



**INTERNATIONAL
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March 12, 2020

VIA EMAIL

To: All Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Re: FY2021 Virginia Class Submarine Program Funding

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 775,000 active and retired members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I am writing to share my deep concerns with the underfunding of the Virginia class submarine program outlined in the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 presidential budget.

Congress has recognized the need for the United States to grow our submarine fleet. This has been demonstrated by the consistent funding of two Virginia class submarines per year. This year the presidential budget outlined a significant backslide from the congressionally supported standard. This anemic funding will not only negatively impact the United States' attack submarine preparedness but also our naval readiness status and capabilities globally. This is an alarming precedent to set considering the vigorous investment the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China have demonstrated in their own naval fleets.

The IBEW represents thousands of members who work under collective bargaining agreements with commercial companies, which include Electric Boat in New London, Connecticut and Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Additionally, IBEW members are employed at naval and private sector shipyards with records as the leading producers of ships and submarines for the United States Navy, including Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and Puget Sound in Washington state shipyards. IBEW members are electricians, helpers, apprentices, electronics mechanics, planners, inspectors and trainers.

As our nation's critical submarine programs are considered in the FY2021 Defense appropriations bill, it is imperative that you to take into consideration the possible negative impact on our undersea force structure and to the families of the working professionals in this industry.

I urge you to sign-on to the recent bipartisan letter circulated by Representatives Joe Courtney, Jim Langevin and Rob Wittman regarding the underfunding of the Virginia class submarine that has been addressed to the House Appropriations Committee. Members can join the letter or get additional information by contacting Sam Menchel on Representative Courtney's staff at sam.menchel@mail.house.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

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