

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 21, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Austin:

We write regarding Russia's illegal war in Ukraine and our military assistance to Ukrainian forces valiantly defending their country. We commend you for the administration's support for Ukraine, including providing approximately \$5.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's brutal, unprovoked, and unlawful invasion on February 24th of this year. This aid has been indispensable as it has enabled Ukrainian forces to slow and even stop Russia's advance in many areas of the country. Importantly, it even enabled Ukrainian forces to expel Russians from the north and away from the capital, Kyiv.

We also support the President's decision this month to approve the transfer of M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and ammunition to Ukraine, utilizing funds from the nearly \$40 billion supplemental that Congress passed last month. However, we are concerned that the Department of Defense only intends to send four M142 HIMARS systems to Ukraine thus far. While we recognize these mobile artillery rocket systems are much more advanced than Ukraine's current artillery platforms and require extensive training to ensure their deployment, Ukraine will ultimately need more and time is of the essence.

Ukraine's needs are urgent and we must give them the capability to not just fight but to win. It is well known that Russia's artillery rocket systems capability outmatches Ukrainian forces, who primarily operate a small number of Soviet-era artillery rocket systems -- allowing Russian forces to strike Ukrainian positions almost at will from safe distances. The delivery of additional advanced artillery rocket systems, like M142 HIMARS or the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), could help level the playing field for Ukraine, allowing its forces to halt Russia's current advance in the Donbas and bolster its counteroffensives in other parts of the country. Additionally, sending a larger number of M142 HIMARS or M270 MLRS systems could inspire our allies and partners with similar systems to also provide them to Ukraine. We have already seen the United Kingdom and Germany follow suit and appreciate your continued efforts to coordinate with allies on robust security aid for Ukraine's defense.

The outcome of Russia's war against Ukraine will hinge on how firmly the West supports Ukrainian forces. Following the incredible defeat of early Russian attempts to topple Ukraine's elected government and seize the entire nation, battlefield needs have understandably evolved

and we must be nimble in meeting these changing needs. As a result, we ask that you urgently provide a significant number of additional artillery rocket systems to Ukraine.

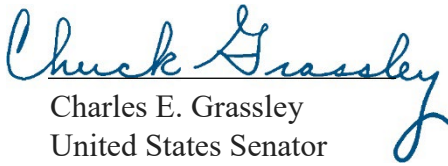
Sincerely,



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator