



July 21, 2026

Dear Representative,

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 Final Passage of the NDAA

We strongly urge you to vote NO on final passage of the NDAA as it is currently written, which would authorize an excessively high Pentagon spending topline of \$1.15 trillion.

The nation is facing an escalating debt crisis, with interest payments on the \$39.5 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, \$89 billion remained unobligated as of July 2, 2026.³ Despite this overabundance of resources, the Pentagon is now seeking a roughly 45 percent

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 "To Consider the Nominations of: Honorable Jules W. Hurst III to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); Mr. Richard M. O'Malley to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment; Dr. L. Roger Mason, Jr. to be Director of the National Reconnaissance Office; and Dr. Erich D. Hernandez-Baquero to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration." *Senate Armed Services Committee*. July 14, 2026. <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/to-consider-the-nominations-of-honorable-jules-w-hurst-iii-to-be-under-secretary-of-defense-comptroller-mr-richard-m-omalley-to-be-deputy-under-secretary-of-defense-for-acquisition-and-sustainment-dr-l-roger-mason-jr-to-be-director-of-the-national-reconnaissance-office-and-dr-erich-d-hernandez-baquero-to-be-assistant-secretary-of-the-air-force-for-space-acquisition-and-integration>

increase in a single year. On the discretionary side of the budget request, \$1.15 trillion represents a nearly 28 percent increase in the Pentagon's base budget. While inflation plays a role in determining the appropriate size of the Pentagon budget, this increase far exceeds the rate of inflation.

Despite lawmakers offering amendments to lower the Pentagon's topline, the Rules Committee excluded these amendments from the rule. We therefore urge you to vote NO on final passage of the NDAA in hopes of securing a more fiscally responsible topline in future negotiations.

Vote YES on Amendment #138 (#63 in the rule)

We urge you to vote YES on Amendment #138 (#63 in the rule governing debate on the NDAA), offered by Reps. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Mark Pocan (D-WI), and Eli Crane (R-AZ). This bipartisan amendment requires the Department of Defense to perform an audit, and stipulates that any component of the Department that fails to receive either an unqualified or qualified audit opinion would forfeit 0.5 percent of its discretionary budget authority to the Treasury for the purpose of deficit reduction. This amendment exempts military personnel, reserve personnel, National Guard personnel, and the Defense Health Program accounts.

Holding the Pentagon accountable for its ongoing failure to pass an audit is common sense. Modest reductions in spending in the event of ongoing failure creates a meaningful incentive for the Department to achieve clean audit opinions across the entire agency.

Vote YES on Amendment #322 (#82 in the rule)

We urge you to vote YES on Amendment #322 (#82 in the rule governing debate on the NDAA), offered by Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA). This amendment would require the Pentagon Comptroller to commission an independent review of the Pentagon's financial management execution benchmarks. In light of the Pentagon's ongoing failure to achieve clean audit opinions across the entire agency, reviewing the Pentagon's internal benchmarks for assessing financial management is prudent.

Vote YES on Amendment #566 (#14 in the rule)

We urge you to vote YES on Amendment #566 (#14 in the rule governing debate on the NDAA), offered by Rep. Eli Crane (R-AZ). This amendment would prohibit the use of taxpayer funds to cover the costs of foreign military personnel participating in bilateral or multilateral military exercises conducted with the United States. It would allow the Secretary of Defense to waive the prohibition if they submit a detailed justification to the Armed Services Committees 30 days in advance explaining why such funding is necessary to support U.S. national security interests.

Vote YES on Amendment #784 (#203 in the rule)

We urge you to vote YES on Amendment #784 (#203 in the rule governing debate on the NDAA), offered by Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL). This commonsense amendment would require the same level of spending transparency for other transaction authority (OTA) agreements as for other forms of

expenditure. As OTAs have become an increasingly common means of securing goods and services for the Pentagon, ensuring adequate transparency is essential for public and congressional oversight of federal spending.

Vote YES on Amendment #807 (#32 in the rule)

We urge you to vote YES on Amendment #807 (#32 in the rule governing debate on the NDAA), offered by Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC). This amendment would require Pentagon contractors performing research or development work for the Pentagon with financial support from the Pentagon to disclose the costs of the project to U.S. taxpayers.

Again, Vote NO on Final Passage of the NDAA

We urge you to seize this opportunity to put the nation on a safer and more fiscally responsible path by supporting amendments to improve accountability and oversight of Pentagon spending, and by voting against final passage of the NDAA as it is currently written in light of its fiscally irresponsible topline. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Ellis