



United States *House of Representatives*

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE **DEMOCRATS**

Adam Smith, Ranking Member

House Armed Services Committee Minority Summary for the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act

To ensure the military services can innovate and field capabilities faster, we need to fundamentally reform the Defense Acquisition System (DAS) to cut red tape and deliver capabilities to U.S. service members as quickly as possible. Acquisition programs take too long to develop, produce, and become operational. The Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (FY26 NDAA) is anchored by [*H.R. 3838, the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery \(SPEED\) Act*](#), to breakdown the bureaucracy and outdated methods by encouraging innovation, streamlining the decision-making process in a responsible way, and making the requirements process more efficient and effective.

Innovation, technology, and modernization are prioritized along with our domestic industrial base and military readiness. The FY26 NDAA authorizes \$142.6 billion in research, development, test, and evaluation to meet the immediate and projected force protection challenges. That includes authorization for \$18.5 billion for science and technology programs, including \$124.6 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions. It invests more than \$18 billion in military construction projects and more than \$13 billion in shipbuilding funding and more than \$13 billion for tactical air and land forces procurement.

To bolster capability and readiness, the FY26 NDAA maintains oversight and, where appropriate, authorizes divestment of legacy programs to boost investment in modern systems. It also reauthorizes annual reviews of the F-35 program to resolve a series of deficiencies across the program along with other important oversight measures.

To address service members' and military families' quality of life needs the FY26 NDAA continues the committee's focus on pay and compensation, housing, health care, childcare, education, and support for civilian personnel. That includes a 3.8% pay raise for all service members and a 60 percent increase in the Family Separation Allowance. It authorizes \$1.5 billion in new construction of barracks, dormitories, housing, and child development centers; \$35 million for local educational agencies with military dependent students; and \$10 million for local educational agencies eligible to receive payment for children with severe disabilities.

To ensure the United States continues to keep pace in the Indo-Pacific Region, it authorizes funding for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and provides \$1 billion for the Taiwan Security Cooperation Initiative. It also reauthorizes the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) for two years for a total of \$300 million per year.

TABLE 1: FY26 NDAA Funding Levels

Budget Item	Amount (in billions of dollars)
DoD Discretionary Base	\$848.2
DoE Discretionary Base	\$33.8
Defense-Related Activities	\$0.5
FY26 NDAA Discretionary Topline*	\$882.6

*Does not include national defense authorizations outside of HASC jurisdiction and other adjustments.

Summary of FY26 NDAA Provisions

INVESTS IN ACQUISITION REFORM AND AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL BASE

The FY26 NDAA continues our commitment to building on federal investments in military readiness and our American industrial base while undertaking long-overdue reform of the military acquisition system. Supporting infrastructure projects, industrial base resilience, and improving infrastructure underpins defense innovation. Addressing outdated systems and paralyzing bureaucracy ensures the U.S. can continue to focus on modernization, including building on scientific and technological developments so that we are able to keep pace with key competitors and deliver capabilities to service members when and where they need it. It reduces the complexity, cost, and risk of doing business with the Department of Defense (DoD) by establishing a new acquisition architecture based on five key pillars of reform: aligning acquisition to service members' priorities and operational outcomes; accelerating the requirements process; finding a balance between the need for regulation and efficiency; strengthening the American industrial base and leveraging commercial innovation; and developing a mission-oriented acquisition workforce.

The FY26 NDAA works to shift the Defense Acquisition System from a compliance-driven focus to a focus on efficiency and effectiveness. It strives to promote the use of funding and employing practical solutions to problems based on what is needed rather than jumping through hoops with unnecessary requirements, cutting the time from



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identification of a capability gap to a decision on a solution from almost three years to as few as three months. It calls for the overhaul of burdensome acquisition regulations that drive up costs and cause delays by exempting smaller programs from excessive regulatory burdens and seeks to eliminate the dual layer of complex cost reporting requirements to streamline regulatory compliance while preserving financial transparency. It seeks to attract new entrants to the defense industrial base by establishing the BOOST program to help promising technologies survive the Valley of Death, creating a data-as-a-service model so that the U.S. military can access the data it needs to maintain its systems, and creating an Industrial Resilience Consortium to address supply chain gaps and speed up the adoption of advanced manufacturing. It works to reduce barriers to DoD's use of commercial technology. And it is focused on promoting a culture at DoD and within Congress geared toward moving quickly and responsible risk-taking to provide service members with the tools and materials they need to respond to rapidly evolving scenarios and help strengthen our national security and national defense.

