



July 20, 2020

As the House considers H.R. 6395, the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, NTU urges all Representatives to support initiatives that reduce wasteful spending, increase accountability and transparency in the national defense budget, and uphold free market principles.

To that end, NTU urges a “YES” vote on the following amendments:

Amd. 6, (filed as #375) Jayapal (D-WA) and Omar (D-MN): This amendment would remove the requirement that various components of the Department of Defense (DoD) provide an “Unfunded Priorities” list to Congress each year. Lawmakers need to be focused on trimming the Pentagon budget, not letting it grow, and budget components like the Unfunded Priorities list only encourage Congress to keep growing an already-bloated DoD topline.

Amd. 9, (filed as #526) Pocan (D-WI) et al.: This amendment would cut spending across the Pentagon budget by 14 percent, with the exception of personnel costs and the Defense Health Program. This would, the amendment authors claim, reduce the overall DoD authorization level by 10 percent (around \$74 billion). This is a modest cut that could serve as a down payment on more significant right-sizing of the DoD budget. At a time of record debt and deficits, lawmakers should support this effort.

Amd. 85, (filed as #271) Cohen (D-TN): Auditors have identified over 3,100 problems or deficiencies at DoD across its first two financial audits, in 2018 and 2019. It’s clear that the Pentagon needs to make significant updates to its financial management tools and procedures. Rep. Cohen’s amendment would require DoD to report to Congress on its “progress in modernizing its financial management enterprise.” This is an important transparency effort that lawmakers should support.

Amd. 92, (filed as #280) Connolly (D-VA) and Fitzpatrick (R-PA): This bipartisan amendment would ensure that subcontractors and subgrantees are afforded the same whistleblower protections currently offered to contractors and grantees. Whistleblowers play an important role in identifying waste, fraud, and abuse throughout government.

Amd. 94, (filed as #237) Cooper (D-TN), Walberg (R-MI), and Comer (R-KY): The Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act would require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to complete its work on a federal program inventory, a requirement originally included in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010. A coalition of eight good-government groups recently wrote to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, urging their support for this amendment’s inclusion in the NDAA.

Amd. 237, (filed as #156) Lynch (D-MA) and Hice (R-GA): This bipartisan effort would restore the Wartime Contracting Commission, which during just three years of existence uncovered between \$31 billion and \$60 billion of taxpayer dollars lost to waste, fraud, and abuse through wartime contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Amd. 274, (filed as #84) Norman (R-SC) and Schrader (D-OR): This bipartisan effort would require the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on how the Pentagon intends to shift Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding from the OCO account to the base budget. The Department of Defense (DoD) has made plans to shift enduring costs from the OCO account to the base budget before, but shelved those plans after the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

Amd. 301, (filed as #339) Phillips (D-MN) and Cloud (R-TX): This amendment would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study DoD's current processes for fulfilling the requirements of Congressionally mandated reports. Current deficiencies and gaps at the Pentagon mean that some reports are late or incomplete, and that others are not made available to the public in a timely manner. A GAO study could better identify flaws in DoD's current approach and point the way to reform options.

Amd. 307, (filed as #213) Porter (D-CA): Inspectors General play a critical role as watchdogs at extremely large and often unwieldy federal agencies, including the Pentagon. Rep. Porter's amendment would ensure that when there is a vacancy in an Office of Inspector General, that vacancy is filled by someone with the proper experience and qualifications to carry out the role.

Amd. 310, (filed as #291) Porter (D-CA), Speier (D-CA), Castro (D-TX), and Phillips (D-MN): This amendment would ensure that DoD makes publicly available all of its legislative proposals submitted to the Senate or House Committees on Armed Services. If the agency is asking Congress to fund something or to make changes to current law, and the information is not classified, the public has the same right to know as Members of Congress.

Amd. 338, (filed as #118) Schrader (D-OR): In 2015, the Defense Business Board (DBB) identified \$125 billion in waste the Pentagon could cut over five years. DoD quite infamously buried that DBB study, which might not have seen the light of day if not for media reports. Rep. Schrader's amendment would require DoD to report to Congress on its efforts to implement recommendations from that DBB report, "and provide alternative solutions for unachievable items from those recommendations."

NTU urges a "NO" vote on the following amendments:

Amd. 11, (filed as #283) Dean (D-PA): This amendment would require the federal government to provide private student loan borrowers up to \$10,000 to pay down balances on their student loans. This effort would be extraordinarily expensive and, furthermore, has no place in the NDAA.

Amd. 17, (filed as #221) Adams (D-NC) and Dean (D-PA): This amendment would require servicers of private student loans to suspend all payments through September 2021, as well as suspend the accrual of interest on private student loans. Similar to the amendment above from Rep. Dean, this effort has no place in the NDAA.

Amd. 118, (filed as #297) DelBene (D-WA): This amendment would add aluminum to domestic content preferences for funds administered by the Pentagon and several federal transportation agencies. Such protectionist measures increase costs for taxpayers and create waste and inefficiency across government.

Amd. 119, (filed as #299) DelBene (D-WA) and McMorris Rodgers (R-WA): Similar to the prior amendment from Rep. DelBene, this legislation would require the Secretary of Defense to use the Defense Production Act for domestic manufacturing of aluminum if production capacity falls below 895,000 tons in a year. This is another protectionist measure that would have the federal government favor certain industries over others, and should be rejected by lawmakers.

Amd. 198, (filed as #627) Keller (R-PA) and Reschenthaler (R-PA): Similar to the prior two amendments, this effort would require DoD to “prioritize the procurement of tungsten and tungsten powder from only domestic producers.” Such domestic manufacturing requirements and “Buy American” provisions, when not implemented to meet specific national security needs, merely increase costs for taxpayers and make the Pentagon less efficient.

If you have any questions, please contact NTU Policy and Government Affairs Manager Andrew Lautz at alautz@ntu.org.
