



July 11, 2022

NTU urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 7900, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. With the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projecting deficits exceeding \$1 trillion per year in nine of the next 10 fiscal years, and debt exceeding 100 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) starting in FY 2027, it is long past due for lawmakers to make serious, sober, and comprehensive efforts at reducing debt and deficits. Defense spending must be part of the conversation. Instead, H.R. 7900 sets the stage for even higher deficits and debt levels, authorizing \$37 billion (4.6 percent) above the president’s FY 2023 request, and \$67.9 billion (8.8 percent) above FY 2022 appropriations excluding emergency funding for Ukraine and Afghanistan. This legislation paves the way for fiscally irresponsible choices, and lawmakers should reject it.

Year after year, NTU urges lawmakers to make even modest efforts at reducing defense authorization and appropriation levels – or to even slow spending growth in these programs. Once again, Members of both parties and in both chambers of Congress have opted for fiscal irresponsibility over prudence, mortgaging the security, safety, and prosperity of future generations in order to claim political victories today.

H.R. 7900 raises defense authorization levels \$37 billion, or more than 4.6 percent above the president’s FY 2023 request. Adjustments for record levels of inflation make up a paltry 20 percent of this \$37 billion increase, suggesting that lawmakers who have been leaning on inflation to increase the defense budget are merely using it as a convenient and salient excuse to fatten up parochial and politically favored procurement programs.

Defense authorization levels under H.R. 7900 would be nearly \$34 billion (more than four percent) above FY 2022 appropriations so far according to CBO, and would be \$68 billion (nearly nine percent) higher than FY 2022 appropriations when removing emergency spending sent to Ukraine and Afghanistan. That nine percent is a spending increase well above and beyond even broad-based consumer inflation, and the House Armed Services Committee’s \$7 billion increase to account for inflation indicates lawmakers could have mitigated the effects of inflation on our nation’s troops for a lot less taxpayer dollars than they have added to H.R. 7900 here.

Defense spending is projected to make up 12.4 percent of total federal spending over the next 10 years, and 44.5 percent of discretionary spending – \$9 trillion in total. It must be part of any comprehensive solution addressing debt and deficits. Lawmakers should support floor amendments that reduce authorization levels in H.R. 7900.

Roll call votes on H.R. 7900 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 Director of Federal Policy Andrew Lautz at alautz@ntu.org.
