



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 1, 2020

Honorable Thomas B. Modly  
Acting Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Admiral Michael M. Gilday  
Chief of Naval Operations  
2000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Dear Acting Secretary Modly and Admiral Gilday:

We write to you today with urgent concern about the health and safety of our sailors and Marines embarked on Navy vessels facing the spread of COVID-19.

Like the nation, the Navy is faced with the challenge of limiting the spread of this deadly virus. However, shipboard life, with limited space for social distancing or quarantine, presents unique challenges that exacerbate the infection rate of this virus. Unfortunately, we are concerned that current guidance from the Department of Defense has allowed for inconsistent response to the spread of the virus on our ships and submarines. With further spread of the virus expected in the coming weeks, it is critical that the Navy, like our states and communities across the nation, take additional steps now to prepare.

We welcome the announcement of the rotation of sailors off the *USS Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), but only after public reports emerged of the rapid spread of the virus following a thorough, measured, missive from her commanding officer. Challenges remain as over 70 ships and submarines are underway, and we fear this is just the first of many COVID-19 cases for Navy warships. Urgent and aggressive intervention is needed to manage this problem and mitigate its impact across the fleet.

To that end, we ask for your urgent response outlining the steps being taken to address the potential emergence of COVID-19 on deployed ships, as well as enacting clear and effective guidance for commanding officers across the fleet to manage and respond to this issue as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



JASON CROW  
Member of Congress

**This letter to Secretary Modly and Admiral Gilday is sent on behalf of the following members of the United States House of Representatives:**

Bradley Byrne  
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Susan A. Davis  
Veronica Escobar  
Dwight Evans  
Tulsi Gabbard  
Ruben Gallego  
John Garamendi  
Deb Haaland  
Chrissy Houlahan  
Jared Huffman  
Derek Kilmer  
James R. Langevin  
Rick Larsen  
Elaine G. Luria  
Seth Moulton  
Donald Norcross  
Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Jimmy Panetta  
Ed Perlmutter  
Scott Peters  
Chellie Pingree  
Xochitl Torres Small  
Jackie Speier  
Filemon Vela