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October 19, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We were horrified to learn of reports that officials within the Administration authorized restrictions on Ukraine's use of Starshield satellite communications services, interrupting the systems that support uncrewed aerial vehicles, fixed-wing and rotary aircraft and missile-defense systems that protect civilians from Russian attacks. The interruption comes as Russia increases its attacks on civilian targets. Civilian casualties in Ukraine were 85 percent higher this September compared to last, and more than 2,500 civilians have been killed in Ukraine since January, according to the United Nations.

The Congress, and in particular, the Appropriations Committee, has consistently expressed its support for Ukraine's fight against Putin's illegal and unjustified attack on Ukraine, a U.S. ally. Putin's invasion was baseless and as an ally, the United States should be providing any and all means of support to Ukraine to defend its sovereignty and its people.

Allowing Russia to murder innocent civilians is unconscionable. Restricting the use of Starshield could be seen as militarily assisting Russia. We urge you to investigate this decision and report your findings to the congressional defense committees within the next thirty days, including: who authorized the restrictions, under what authority, the justification for the decision, and the duration and operational impact of the restrictions.

Consistent and dedicated support for Ukraine's military to protect its country and citizens should be one of the priorities for this Administration and in particular, the Department of Defense. Allowing Russia to act with impunity will only serve to harm the United States and our allies.

Sincerely,



Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee



Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense