

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 23, 2020

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
H-232, the Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Leader Mitch McConnell
S-230, the Capitol
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker and Leader McConnell,

As Black, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander American Members of Congress, we are writing to express our strong support for Secretary-designate Lloyd Austin, who has been named by President-elect Biden as his nominee for Secretary of Defense, and the necessary congressional waiver.

Secretary-designate Austin's appointment as Secretary of Defense would make our country stronger and safer. He has led a distinguished career from a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and most recently, head of the United States Central Command. Secretary-designate Austin has extensive combat experience and an impeccable record of service to our country.

Moreover, as the first Black nominee for Secretary of Defense, Secretary-designate Austin's appointment would not only break historic barriers, but send an important signal to our country and the rest of the world about the value of diversity, inclusion, sacrifice and strength. We believe President-elect Biden deserves the person that he wants to lead our military. After conducting the necessary hearings in both the House and Senate, we encourage you to move his nomination and the necessary congressional waiver forward quickly in the 117th Congress.

Due to the pandemic and paradigm shift in global power, our world is entering a new era. We look forward to working closely with you, the Biden-Harris Administration, Secretary-designate Austin and the Department of Defense to put an end to the coronavirus crisis, keep Americans safe, and protect our national security interests abroad.

Sincerely,



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Val Butler Demings
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Al Lawson
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D
Member of Congress

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho
Sablan
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress