



June 11, 2019

NTU urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 2740, the Department of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2020. This near-trillion dollar funding package busts the bipartisan budget caps, adds significantly to the deficit, and falls far short of the spending reforms taxpayers desperately deserve. Lawmakers should oppose this proposal and work on a more fiscally responsible approach to government funding.

Due to “persistently large deficits,” the Congressional Budget Office calculates federal debt will reach 93 percent of GDP in 2029, its highest level since the end of World War II. If the United States is to avoid fiscal and economic crisis, Congress must enact serious reforms to balance the budget. However, this package exacerbates Washington’s overspending habits by increasing spending by \$35 billion above enacted spending caps and sets the stage for a large-scale debt crisis in the years to come.

To the disappointment of taxpayers, H.R. 2740 is a missed opportunity to bring meaningful cost-saving reforms to the Pentagon that could also help the military run more efficiently. Despite the United States not being in a declared state of war, this legislation appropriates \$622 billion in base defense spending - an increase of more than \$16 billion over FY19. H.R. 2740 would also spend another \$68 billion to fund Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), which has essentially become a slush fund to pad the Pentagon’s budget and avoid spending caps. H.R. 2740 also allocates funding for the purchase of 90 F-35 jet fighters, 12 more than what were requested by the Pentagon. Despite being plagued with cost overruns, delays, and poor performance, Congress continues to appropriate billions of taxpayer dollars for aircraft that cannot be used in military conflict.

Unsurprisingly, H.R. 2740 is also padded with even higher non-defense discretionary spending. H.R. 2740 would increase Labor-HHS spending by \$16 billion over the current figures and would be \$50 billion more than the president’s budget request. Concerningly, this legislation would require CMS to use \$100 million in Obamacare user fees to support the ACA Navigators program, which funds organizations that help sign up more people onto the Obamacare exchanges. It also provides an additional \$2.4 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and an additional \$1.5 billion for the ineffective Head Start program.

NTU strongly urges Representatives to oppose H.R. 2740 in its current form and work to improve the underlying bill by adopting fiscally responsible amendments.

Roll call votes on H.R. 2740 will be significantly weighed in NTU’s annual Rating of Congress and a “NO” vote will be considered the pro-taxpayer position.

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