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May 16, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the nearly 5,700 community banks represented by the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), I write to express our strong support for an amendment to the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5515) that would promote competitive banking services on our nation's military bases to the benefit of servicemembers. The amendment was offered in committee by Rep. Steve Russell and passed with bipartisan support. ICBA and community banks would strongly oppose any efforts to remove this critical provision from the bill when it is considered on the House floor.

Under current law, banks on military bases pay rent for the use of facilities according to a "fair market value" which is determined separately by each facility. The process has not been fair or effective and has resulted in unreasonable rent increases that have driven many banks off military bases in recent years. Credit unions do not pay rent, according to a law passed over a decade ago. As a result, many bases that were once served by both a bank and a credit union are now served only by a credit union. This is a disservice to our men and women in uniform who deserve a choice in financial institutions.

The Russell Amendment to H.R. 5515 would require the Department of Defense to accept the value of services provided by military banks as full payment for any lease, services, and utilities costs for the space they occupy on military installations. The amendment would effectively

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create parity in this regard between banks and credit unions, promoting choice and competition for the benefit of servicemembers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rebeca Romero Rainey
President & CEO

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

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