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## United States Senate

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

Childcare is an essential concern in the lives of many Americans, and particularly for the brave men and women who serve in our nation's armed forces. Servicemembers have repeatedly raised childcare issues with me during my visits to Arizona's military bases and other military installations around the world. I am pleased Congress and the Administration worked together to include childcare provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020 (NDAA), and look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Defense to effectively implement these provisions for servicemembers in Arizona.

The state of Arizona is home to nearly 20,000 military personnel, many of whom are parents. Servicemembers childcare needs are unique from the civilian population due to the nature of military service, which frequently includes permanent change-of-station moves, working inflexible hours and overseas deployments. Additionally, school districts in our state have increasingly shortened the school week due to a lack of funding in recent years. Lack of available childcare has forced some to take personal leave in order to care for their children. This causes stress for servicemembers, their units and the children themselves. America must do better for parents in the military.

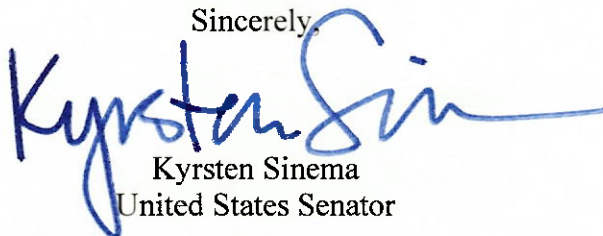
I am especially proud of the Child Development Center at Luke Air Force Base, which was recognized as the Air Force's best child development program in 2016. This facility stood out among 100 others for its quality services and dedicated staff. That excellence must be maintained and expanded to all child care facilities serving military families, and our allocation of resources should reflect those values. We especially want to ensure that all parents have access to these essential services.

Section 580 of Public Law 116-92, the NDAA, includes Improvements to Child Care for the Members of the Armed Services, which requires a report from you by June 1 of this year on remediation of any shortfalls. I look forward to reading this report and hope to join your briefing on childcare parity as required by the Senate Committee NDAA Report.

The Department of Defense has taken commendable actions to deliver childcare benefits to servicemembers and to address the shifting needs of servicemembers and their children. Servicemembers cannot protect and defend our nation if they are worried about their children. It is paramount that the department provide sufficient childcare to the military personnel, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to address this important need.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kyrsten Sinema". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator