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AND MARITIME SECURITY

April 26, 2022

Admiral Michael Gilday
Chief of Naval Operations
United States Navy
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Admiral Gilday:

The Navy has now confirmed that within the past year, seven service members assigned to USS George Washington have died. The Department must explain what steps are being taken to address command climate, safety concerns, mental health, and other issues that may have contributed to this tragic loss of life in USS George Washington.

Each of these deaths is a tragedy, and the number of incidents within a single command, which includes as many as four sailors taking their own lives, raises significant concern that requires immediate and stringent inquiry. While the Navy has publicly indicated that investigations are underway, immediate action is required now to ensure the safety and wellbeing of this ship's crew.

My office has received reports of inadequate attention to quality of life for sailors and a toxic atmosphere. This indicates an urgent need to understand if there are endemic problems within the command, safety concerns, or other contributing issues. Our servicemembers must be treated with respect, and we have an obligation to fully inquire what steps are being taken to ensure that appropriate conditions are being maintained in USS George Washington.

It is critical that the families, next of kin, and impacted sailors receive the full support of the Navy at this time. The availability of chaplains, psychologists, counselors, and leaders to assist is an important first step.

The Department should provide the Armed Services Committee and Members of Congress with a full accounting of what steps have and will be taken relevant to the conditions on USS George Washington. I request answers to the following questions:

1. What resources are being made available now to assist impacted families and individuals through this tragic time?
2. How will the Department assess the climate aboard USS George Washington?
3. Will there be a process for individuals to share their concerns without fear of reprisal?
4. What immediate or interim changes will be made in the command as investigations proceed and over what timelines?

I request your staff coordinate a visit for myself and my staff to hear directly from junior enlisted sailors assigned to USS George Washington regarding conditions on the ship, supportive services provided, and other issues.

Your attention to this urgent matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elaine G. Luria". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress