

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Richard Spencer  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Spencer:

We write to you today concerning recent decisions to remove ships from their homeport for ship maintenance that is scheduled to take less than 10 months, even though it is not necessary to do so. In the past year, policy changes implemented by the Navy's Southeast Regional Maintenance Center (SERMC) have led three (3) Patrol Craft (PC) ships (*USS Zephyr*, *USS Shamal*, *USS Tornado*) and their sailors to be removed from their homeport of Naval Station (NS) Mayport for a Docking Phased Maintenance Availability (DPMA). All of these DPMAs have been removed from NS Mayport even though adequate competition existed and the initial Period of Performance was less than 10 months in duration. The most recent action taken by SERMC for the *USS Zephyr* DPMA in March involved increasing the period of performance from less than 10 months to over 10 months after establishing competition existed. This behavior demonstrates a clear and constant pattern of removing PCs from their NS Mayport homeport.

These moves appear to be a potential violation of law and are detrimental to the quality of the life of the sailors and their families. After overseas deployments and training exercises away from their families, sailors rely upon the period in homeport as a time to reconnect. However, when decisions are made to remove ships, like the *USS Zephyr*, *USS Shamal*, *USS Tornado*, sailors are unnecessarily subjected to additional stress and pressures.

In addition to the impact on quality of life, the removal of these DPMAs from NS Mayport increases the volatility of the local ship repair industrial base work load. A healthy industrial base is crucial for the readiness of all the ships homeported at NS Mayport. The Jacksonville ship repair industrial base has weathered years of reduced ship counts and it seems counter intuitive to exacerbate the situation by removing ships from the homeport when competition exists.

With this in mind, we look forward to your responses to the following questions in regards to Title 10 of the U.S. Code relating to maintenance contracts for Navy vessels:

1. Are there two or more firms available to perform the work at Mayport?
2. If so, were those firms solicited for bids?
3. If a contracting officer determined that these firms were unqualified or the work should be performed elsewhere, was the reason permitted by law?
4. If a contracting officer determined that these firms were unqualified or the work should be performed elsewhere, and such a decision was permitted by law, can you please provide background documentation?
5. Please provide a detailed timeline of decisions made regarding this contract award including:
  - a. Original Solicitation
  - b. Cancellation or delay of solicitations
  - c. Decision to change the vessel's homeport

6. When determining to reissue the solicitations for the *USS Zephyr*, *USS Shamal*, and *USS Tornado* with an expanded range of availability from the homeport, did the Navy include the costs of moving the ship and its crew when considering what bids may be fair and reasonable, and if so, what were those costs?

Thank you for your service and dedication to the Navy and the quality of life of its sailors and Marines. Your Answers to these questions will ensure that we continue to assist you in doing everything we can to make the Navy and its families stronger and more resilient.

Sincerely,



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Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



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John M. Rutherford  
Member of Congress