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Congress of the United States
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August 13, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Hung Cao
Acting Secretary of the Navy U.S.
Department of Defense
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Acting Secretary Cao:

This letter expresses increasing concern regarding the reported conditions on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72) and requests information regarding the well-being of support servicemembers and the habitability of the Lincoln. I am writing to add my voice because the parents of my constituents serving aboard the carrier have contacted me with their concerns for the well-being of these servicemembers.

The USS *Abraham Lincoln* has been deployed for over 250 days since departing from San Diego on November 21, 2025.¹ The Lincoln was scheduled for a seven-month deployment in the South China Sea, instead, the carrier has not made a port call in over 200 days while supporting military operations against Iran. The deployment has been extended multiple times with no publicly announced return date.

There have been reports of unreliable access to hot water and laundry, shortages of basic supplies, including food and hygiene goods, significant disruptions in the mail system, deteriorating mental health and increasing suicide attempts, and limited opportunities for sailors to communicate with their families.² I have constituents on board the Lincoln and I have heard directly from parents in my District who are worried about the living conditions their family members are being subjected to while they serve our country. They speak of care packages that

¹ Alison Bath, "USS Abraham Lincoln Families Press Navy Leaders over Sailors' Mental Health," Stars and Stripes, August 13, 2026; www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2026-08-11/abraham-lincoln-middle-east-mental-health-town-hall-meeting-22506344.html

² Adkin, Ross. "Lawmakers Demand Answers about USS Abraham Lincoln Conditions as Reports Emerge of Sailors Attempting to Jump Overboard." CNN, Cable News Network, 13 Aug. 2026; www.cnn.com/2026/08/13/politics/uss-abraham-lincoln-conditions-extended-deployment-hnk.

remain undelivered after months, low quality and rationed food, cold showers when the showers are available, and dangerously low crew morale. These reports demand immediate attention.

The sailors on the Lincoln are maintaining and supporting some of the most sophisticated aircraft and weapons systems in the world, while under constant threat of attack from our enemies.³ They are working extraordinary hours aboard a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier while supporting military operations thousands of miles from their loved ones. These sailors deserve our full support, the least of which includes having their basic needs met.

Given these concerns, we would like to request your responses to the following questions no later than August 27, 2026:

- As of August 13, 2026, did the USS *Abraham Lincoln* meet U.S. Navy habitability requirements?
- Have habitability problems been identified? If so, what corrective action has been taken? If no action has been taken, what action will be taken?
- Please list the supply shortages, including meals, and quality-of-life problems that have been identified aboard the Lincoln. What action has been taken to correct these problems. If no action has been taken, what action will be taken?
- What is causing disruptions to mail delivery on the Lincoln and what action has been taken to ensure sailors will receive the packages their families send in a timely manner? If no action has been taken, what action will be taken?
- What steps is the Navy taking to manage fatigue, morale, and quality of life during this extraordinarily demanding deployment for the Lincoln and other carriers, like the USS John Finn?
- When will the crew of the USS *Abraham Lincoln* return home to the United States?

The sailors aboard the Lincoln continue to put their lives on the line to protect our country and it is our duty to ensure they are taken care of while they are serving. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

³ U.S. Navy, “An F/A-18E Super Hornet launches from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, July 31, 2026. The carrier has flown combat missions throughout the war with Iran, including Operation Epic Fury and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.” *Stars and Stripes*, 13 Aug. 2026; www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2026-08-11/abraham-lincoln-middle-east-mental-health-townhall-meeting-22506344.html

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress