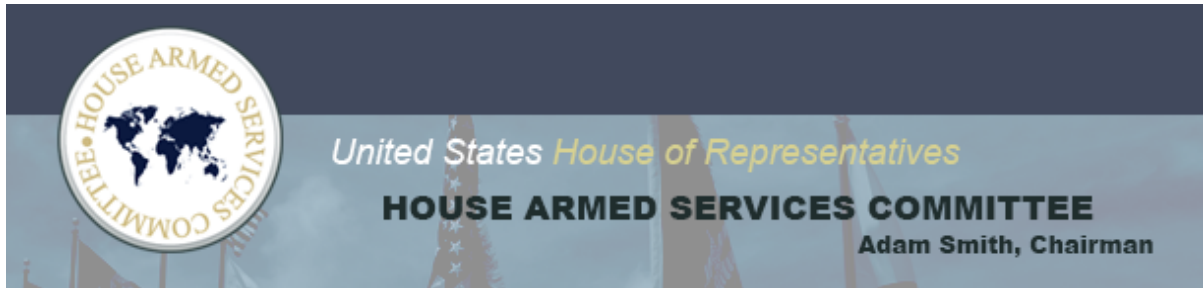


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Opening Statement (As Prepared)
Chair Jackie Speier
Subcommittee on Military Personnel:
*"Full Committee Markup of H.R. 7900 — National
Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023"*
June 22, 2022

Click [here](#) to view the hearing.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.

The Military Personnel Subcommittee mark was adopted unanimously June 8th reflecting the bipartisan nature of this effort. It is inclusive of many member priorities.

Thank you to Ranking Member Gallagher for your efforts this year as we continued to work to improve the quality of life of our service members, their families, and retirees.

The provisions included in this mark make significant strides in addressing the urgent needs and concerns of service members.

The bill supports a military basic pay raise of 4.6% and requires the Secretary of Defense to do a thorough assessment on military pay and compensation programs. As such, there is a provision to report on the accuracy of the housing allowance and exclude the housing allowance from household income for the purposes of the Basic Needs Allowance.

The tragedy of suicide continues to mark the Services, and we addressed this issue by increasing the number of military and civilian behavioral health provider educational pipelines to make short- and long-term impacts on improving access to care for those who need it most.

In an effort to build on recent improvements to the Exceptional Family Member Program, the bill establishes a grant program to better support families needing to navigate a new school district after every move and ensures that their children with special needs receive appropriate educational services for their needs.

In 2021, more than 20,000 families of military children with immediate need for child care were stuck on waitlists, and we believe the Department is not doing enough to recruit and retain an adequate workforce to support the child care needs of military families. As a result, we are requiring the Department of Defense to complete regional studies on adequate pay for military child care center employees and to implement pay increases based on the studies.

Last year we made historic reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and this year we continue that work by asking GAO to review whether our criminal litigators are getting the best training, resources, and experience possible.

The subcommittee's oversight of the Military Health System is reinforced through various provisions in our subcommittee mark. We remain concerned about the increasing number of vacancies for funded military and civilian health care providers across the Military Health System, so we are prohibiting the Department from realigning or reducing military medical end strength until additional analysis on the impacts is complete. We are also requesting an independent analysis of the Quality and Patient Safety Program and a GAO Study on how TRICARE behavioral health coverage compares to mental health parity laws.

The full committee mark authorizes \$53 million to provide assistance to local educational agencies with military dependent students and \$22 million to assist with students with severe disabilities.

Where the service members serve, so do their families. Together, they make sacrifices for our Nation and we must continue our commitment to them.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the staff's efforts, Ilka Regino, Dave Giachetti, Hannah Kaufman, Glen Diehl, Forrest McConnell, and Sidney Faix. They have worked diligently and always in a bipartisan manner to develop the subcommittee mark.

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