

MIKE COFFMAN
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0606

October 24, 2018

2443 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-7882
(202) 226-4623 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:
3300 SOUTH PARKER ROAD
CHERRY CREEK PLACE IV, SUITE 305
AURORA, CO 80014
(720) 748-7514
(720) 748-7680 FAX

COFFMAN.HOUSE.GOV

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you today regarding our Secretary of Defense, James N. Mattis. Secretary Mattis is one of the most talented and highly qualified individuals ever to serve as Secretary of Defense. Not since General George C. Marshall was appointed and confirmed in 1950, has there been a Secretary of Defense with the depth of military experience and understanding of the men and women who serve our country in uniform. He has had a 41 year career in the United States Marine Corps having commanded the 1st Marine Division; the Marine Corps Combat Development Command; I Marine Expeditionary Force; Joint Forces Command; and the U.S. Central Command.

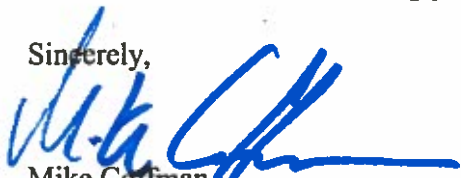
I have been deeply impressed with Secretary Mattis' testimony and a wide variety of defense-related topics before the House Armed Services Committee, and with my interactions with his senior leadership in my role on the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. Secretary Mattis has always exhibited the professionalism and competence I expect of a Secretary of Defense and he is respected by both sides of the aisle in Congress, by the American people, and by our allies.

In an October 14, 2018 column in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled "Trump Opens Door to Mattis Exit," Nancy Youssef quotes you from a recent *60 Minutes* interview, where you speculated that Secretary Mattis might leave "at some point." The article also implies that Secretary Mattis is "out of step with the White House" and that you may be quietly considering ending his tenure at the Department of Defense. The article also indicates that Secretary Mattis is not currently contemplating resigning. I hope this discussion of his potential departure is idle media speculation and not something you are really considering.

A resignation by the Secretary of Defense would be extremely counterproductive to our national security interest, it would shake the confidence of the men and women who service our country in uniform who admire and have confidence in his leadership, and it would send a signal of instability at the Pentagon to our allies and enemies alike.

Secretary Mattis has proven himself to be an extraordinary leader as our Secretary of Defense. It is my hope that Secretary Mattis is not interested now, or at any time during the remainder of your tenure as the President of the United States, in leaving his office of Secretary of Defense, and that you will request that he continue his duties accordingly.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress
6th Congressional District of Colorado