Infrastructure

The FY26 NDAA authorizes more than \$18 billion for military construction projects, including:

- \$1.5 billion for new construction of quality-of-life infrastructure including barracks, dormitories, government-owned family housing, and child development centers;
- \$254 million in design funds to expedite future new construction of barracks and child development centers;
- \$1.4 billion for Pacific Deterrence Initiative construction, including another \$162 Million for the INDOPACOM Military Construction Pilot Program to support minor MILCON projects;
- \$460 million for environmental cleanup at Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) sites, including a \$50 million addition for Navy BRAC; and
- \$684 million for the Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program.

As we continue to face environmental and manmade challenges to installations and readiness at home and around the world, it requires a series of mitigation efforts that include requirements for:

- \$22.5 million for advance battery research within the Department of the Navy;



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- Water management plans in drought prone areas to ensure we are factoring in the water security implications for AI data centers;
- The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment to provide a report on battery technologies that can operate in the arctic or in extremely low temperatures, furthering the committee's encouragement of DoD investment in advanced batteries;
- The Secretary of Defense to provide a report on the DoD's plan to place Artificial Intelligence (AI) centers on installations, including an assessment of energy and water consumption, as well as other potential impacts of AI centers on the installation and surrounding communities;
- A comprehensive assessment of DoD installation power demands, vulnerabilities, and authorities to ensure that the DoD is poised to work alongside relevant agencies and private sector partners to achieve maximal energy security and mission assurance;
- An assessment of DoD installation capacity to withstand and recover quickly from unexpected events, including information on backup sources of power due to outages, cyber risks, and natural disasters; and
- A briefing on the use of thermal energy technology to cool DoD data centers and reduce overall energy consumption and operational costs.

Maintenance, Logistics, and Sustainment

To ensure we can maintain forces, equipment, and operations to meet ever-evolving challenges requires renewed focus on logistics, maintenance, and sustainment needs the FY26 NDAA requires:

- The Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to designate an individual to serve as the official responsible for the integration of global contested logistics;
- The Secretary of Defense to ensure that sufficient wartime spares support equipment and depot level capabilities are available for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program to sustain the aircraft for at least 90 days in a contingency and requires the F-35 contractor to validate all information necessary for the DoD to successfully complete an audit;
- Looking forward, a separate budget line item in FY27 in the Navy operation and maintenance budget request for amphibious ship maintenance, ensuring amphibious ships are receiving adequate resources for maintenance; and
- A briefing on efforts to use predictive maintenance on surface vessels to alleviate maintenance delays, enable proactive repairs, reduce cost and time in depots, and extend the service life of Navy vessels.



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Seapower and Projection Forces

The FY26 NDAA authorizes over \$13 billion in shipbuilding funding, including the procurement of the third Columbia Class Ballistic Missile Submarine and \$5 billion in advance procurement for future submarines as well as:

- \$1 billion for the Carrier Replacement program and \$1.6 billion for an aircraft carrier currently under construction;
- \$816 million for Virginia Class submarines (VCS) which, along with advanced procurement, would procure one VCS;
- \$3.1 billion for advance procurement of Virginia Class submarines;
- \$612 million for one Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance ship (T-AGOS);
- \$1.2 billion for completion of prior year programs including aircraft carrier, submarine, and surveillance vessels.
- \$1.5 billion for four tactical airborne early warning aircraft;
- \$407 million for three aerial refueling drones;
- \$250 million for sonobuoys;
- \$189 million for unmanned carrier aviation control; and
- \$585 million for spares and repair parts.
- Contract authority for aircraft carrier block purchases to ensure we maintain a robust and consistent carrier workforce and cadence;
- Authorization of the use of a vessel construction manager for the Landing Ship Medium to help keep construction costs down;
- Ensures Unmanned Surface Vessels will be purpose built for autonomy;
- Requires a separate budgetary activity for amphibious ship spares and repair parts in a procurement line;
- Requires the development and implementation of a strategy for investment and support for the maritime industrial base that includes the use of artificial intelligence;
- Raises the minimum air refueling aircraft floor to 504 by 2027;
- Maintains the inventory requirement of C-130 aircraft at 271 aircraft;
- Requires retired KC-10 aircraft be maintained in an air refueling configuration to reduce the risk should the Air Force require additional aircraft in the future;
- Extends the future of the Navy Commission;
- Authorizes appropriations for the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and other improvements to civilian programs of MARAD; and



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- Requires a report on the potential use of a commercial contracting agent for crewing and operation of Military Sealift Command vessels.

