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**Creech Airmen Economic Security and Resilience Act**

*Introduced by Congresswoman Susie Lee (D-NV)*

**The Need to Support Airmen at Creech:**

* Creech Air Force Base is a key military installation for our nation and southern Nevada, home to the “Hunters” of the Air Force’s 432d Wing and 432d Air Expeditionary Wing, as well as the global Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Enterprise.
  + Creech’s RPA mission is critical for providing our nation the capability to gather intelligence, to help coordinate complex operations, and to accurately strike high-value, time-sensitive targets that threaten U.S. national security.
  + Without Creech’s 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year mission, Nevada, the United States, and the world would be much less safe and secure.
* The essential nature of Creech’s mission makes it all the more critical that we see clearly the unique difficulties and stresses facing the men and women tasked with keeping our nation safe.
  + In addition to being critically important to U.S. national security, Creech’s mission is also uniquely stressful, as the only domestic U.S. base conducting around-the-clock RPA combat operations across the globe.
    - Airmen shifting quickly between conducting intense, classified missions and carrying out ordinary activities at home and across the city, with limited opportunity for addressing the stress of their jobs.
  + Without housing on-base or nearby, Airmen also must commute multiple hours daily to and from Creech AFB for their work, requiring significant personal expense in gas and maintenance costs to keep vehicle safe and functional in the desert environment.
    - Junior Airmen are estimated to spend at least 30% of their income on commuting expenses to and from their shifts at the base.
  + Overall, Creech Airmen are faced with long and irregular shifts, a heightened cost of living that has outpaced military pay and benefits, and significant difficulty finding affordable childcare and health care for themselves and their families.
* Creech leaders have worked hard to help support their Airmen with what additional resources that are available, and with the development of impressive RPA Human Performance Teams to help support Creech personnel through the stresses of their mission.
  + However, the significant stresses and large expenses faced by Creech Airmen day to day demand attention by Congress to ensure that we are adequately supporting the men and women operating at Creech on the frontlines of U.S. national security.
* Airmen regularly commute about 100 miles daily to and from Creech AFB for their work, causing significant personal expense in gas—especially for junior Airmen, estimated to spend some 30% of their income on commuting expenses.

**What This Bill Does:**

* With this need in mind, Congresswoman Susie Lee has introduced the ***Creech Airmen Economic Security and Resilience Act of 2023*** to thoroughly account for the financial, mental health, and other difficulties that all too often confront Creech Airmen.
  + The bill lays the groundwork for advancing substantive solutions to ensure that they are fully equipped to thrive in their lives in southern Nevada and to carry out their missions to the best of their ability.
* Built out of two amendments that Congresswoman Lee sponsored and secured in the House FY24 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the ***Creech Airmen Economic Security and Resilience Act*** would require the Secretary of the Air Force to execute two critical studies.
  + One of the studies would assess the feasibility of reinstating Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) for Airmen based at Creech—a benefit that was originally authorized in 2008 but has since been eliminated.
    - The Secretary of the Air Force would be required to assess the financial stress experienced by those based at Creech, especially junior Airmen with families, due to costs of commuting, their RPA mission's irregular hours and unique demands, and limited access to housing, health care, and child care.
    - The Secretary would then submit this information in a report to Congress outlining the need for and feasibility of restoring this additional financial support for Creech Airmen.
  + The bill would also require a behavioral health epidemiological consultation (EPICON) report to better assess the unique stressors impacting Creech Airmen and identifying steps to improve their mental health, quality of life, and overall well-being.
    - The Secretary of the Air Force would be required to collaborate with the Defense Health Agency Director to conduct this report in support of Congress’s efforts to thoughtfully and effectively meet the needs of Creech personnel, and their families, as they continue to carry out their critical RPA mission.

**For more information or to cosponsor or endorse this bill, please contact:**

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