



September 11, 2025

NTU urges all Senators to vote “NO” on S. 2296, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This \$924 billion authorization bill is over \$30 billion above the President’s budget request level, on top of the increased defense spending in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) of over \$156 billion over its 10-year window. At a time of record debt and trillion-dollar deficits, lawmakers should pursue discretionary spending reductions to defense and non-defense functions. Lawmakers should reject this legislation as written and support amendments to improve the fiscal position of the bill.

Year after year, NTU warns lawmakers that they are authorizing and appropriating far too many taxpayer dollars for defense spending. This has been the case for budgets passed by Republican-controlled Congresses and Democratic-controlled Congresses, under Republican and Democratic presidents, in times of war, and in times of relative peace. As the nation pulls back from unwieldy foreign military commitments and focuses on defending the homeland, it must confront a \$37 trillion debt and trillion-dollar deficits as far as the eye can see. It is time for lawmakers to pivot away from decades of profligacy in federal spending and begin reducing deficits. This politically-challenging pivot should occur for both defense and non-defense discretionary spending, and, of course, lawmakers should also pursue long-term reforms for the more than 60% of spending that is effectively on autopilot as mandatory spending.

We understand that lawmakers must face rising challenges from adversaries across the globe, many of whom seem to be aggressively attempting to expand the scope and lethality of their militaries. To help meet these challenges, Congress should choose to refocus spending away from outdated or wasteful defense projects, like the A-10 Warthog, the F-35, and the Constellation frigate programs, and toward more beneficial projects better suited to defend the homeland and project strength abroad. Lawmakers should support the Trump Administration’s efforts to modernize our defensive strategy, improve defense procurement, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse. Congress can do this by ending attempts to keep failed projects alive and stopping recommending new wasteful pet defense spending projects. Congress should also enhance the ability of its watchdogs (like the Government Accountability Office) to study wasteful spending at the Department of Defense. Absent appropriate overall reductions to the authorized levels of spending in S. 2296, as well as appropriate directional changes in key defense programs, lawmakers should reject this legislation.

Roll call votes on S. 2296 will be included in NTU’s annual Rating of Congress and “NO” votes will be considered the pro-taxpayer position.

If you have any questions, please contact NTU Senior Policy Manager David Timmons at dtimmons@ntu.org
