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**Congress of the United States**  
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December 2, 2021

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Republicans in Congress Blocking Pay Raise for Military Service Members and Fueling Economic Uncertainty and Higher Costs on American Families and Business Owners

Dear Minority Leader McConnell,

I urge you to end your intentional obstruction of the National Defense Authorization Act, annual appropriations bills, and the Build Back Better Act, as you are causing economic harm to American families and businesses at a time when the economy is bouncing back from Covid19 and people are returning to the workforce in much higher numbers. American families deserve leaders who are going to stand up for them, help lower costs and improve their lives, yet Republicans in Congress are intent upon causing chaos and economic turmoil solely for political purposes. One Republican senator recently celebrated higher prices on working families by calling it a political “gold mine.” That’s terrible.

I represent many military service members, families and veterans in the Tampa Bay area, and I am particularly concerned that you are blocking a pay raise for our military and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians and forcing a “continuing resolution” (CR) that hamstring DOD and other agencies from investing in our evolving national security missions. Service members and military leaders despise CRs because they are costly to the various military missions and leave them unable to plan operations effectively and confidently. Long-term CRs also impair the ability to plan and execute timely contracts and cost critical resources. When Republicans block a military pay raise and fuel economic turmoil, it impacts everyone, businesses large and small. Doing so as we enter the holiday season simply to score political points is cynical and wrong.

Not only does a long-term CR hurt the service members I represent in Tampa, but it also hurts the small businesses across Tampa Bay that work with DOD to keep our warfighters and homeland safe. The National Defense Industrial Association hit the nail on the head in a recent

letter, “it [CR] is a poor stand-in for the full-year appropriations desperately needed by our warfighters. The limbo caused under CRs wastes precious time and money our nation cannot recover.” The technologies developed by Tampa area businesses have improved our military capabilities and created good-paying jobs, but that growth is at risk under CRs. We know that uncertain funding from CRs leads to contract delays and rebids, which costs the federal government money as well as small businesses in my community.

Fortunately, under President Biden’s leadership and with passage by Democrats of the American Rescue Plan and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the holidays this year will be far brighter and happier – and our economy stronger – than it was last December. While developed countries around the world are facing inflation and higher prices because of a global pandemic, Americans are better off than families around the world. **Even after inflation, the typical American family has more money in their pockets than they did last year or the year before that – we’re the only developed economy where that’s true.** And, while we still face challenges, we see good news across the economy. Jobs are up. Wages are up. Child poverty is down by 40 percent and new small businesses are up by 30 percent.

Now, we have a chance to build on that progress, to lower prices, and to fight inflation with the President’s Build Back Better Act. **In fact, a new report showed that a typical family of four would see tax cuts and savings of \$7,400 a year under the President’s plan.** And the Build Back Better Act is fiscally responsible – unlike the GOP tax scam. It fully covers the cost of its investments by asking the largest corporations and richest Americans to pay a little bit more. It is the first major piece of legislation in more than a decade that is not only fully paid for, but will generate more than \$100 billion in deficit reduction.

You have made it clear that you will oppose the President’s plan. Congressional Republicans have the opportunity to work with us to lower the cost of daycare for a middle-class family, but instead you said, ‘No - pay more.’ Republicans could help us reduce the cost of taking care of an elderly parent, but again you said, ‘No - pay more.’ The cost of prescription drugs could have been lower – a lot lower – just \$35 a vial for insulin. But Republicans are telling the American people, ‘No - pay more.’

This morning, we received additional evidence of the strength of America’s historic economic recovery and welcome news that many of our neighbors are getting back. New unemployment claims are now at a level not seen since March 7, 2020, and last week’s claims were revised down to their lowest level since 1969. **Initial unemployment claims are now down more than 70 percent since President Biden took office,** and total claims filed each week are now down by around 16 million over that same period. **America’s jobs recovery is strong thanks to President Biden and Democrats.** In addition to recent steps the President has taken to address supply chain bottle necks and reduce the price of gas at the pump, the historic Build Back Better Act will cut costs that American families have struggled with for years. Today’s data underscore the historic progress we are making and the importance of building on that progress in the weeks ahead.

I urge you to stop throwing a wrench into America’s progress with your harmful obstruction. Support the brave men and women who serve our nation selflessly and help us build on the improving American economy. Stop causing economic turmoil and uncertainty for our




neighbors just to score political points. Congressional Democrats stand ready to work with you to confront national security challenges, sustain American competitiveness and innovation and lower costs for families.

Happy Holidays,

*Kathy Castor*

Kathy Castor  
 United States Representative  
 Florida – District 14

P.S. I have included a helpful graphic to remind you of the progress House Democrats have made to Build Back Better for the American people.

<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Democratic House Action</b>	<b>Senate GOP Obstruction</b>
<b>9/12 Appropriations Bills</b>	 <i>Passed July 2021</i>	
<b>FY22 National Defense Authorization Act</b>	 <i>Passed Sept. 23, 2021</i>	
<b>Temporary Debt Limit Increase</b>	 <i>Passed Oct. 12, 2021</i>	<i>Signed into law on Oct. 14, 2021 despite GOP obstruction</i>
<b>Bipartisan Infrastructure Law</b>	 <i>Passed Nov. 5, 2021</i>	 <i>Signed into law Nov. 15, 2021</i>
<b>Build Back Better Act</b>	 <i>Passed Nov. 19, 2021</i>	