have the support they need.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Senator

cc: Mr. Peter Navarro  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

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<sup>1</sup> Review of the FY2019 Budget Request for the U.S. Army: Hearing before the Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, Senate, 115th Congress (2018) (Joint Testimony of Secretary of the Army Mark Esper and Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley).