

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

May 10, 2016

COMMITTEES:
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The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

As you finalize your work on the fiscal year (FY) 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, I write in strong support of permanently changing the Department of Defense's (DoD) long-term temporary duty (TDY) policy under the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) as it applies to civilian public naval shipyard workers. While I understand the need to scrutinize costs carefully in order to eliminate waste, I believe that failure to permanently change this policy would place our nation's Naval fleet readiness at risk, harm mission-essential shipyard workers, and end up costing more money.

According to Admiral William Hilarides, Commander of Naval Sea Systems Command, the reduced reimbursement rate for long-term TDY is currently jeopardizing the ability of public naval shipyards to effectively and efficiently conduct Navy ship maintenance, modernization, and repair. Additionally, the policy is projected to increase end costs of projects, which undermines the intent of implementing the change.

The Department's approach is also harming our shipyard workers, who often conduct long-term TDY assignments. I am concerned that this new policy may reduce the number of shipyard workers who are willing to volunteer to perform long-term TDY travel as the reduced rates are insufficient to cover all TDY expenses. We owe our dedicated shipyard workers, who make great sacrifices on our behalf, the assurance that they will not be responsible for expenses that should be paid for by the government.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this request and look forward to working with you to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator