

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

As the Department of Defense considers the delivery of additional aid to Ukraine, we strongly encourage you to include the delivery of small, American-made drones, which are essential for tactical success on the battlefield.

Small drones play an essential role in Ukraine's war effort. These systems are the primary method for identifying targets, directing artillery fire, surveilling enemy positions, and enabling battlefield maneuvers and force protection. On the front lines, Ukraine consumes around 10,000 of these small drones per month, most of which are made by a single Chinese company.

While DOD has played a key role in sending larger systems to Ukraine, we understand the U.S. State Department has provided several hundred small drones to Ukraine's Ministry of Interior, which fights alongside the Ukrainian military on the front lines. The provision of drones to Ukraine benefits both Ukraine and the United States. As a result, the Department of Defense must join this effort and provide Ukraine with small drones for three fundamental reasons:

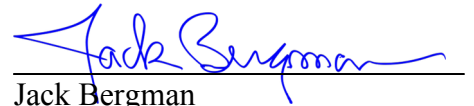
1. Drones are critical to Ukraine's struggle to defend their country in the face of Russian aggression. Without drones, Ukrainian forces are unable to direct battlefield fires, identify and surveil enemy positions, and protect their own forces.
2. Ukraine's use of drones provides a window into the future of near-peer conflict, with drone tactics evolving on a daily basis. Surging small, American-made systems to Ukraine benefits the United States military and our industrial base by enabling rapid iteration and improvement in the world's most demanding battlefield conditions. The use of American drones in Ukraine allows the United States to iterate and build systems superior to Chinese drones and develop capabilities that are necessary for deterring—and if necessary, winning—future near-peer conflicts.
3. Delivering American drones to Ukraine and displacing Chinese drones is a geopolitical victory for the United States. Drone exports are an increasingly important tool for influence abroad; replacing Chinese systems in Ukraine will further erode Chinese influence and control of this critical global industry.

The recently enacted Ukraine Supplemental included \$13.8 billion in funding for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), a crucial mechanism for delivering defense aid to Ukraine. In obligating these and other appropriate funds, we strongly urge you to include small, American-made drones in the next package of assistance to Ukraine. Without these drones, Ukrainian forces cannot conduct effective battlefield operations and must rely on insecure drones from China that are increasingly difficult to procure. We look forward to working with you to meet this compelling, urgent need.

Sincerely,



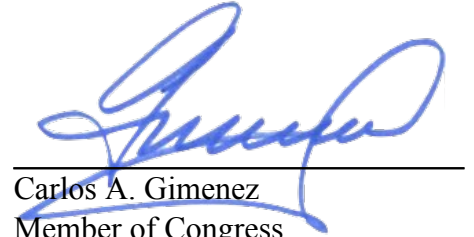
Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA  
Member of Congress



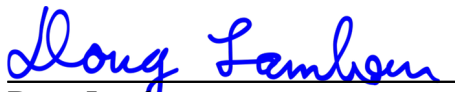
Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress



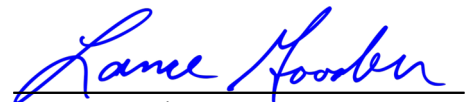
Jen A. Kiggans  
Member of Congress



Ashley Hinson  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



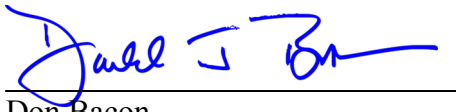
Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress



Nick LaLota  
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Don Bacon", written over a horizontal line.

Don Bacon  
Member of Congress