H. R. 941

To increase the number of operational aircraft carriers of the Navy, and
for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2017

Mr. CONAWAY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To increase the number of operational aircraft carriers of
the Navy, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Represen-
tatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “12 Carrier Act”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The aircraft carrier can fulfill the Navy’s
core missions of forward presence, sea control, en-
suring safe sea lanes, and power projection as well
as providing flexibility and versatility to execute a wide range of additional missions.

(2) Forward airpower is integral to the security and joint forces operations of the United States. Carriers play a central role in delivering forward airpower from sovereign territory of the United States in both permissive and nonpermissive environments.

(3) Aircraft carriers provide our Nation the ability to rapidly and decisively respond to national threats, as well as conducting worldwide, on-station diplomacy and providing deterrence against threats to the United States allies, partners, and friends.

(4) Since the end of the cold war, aircraft carrier deployments have increased while the aircraft carrier force structure has declined.

(5) Considering the increased array of complex threats across the globe, the Navy aircraft carrier is operating at maximum capacity, increasing deployment lengths and decreasing maintenance periods in order to meet operational requirements.

(6) To meet global peacetime and wartime requirements, the Navy has indicated a requirement to maintain two aircraft carriers deployed overseas and have three additional aircraft carrier capable of deploying within 90 days. However, the Navy has indi-
cated that the existing aircraft carrier force struc-
ture cannot support these military requirements.

(7) Despite the requirement to maintain an air-
craft carrier strike group in both the United States
Central Command and United States Pacific Com-
mand, the Navy has been unable to generate suffi-
cient capacity to support our combatant com-
manders and has developed significant carrier gaps
in these critical areas.

(8) Because of continuing use of a diminished
aerial carrier force structure, extensive mainte-
nance availabilities result which typically exceed pro-
gram costs and increase time in shipyards. These ex-
ansive maintenance availabilities exacerbate existing carrier gaps.

(9) Because of maintenance overhaul exten-
sions, the Navy is truncating basic aerial carrier
training to expedite the deployment of available air-
craft carriers. Limiting aerial carrier training de-
creases operational capabilities and increases sailor
risk.

(10) Despite the objections of the Navy, the
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Tech-
nology, and Logistics directed the Navy on August
7, 2015, to perform shock trials on the U.S.S. Ger-
ald R. Ford (CVN–78). The Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy indicated that this action could delay the introduction of the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford (CVN–78) to the fleet by up to two years, exacerbating existing carrier gaps.

(11) The Navy has adopted a two-phase acquisition strategy for the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79), an action that will delay the introduction of this aircraft carrier by up to two years, exacerbating existing carrier gaps.

(12) Developing an alternative design to the Ford-class aircraft carrier is not cost beneficial. A smaller design is projected to incur significant design and engineering cost while significantly reducing magazine size, carrier air wing size, sortie rate, and on-station effectiveness among other vital factors when compared to the Ford-class. Furthermore, a new design will delay the introduction of future aircraft carriers, exacerbating existing carrier gaps and threatening the national security of the United States.

(13) The 2016 Navy Force Structure Assessment states “A minimum of 12 aircraft carriers are required to meet the increased warfighting response
requirements of the Defense Planning Guidance De-
feat/Deny force sizing direction.”

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
gress that—

(1) the United States should expedite delivery
of 12 aircraft carriers;

(2) an aircraft carrier should be authorized
every three years;

(3) shock trials should be conducted on the
U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79), as initially pro-
posed by the Navy;

(4) construction for the U.S.S. John F. Ken-
nedy (CVN–79) should be accomplished in a single
phase;

(5) the United States should continue the Ford-
class design for CVN–81; and

(6) bulk procurement initiatives for CVN–80
and CVN–81 should be pursued.

SEC. 3. SHOCK TRIALS FOR CVN–78.

Section 128(b)(1) of the National Defense Authoriza-
tion Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114–92; 129
Stat. 751) is amended by striking “prior to the first de-
ployment of such ship”.
SEC. 4. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT CARRIERS OF THE NAVY.

(a) INCREASE.—Section 5062(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking “11 operational aircraft carriers” and inserting “12 operational aircraft carriers”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on September 30, 2023.