



July 28, 2020

NTU urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 7617, the second spending package of seven appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2021. After spending \$3 trillion on emergency relief measures in the past four months, lawmakers should take the time to reevaluate waste and inefficiency across the FY 2021 budget. The overall spending figure, due in large part to the supplemental appropriations in H.R. 7617, fails to adhere to fiscal discipline and inches the U.S. closer to fiscal peril.

Due to persistently large deficits and the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Congressional Budget Office projects the federal debt to be 101 percent of GDP by the end of the fiscal year. If the United States is to avoid a fiscal and economic crisis, Congress must enact serious reforms to balance the budget. Instead of reversing this worrying trend, H.R. 7617 exacerbates Washington’s loose spending habits by increasing spending by more than 18 percent, bringing the total cost of this spending package to \$1.37 trillion for FY21. It is fiscally irresponsible to increase spending at a time when American taxpayers are facing record amounts of debt and deficits. As Congress looks to appropriate further taxpayers dollars to fight COVID-19, lawmakers in both chambers need to seriously re-examine the priorities and topline spending levels at all departments.

To the disappointment of taxpayers, H.R. 7617 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 \$730 billion to a bloated Pentagon budget, including \$69 billion to the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) slush fund. H.R. 7617 also continues to shovel billions into military assets that the Pentagon doesn’t even need, including 33 more aircraft than requested, and billions more than requested for new ships and vehicles.

While the actual FY21 numbers are only slightly higher than the FY20 numbers and generally fall within the budget caps, H.R. 7617 includes \$213 billion in problematic supplemental appropriations which significantly inflate the overall cost of this package. Concerningly, this legislation rewards ineffective or unnecessary programs, such as increased funding to sign up more Americans onto Obamacare, more funds for Airport Improvement Grants, higher funding for the Head Start program, and more money to the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

Representatives should be focused on efforts to save taxpayers money through making government more efficient. To that end, we encourage lawmakers to oppose H.R. 7617 and look for opportunities to reduce spending.

Roll call votes on H.R. 7617 will be Significantly weighted in NTU’s annual Rating of Congress and a “NO” vote will be considered the pro-taxpayer position.

If you have any questions, please contact NTU Policy and Government Affairs Manager Thomas Aiello at Thomas.Aiello@ntu.org