

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Esper:

Since John F. Kennedy first challenged the country to probe the vast unknown of space and land a man on the moon, the State of Florida has been at the forefront in this great national endeavor. Our great state has much to offer for the future of space related activities. As such, we were pleased that your recent testimony to the Senate Committee on Armed Services stated that the Department of Defense (DOD) would be undertaking a transparent, nonpartisan and iterative process to reassess the permanent location of the United States Space Command (USSPACECOM) Headquarters. Subsequently, we wholeheartedly urge you to select the great State of Florida as the location for USSPACECOM.

Every American manned mission to space began its voyage on Florida soil. Apollo, the Space Shuttle, and the Mars Rover all launched from Florida. Last month, the newest service of our military, the United States Space Force, launched its first rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Our state has led the charge in the renaissance of the space industry in the last decade. Through the committed efforts of leaders past and present, Florida has cultivated a synergistic relationship between federal and state agencies, branches of the military, and the private sector to advance U.S. leadership in space. Florida is also home to several excellent institutions of higher education with a long history of prioritizing space research and innovation which would be a great asset to USSPACECOM as the Space Force grows.

Maintaining technological superiority in space, projecting power from above, deterring our adversaries, and preserving our national security through the acceleration of our space systems is our nation's next challenge. Florida's reputation as the most military-friendly state in the nation is unrivaled. Few states can compare with the training opportunities and expansive testing ranges our state affords its tenant commands. In addition to 20 active duty military installations around the state, SOCOM, CENTCOM, and SOUTHCOM all call Florida home. We hope the additional positive benefits Florida brings to the future of space operations will factor into your upcoming decision on where to locate USSPACECOM.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter, and look forward to discussing more about what Florida, the gateway to the stars, has to offer.

Sincerely,

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

Rick Scott  
U.S. Senator

Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress

Matt Gaetz  
Member of Congress

Neil P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Daniel Webster  
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John Rutherford  
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Ross Spano  
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Charlie Crist  
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
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Val Demings  
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Kathy Castor  
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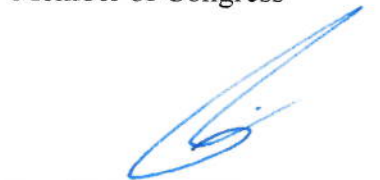
  
Gus Bilirakis  
Member of Congress


  
Debbie Mucarsel-Powell  
Member of Congress

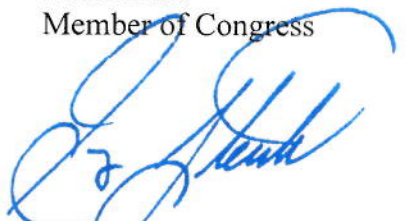
  
Donna E. Shalala  
Member of Congress

  
Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

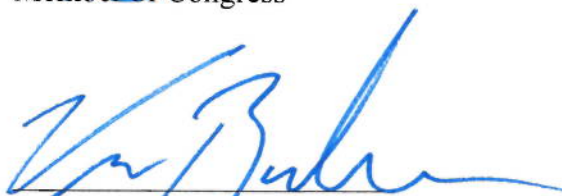
  
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