

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

December 5, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

Concerning reports have surfaced regarding the process for reporting missing or lost equipment during the botched withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in August 2021. Specifically, a social media post circulated last week from a separating member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division who claims he is being charged \$3,561 for military equipment he claims he was ordered to leave behind during the withdrawal.

Service members should not face financial penalties for following orders that result in lost or missing gear incurred in the line of duty. Understanding the complexities of military operations, it is important to evaluate and assess the extent to which such incidents occur to ensure this is not a widespread problem.

To comprehensively address these concerns, we request your assistance in providing relevant data. Please provide answers to the following questions by December 20, 2023:

- 1) What is the breakdown of the total amount of money owed for lost equipment during the Afghanistan withdrawal, categorized by the units deployed?
- 2) What information is provided to service members about the process for reporting missing equipment?
- 3) How frequently are service members informed about the process for reporting missing equipment?
- 4) Are there any communication gaps or challenges in conveying this information to deployed units?
- 5) Was the necessary paperwork and documentation procedures completed in these instances?
- 6) Did the reported paperwork receive appropriate approvals?
- 7) Are there any improvements or changes planned for data collection and analysis in this context?

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



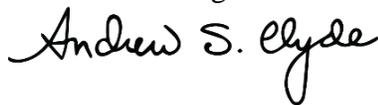
Andy Ogles  
Member of Congress



Warren Davidson  
Member of Congress



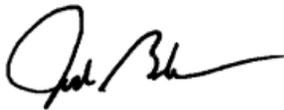
Anna Paulina Luna  
Member of Congress



Andrew Clyde  
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress



Josh Brecheen  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



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Brian Mast  
Member of Congress



Eli Crane  
Member of Congress



Matthew M. Rosendale Sr.  
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress

*Randy K. Weber*

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Member of Congress