

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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August 28, 2025

The Honorable John Phelan
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Navy
1200 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Phelan:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is continuing to investigate the U.S. Navy's (Navy) efforts to address possible physiological and psychological effects experienced by naval aviators and flight officers.¹ As you know, recent public reporting revealed concerns among current and former naval personnel about the possible prevalence of brain injuries among aviators and flight officers.² In light of these concerns and to assist the Committee's ongoing oversight, we are requesting additional documents and information related to the Navy's evaluation, tracking, and mitigation of these health risks.

The Committee is concerned that the Navy is failing to adequately understand or address the underlying causes of traumatic brain injuries, cognitive dysfunction, and mental health issues affecting aviators and flight officers. Documents produced by the Navy indicate that the Department has never conducted a comprehensive investigation into the psychological effects of flight operations on these personnel.³ The lack of information on this issue also raises concerns about the adequacy of the information that is being provided to Congress and decisionmakers regarding the health and welfare of our warfighters. It is critical that the Navy take all necessary steps to identify the potential health risks facing aviators and flight officers.

To further assist the Committee's ongoing investigation into this matter, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but no later than September 11, 2025:

1. All reports, statistical data, medical studies, situational assessments, and substantive communications, including memoranda or email attachments, relating to F-18 aviator mental and physical health and/or suicide from January 1, 2023, to the present. Including but not limited to any materials raising concerns, formally or informally, regarding

¹ Letter from Rep. James Comer, Chair, H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, to Acting Secretary Terence Emmert, U.S. Navy (Feb. 6, 2025) (on file with H. Comm. on Oversight & Government Reform)

² Dave Phillips, *Top-Gun Navy Pilots Fly at the Extremes. Their Brains May Suffer*, THE N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 8, 2024).

³ Email from U.S. Navy Staff to H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform Staff (March 14, 2025); Briefing from U.S. Navy Staff to H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform Staff (May 28, 2025).

traumatic brain injuries, cognitive impairments, or risks associated with flight operations, directed to, from, or involving the following U.S. Navy personnel⁴:

- a. [REDACTED]
- b. [REDACTED]
- c. [REDACTED]
- d. [REDACTED]
- e. [REDACTED]
- f. [REDACTED]

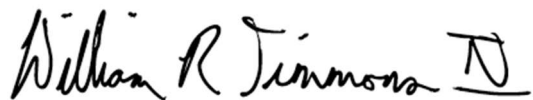
To arrange for delivery of documents or to ask any related follow up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform



William Timmons
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military and
Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Suhas Subramanyam, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs

⁴ Committee staff reserves the right to supplement this list with additional names as the investigation progresses.