



July 9, 2019

NTU urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 2500, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. This legislation ignores budget caps put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011 and continues irresponsible spending through the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account. Lawmakers should oppose this proposal and focus on improving the legislation by adopting amendments that encourage fiscal responsibility and spending transparency.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) implemented prudent, rational spending limits for both defense and non-defense spending over a decade. As Congress works through authorization and appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2020, the second-to-last year BCA spending caps are in effect. Representatives should reject H.R. 2500, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020, which authorizes base discretionary defense funding at \$655.9 billion (including \$632.9 billion for DOD and \$22.6 billion for DOE) -- almost 14 percent above the defense spending cap originally set by BCA and updated by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (\$576 billion). Violating these caps only adds to the nation’s growing debt crisis, which both military and intelligence leaders warn threatens national security.

Even more troubling than H.R. 2500’s ignorance of budget caps is its authorization of \$69.0 billion for OCO. Considered a “slush fund” that boosts the national defense topline with spending not subject to BCA caps, OCO receives the same level of funding this year as authorized in the Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA. Rather than doubling down on irresponsible spending strategies through OCO, NTU urges Representatives to adhere to BCA spending caps and avoid padding the Pentagon’s budget.

H.R. 2500 also includes authorization for additional spending Pentagon leaders did not ask for. This includes \$168.6 million more than the administration requested for construction projects “associated with the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) and 31 projects from the military departments’ unfunded priority lists,” and 33 percent more than the administration requested for the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative. Congress should listen to Pentagon leaders, rather than funding programs or systems above and beyond what military leaders determine is necessary.

NTU strongly urges Representatives to oppose H.R. 2500 in its current form and work to improve the underlying bill by adopting fiscally responsible amendments.

Roll call votes on H.R. 2500 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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