

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Minority Leader McConnell,

We write you today to share our deep concern for the stability of our Armed Services and national security and call on you to exercise your leadership to protect the readiness of our military. Since February, Senator Tommy Tuberville [R-AL] has been single-handedly blocking the promotion of hundreds of generals and admirals, threatening our national security and the orderly and necessary leadership transitions typical of our professional military, over his disagreement with the DOD's travel policy. We know you share our concerns about the consequences of this hold on our Armed Services<sup>1</sup>, and as the leader of your conference, we urge you to take stronger action to resolve this situation.

Although there are numerous ways to legislatively change this policy, Senator Tuberville has failed to convince a majority of the Senate to agree with his position. He continues to try to force his personal beliefs on the women and men who volunteer to serve our country, creating unnecessary havoc and punishing servicemembers for a policy they had no part in writing. In the coming months, more than half of the current Joint Chiefs are required to vacate their posts, and due to Senator Tuberville's stonewalling, they'll do so without a Senate-approved successor in place. During this time of heightened global tensions, failing to fill these critical positions is not only imprudent but risks our national security.

In a May 5<sup>th</sup> letter detailing the full accounting of the impact of Tuberville's hold, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin estimated that by the end of the year nearly 650 general and flag officers will require Senate confirmation. Since the tenure of service chiefs is limited by law, incumbents must vacate their positions at the appointed time. This was the case on July 10, when the Marine Corps Commandant retired without passing command to his designated successor for the first time in 164 years. This is but one example of the key appointments Senator Tuberville is holding up. Mission vacancies such as this will continue hindering Pentagon operations. In new domains of potential conflict, holds on positions such as the Director of the National Security Agency who commands the U.S. Cyber Command, jeopardize our systems at a time when adversaries are exploiting any perceived weakness in America's defense.

When asked during a recent Senate Armed Services hearing, Air Force General Charles Brown, the nominee to become the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarked how Senator Tuberville's hold is impacting more than just senior military leadership. He explained the ripple-effects hindering the progression of junior officers which are leading some members to leave the military entirely. Families who were ordered to move are now living in temporary family housing, children aren't able to ready themselves for new schools, and spouses are missing vital

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<sup>1</sup> [McConnell breaks with Tuberville over blanket hold on military nominees | The Hill](#)

employment opportunities.

As the leader of the Republican Conference, we count on you to hold your colleagues accountable when they recklessly cross boundaries and upend Senatorial order. Senator Tuberville's continuation of this stalemate is reckless, dangerous, and must end.

It falls to you to act now, for the safety and security of our nation. We urge you to exercise your leadership and prevail on Senator Tuberville to end his reckless hold.

Sincerely,



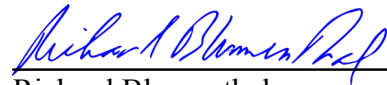
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



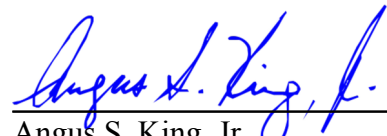
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



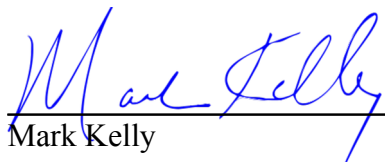
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator