



May 20, 2026

Dear Armed Services Committee Member,

Ahead of the Armed Services Committee markups of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to strongly urge you to support efforts to reduce the Pentagon's excessively high topline, and to vote against advancing the NDAA if the topline is not significantly reduced from the proposed \$1.15 trillion mark.

The nation is facing an escalating debt crisis, with interest payments on the \$39 trillion debt now surpassing \$1 trillion annually. If enacted, the Pentagon's total request for \$1.5 trillion would dig the nation even deeper into debt, while the discretionary request of \$1.15 trillion—a \$250 billion increase over last year's discretionary budget—would set a dangerous new baseline that on its own would add trillions to the debt over the coming years. In fact, over the next eight years, this budget request envisions spending over \$3 trillion *more* than the Pentagon budget request just two years ago envisioned spending over that period.<sup>1</sup>

We recognize the importance of maintaining a strong military. However, recent spending increases have dramatically exceeded needs, leading to wasteful spending on programs and practices that do not serve U.S. national security interests, and that ultimately undermine national security by putting the nation on a fiscal trajectory that threatens the future availability of funds for the military.

Contrary to some misleading characterizations, the Pentagon budget has been steadily growing over the course of this century. Adjusted for inflation, military spending grew by over 48 percent from 2000-2024.<sup>2</sup> Then in FY2026, military spending grew by roughly 18 percent. Apparently, the Pentagon has been struggling to spend this increase. Of the \$156 billion enacted through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) last summer, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth recently testified that only \$26 billion has been obligated.<sup>3</sup> Despite this overabundance of resources, the Pentagon is now seeking a roughly 45 percent increase in a single year. On the discretionary side of the budget request, \$1.15 trillion represents a nearly 28 percent increase. While inflation plays a role in determining the appropriate size of the Pentagon budget, this increase far exceeds the rate of inflation.

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<sup>1</sup> "National Security Budget Request Could Double Pentagon Spending in Two Years." *Taxpayers for Common Sense*. April 3, 2026. <https://www.taxpayer.net/budget-appropriations-tax/national-security-budget-request-could-double-pentagon-spending-in-two-years/>

<sup>2</sup> Grazier, Dan, Julia Gledhill, and Geoff Wilson. "Current Defense Plans Require Unsustainable Future Spending." *The Stimson Cetner*. July 16, 2024. <https://www.stimson.org/2024/current-defense-plans-require-unsustainable-future-spending/>

<sup>3</sup> "04-30-2026\_transcript-full." *Senate Armed Services Committee*. April 30, 2026. [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04-30-2026\\_transcript-full.pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04-30-2026_transcript-full.pdf)

This year's NDAA markup will set the stage for the broader congressional debate that this Pentagon budget request demands. We urge you to seize this opportunity to put the nation on a safer and more fiscally responsible path by supporting amendments to lower the topline, and by voting against advancing the NDAA out of committee if efforts to lower the topline fall short. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taxpayers for Common Sense  
National Taxpayers Union  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance