TAXPAYERS for COMMON SENSE

July 13, 2026

Dear Senator,

Ahead of floor votes on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to share our recommendations in support of U.S. taxpayer interests.

Vote NO on the NDAA, Unless Topline is Significantly Reduced

We strongly urge you to oppose the NDAA, which would authorize an excessively high Pentagon spending topline of $1.15 trillion, unless the topline is meaningfully reduced.

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.[1]

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.[2] 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 testified this spring that only $26 billion has been obligated.[3] 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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[1] "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/

[2] 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/

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

Support amendments to meaningfully lower the Pentagon topline

In the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, lawmakers offered amendments to cut $150 billion from the topline, which would bring the topline back to roughly $1 trillion. Enacting such a cut would still allow for a roughly $100 billion increase in the Pentagon's base budget this year. While those amendments were narrowly defeated, we urge you to support any similar floor amendments to the NDAA should they receive a vote.

Again, Vote NO on the NDAA

We urge you to seize this opportunity to put the nation on a safer and more fiscally responsible path by voting no on the NDAA. If the cloture motion is successful, we urge you to support amendments to meaningfully lower the Pentagon's topline. Unless the Pentagon topline is significantly reduced, we urge you to vote no on final passage of the NDAA in hopes of securing a more fiscally responsible topline in future negotiations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Ellis