Tactical Air and Land Forces

The FY26 NDAA authorizes over \$13 billion for key tactical air and land forces procurements that include:

- \$.3.14 billion for three AH-64E Apaches, 24 H-60M Blackhawks, 11 CH-47 Block II Chinooks, 12 CH-53K King Stallions, and two MH-139 Grey Wolf aircraft;
- \$7.29 billion for 24 F-35A, 11 F-35B, and 12 F-35C aircraft;
- \$800 million to continue rapid prototyping efforts for the E-7A aircraft;
- \$362 million for 14 T-7 Advanced Trainer aircraft; and
- \$3.03 billion for 86 Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicles, 10 M109 Paladins, 30 M1A2 Abrams tanks, 91 Marine Corps Amphibious Combat Vehicles, and 44 Maneuver, Short Range Air Defense vehicles.

Additionally, the FY26 NDAA sustains the statutory floor for Air Force Fighter Mission Aircraft Inventory and sustains the prohibition on the retirement of Air Force F-22 Block 20, F-15E, and A-10 aircraft. It also requires:

- The Secretary of the Army to notify Congress 30 days prior to implementation of any Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) efforts, including to force structure, basing, procurement, or divestment;
- A report that explains ATI budget impacts, requirements changes, and capability gaps; and
- A pilot program to accelerate deployment of unmanned aerial systems to covered facilities in NORTHCOM.

Strategic Forces

The FY26 NDAA addresses space as a critically important defense and commercial domain by continuing to push DoD to adopt and integrate commercial capabilities including areas such as space weather models, dynamic space operations, hybrid satellite communications, space access, mobility, and logistics, and tactically responsive space. In addition to reporting requirements, it recommends additional funding in several of these areas to more rapidly leverage the innovative U.S. commercial space industry. It further requires:

- The U.S. Space Force prioritize its acquisition workforce in initial officer training course curricula, and mandates that early-career Guardians be given opportunities in acquisition to grow the military cadre of experts in acquisition to



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improve the service's ability to deliver needed capability on orbit, on time, and on budget;

- The Assured Access to Space Program Executive Officer be at minimum a 1-star general, and be dual-hatted with operational responsibilities as the Space Launch Delta 45 director, keeping both acquisition and operational duties under control of one general officer; and
- Beginning in 2029, to be promoted to a general officer, a Guardian must have at minimum one operational tour and one acquisition tour.

It authorizes increased missile defense capabilities by:

- Increasing oversight through requiring reports and briefings on critical areas such as Defense of Guam architecture, sensor upgrades to the Patriot system, and hypersonic defense capabilities;
- Authorizing funding for regional missile defense capabilities including associated interceptors, such as THAAD, Patriot, Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (Standard Missile-3 Blocks IB and IIA); and
- Requiring yearly briefings on the implementation of the President's Golden Dome for America initiative.

It supports the safety and security of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent by increasing funding for Global Nuclear Security Nonproliferation work, minority and tribal serving institution partnership programs, and environmental clean-up at Hanford and Savannah River sites. It further requires:

- The Secretary of Defense to designate an executive agent for installation and operational nuclear energy and submit a plan to establish a program of record for the use of nuclear energy;
- The Secretary of Defense to establish an advanced nuclear technologies transition working group to develop and implement a strategy to field commercially available advanced nuclear technologies;
- Authorization of an additional \$20 million for TRISO, a fuel for advanced nuclear reactors; and
- Requires an assessment of air quality by particulate producing powerplants on or near installations compared with advanced nuclear technologies.

INVESTS IN PEOPLE



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The priorities of House Armed Services Committee Democrats continue to be defined by the belief that people—the service members and their families making enormous sacrifices every day so that we are safe, the workers powering America’s defense industrial base, the civil servants across the DoD working tirelessly to protect our country, and the scientists and researchers building the technologies of the future—are the greatest source of strength for America’s defense.

To ensure we can continue to recruit and retain the diverse and talented people needed to provide for our national defense, this year’s NDAA addresses quality of life needs by focusing on pay and compensation, housing, health care, childcare, and civilian support. It also improves military recruitment access to high schools, colleges, and universities to increase their ability to reach a strong diverse talent pool.

Pay and Compensation

- Authorizes a 3.8% pay raise for all military personnel;
- Increases oversight of food programs across the Services and of the Basic Allowance for Subsistence to ensure funds are used to provide food for service members; and
- Expands access to food on military installations by granting the Services authorities to conduct pilot programs to reform their food programs.

Housing

- Requires analysis of alternative methods for calculating the Basic Allowance for Housing to better reflect market trends.

