

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2019

Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Esper,

I write today to express my full support for the U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) permanent headquarters to be established in Huntsville, Alabama. Huntsville has consistently been one of our nation's hubs for space technology, which makes it the best and obvious choice for USSPACECOM.

President Trump was right to reestablish USSPACECOM as our adversaries continue to advance their presence and abilities in the space domain. I have attended numerous classified briefings and, as you are keenly aware, space is the future. Satellites and space-based sensors will give us the communication fidelity we need and the ability to better defend ourselves from the new missiles the Chinese and Russians are developing. This combatant command will give priority to the space domain and will make sure we are keeping pace with the evolving threats.

Huntsville's space legacy goes back decades, and it is ready for this most important command. It is home to Dr. Wernher von Braun's legacy that helped put the first satellites in space and men on the moon, earning Huntsville the name, the "Rocket City." Dr. von Braun developed the first stage of the rocket that launched Explorer 1, the first satellite sent to space. In 1960, the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) was formed on Redstone Arsenal with the first mission of developing the Saturn launch vehicles for the Apollo program. MSFC was the lead center for the Space Shuttle main propulsion and external tank, the International Space Station design and assembly, and the Space Launch System (SLS), that will take men back to the moon. Huntsville has the infrastructure and the highly skilled workforce for space technology, especially for the development of rocket propulsion systems and technologies.

Redstone Arsenal hosts the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Research Development organizations, the Missile Defense Agency, and NASA, showing their commitment to space technology within the national security architecture. USSPACECOM headquarters would seamlessly fit with the other missions located on the base.

Huntsville is also home to the second largest research park in the country supporting all the government organizations on Redstone Arsenal. This community is crucial in supporting our military's many missions and stand ready to support USSPACECOM.

In sum, I encourage you to choose Huntsville, Alabama as the home of USSPACECOM. Nowhere in the United States can match the workforce, history, infrastructure, resources, and support that you will find in North Alabama. The Huntsville community is the past, present, and future of space technology and an integral player in our national security.

Sincerely,

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

Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress