

July 31, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to serve as Secretary of Defense. I appreciate your dedication and commitment in supporting the men and women serving in our nation's armed forces. Like you, I believe that people are our military's greatest asset. I was honored to meet with you in Colorado Springs during your visit to Fort Carson, Colorado last October as Secretary of the Army. As you embark on this new role, I would like to invite you back to Colorado for a visit with Colorado's unique Active, Reserve, and National Guard defense mission partners and military installations.

I would also like to offer my strong support for the elevation of national military space operations and urge the establishment of U.S. Space Command in Colorado. The creation of a Unified Combatant Command for space is vitally important to ensuring military readiness, training for defensive/offensive space control operations, and deterring acts of aggression by potential adversaries.

Colorado is proud to have been the first home of U.S. Space Command when it was previously established in 1985. Today, Colorado continues to possess the trained military personnel, and technical expertise necessary to assume the additional responsibilities associated with a Unified Combatant Command for space as well the space-related responsibilities currently assigned to United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM).

Furthermore, Colorado is home to several strategic military installations and joint operational space programs to include, U.S. Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC), and the National Space Defense Center (NSDC). Defense industry partners are represented by more than 500 space-related companies and professional organizations such as the Space Foundation, Colorado Space Coalition, and the Colorado Space Business Roundtable.

Colorado has been a nationwide leader on efforts to support transitioning military families. Community support in our state for military operations, personnel, and their families cannot be matched. Collaborative and regional interstate compacts agreements have significantly improved

licensure reciprocity and portability for transitioning military spouses seeking employment as teachers, nurses, emergency medical personnel, and physical therapists across the state. Our Colorado state and community partners understand the importance of these aspects of military service and are undertaking efforts locally to address the growing needs of our military families.

At a time when the Department of Defense is looking to prioritize training and mission readiness, establishing U.S. Space Command in Colorado capitalizes on existing capabilities and expertise while ensuring that national security space operations can be further developed with minimal disruption and without delay.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your continued leadership on this critically important national security issue. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory Gardner", is written over the printed name.

Cory Gardner  
United States Senator