Education and Childcare

- Impact Aid: Authorizes \$35 million for the purpose of aiding local educational agencies with military dependent students, and \$10 million for local educational agencies eligible to receive payment for children with severe disabilities. Requires an annual review of the fee assistance program rate cap for eligible community-based childcare providers; and
- Extends the *Child Care In Your Home* Pilot Program until December 31, 2029.

Health Care

- Waives fees and copays on the TRICARE Dental Program for all members of the Selected Reserve.
- Increases military-civilian partnerships in support of the National Disaster Medical System.
- Access:



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- Expands mental health services to meet the unique needs of the Cyber Mission Force;
 - Authorizes two pilot programs that would expand obstetrical and gynecological care for TRICARE beneficiaries;
 - Prohibits the DoD from reducing military medical personnel; and
 - Increases access to specialty care by lowering the threshold for travel reimbursement for a medical appointment from 100 miles to 50.
- Studies:
 - Requires a longitudinal study of long-term health effects within the Special Forces community; and
 - Requires a report on the Traumatic Brain Injuries among active-duty pilots exposed to high-speed maneuvers, catapult launches, and/or other repetitive actions potentially harmful to the brain.

Civilian Personnel

- Fixes a payment issue that prevents Military Sealift Command's senior licensed officers from receiving bonuses, awards, or other cash payments in the year awarded, therefore ensuring these payments are not deferred and can be awarded on a yearly basis; and
- Fixes pay limitations that severely disadvantage federal maritime employment.

INVESTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science and technology are prioritized along with our domestic industrial base and military readiness. The FY26 NDAA authorizes \$142.6 billion in research, development, test, and evaluation to meet the immediate and projected force protection challenges. That includes \$18.5 billion for science and technology programs and \$6 billion in General Transfer Authority. Specifically, the FY26 NDAA:

- Requires the creation of a software bill of materials for artificial intelligence;
- Authorizes generative artificial intelligence pilot efforts;
- Requires the implementation of standard reference architectures for digital engineering;
- Requires the creation of a digital test and evaluation environment for developmental and operational testing and the production of data management plans for defense programs;
- Allows the Office of Strategic Capital to charge fees on transactions;



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- Builds on the FY25 NDAA to improve reporting and accountability for the Authority to Operate (ATO) process and streamlines timelines for approving an ATO;
- Authorizes the creation of additional Defense Innovation Unit OnRamp Hubs;
- Requires the Department to study how to better align the force management, budgeting, and requirements processes, including using data-driven commercial technologies; and
- Brings audit-related defense business systems under the purview of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

INVESTS IN ALLIES AND PARTNERS

The FY26 NDAA authorizes and builds on some crucial investments in the United States' alliances and partnerships for the benefit of our national defense and to promote peace and stability around the world.

The FY26 NDAA resources the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and continues related reporting requirements, including an independent assessment of the Commander of USINDOPACOM. It also authorizes \$1 billion for the Taiwan Security Cooperation Initiative and extends the authority to transfer funds to the Department of State for dioxin remediation at Bien Hoa Airbase in Vietnam, pursuant to Section 1253 of the FY21 NDAA.

The FY26 NDAA reauthorizes USAI for two years at \$300 million per year and restricts reducing force structure in EUCOM below 76,000, helping to ensure U.S. forces remain in Europe in the face of continued Russian aggression toward Ukraine and NATO allies. It requires an update on DoD spending related to the Baltic Security Initiative and notes Baltic countries have consistently invested seriously in their own defense and they rank among the highest in NATO for defense spending as a percentage of gross domestic product. Further, it emphasizes the importance of the Baltic Security Initiative (BSI) and its role in improving the defensive military capabilities of these NATO member states.

OVERSIGHT



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The duty of Congress to provide oversight over the people and programs that provide for our national security and national defense is among the most important obligations we must fulfill.

Oversight of major defense acquisition systems in the FY26 NDAA includes reauthorizing the Comptroller General to conduct annual reviews of the F-35 program, including its requirements, cost, scope, and schedule of the program overall and each of its acquisition subprograms. It would also limit delivery of KC-46 aircraft until the Secretary of Defense submits to the congressional defense committees a corrective action plan for all category 1 deficiencies.

The FY26 NDAA increases oversight of the missile defense system by requiring reports and briefings on critical areas such as the Defense of Guam architecture, sensor upgrades to the Patriot system, and hypersonic defense capabilities. It further increases oversight on the Spent Fuel Handling Recapitalization Project in Idaho that is several years behind schedule and over budget.