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March 16, 2018

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Esper:

Thank you for inviting me to meet with you last week in the Pentagon. I enjoyed our conversation, and am writing to follow up on our discussion about the forthcoming selection of a headquarters location for the Army Futures Command. As the Army studies potential sites, I respectfully ask that you give fair and full consideration to Orlando, Florida.

As we discussed, Orlando is home to the Central Florida Research Park, a campus-like environment adjacent to the University of Central Florida (UCF) that is the world's premier public-private partnership for modeling, simulation, and training (MS&T). The Research Park hosts a unique partnership between the military, federal agencies, private industry, and local universities focused on the MS&T and cyber industries. The proximity of these entities, co-located with UCF, offers a culture of collaboration that fosters relationship-building and innovation.

For decades, the Central Florida Research Park has thrived because of access to a highly technical workforce, a strong academic talent pipeline, a prosperous business climate, and the robust transportation networks that Orlando provides. According to Forbes, in 2017 Orlando had more STEM job growth than any other region in the nation, and was ranked as the top metropolitan area for job growth for the third year in a row. The Orlando region also ranks as the second-highest metropolitan area in the country for projected population growth in 2018.

Our high-tech workforce relies on the intellectual ability and research resources in the numerous academic institutions in the Orlando region. When combined with the 34 other premier academic institutions in the 100-mile radius around Orlando, there are over 500,000 students in the higher education community. With over 64,000 students, UCF is the nation's second largest university, and the number of UCF students that are hired by aerospace and defense companies after they graduate is higher than any other university in the country.

Furthermore, central Florida is home to many small, medium, and large firms that harness the power of technology to produce innovative products for customers in the public and private sector.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress