



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

December 7, 2025

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. This drives up costs and creates an environment rife with waste and inefficiencies. The Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (FY26 NDAA) was anchored by [H.R. 3838, the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery \(SPEED\) Act](#) to breakdown bureaucracy and outdated methods by encouraging innovation, streamlining the decision-making process in a responsible way, and making the requirements process more efficient and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.

The FY26 NDAA authorizes \$890 billion for the Department of Defense, National Nuclear Security Agency, and other related national security agencies. That includes \$145.7 billion in research, development, test, and evaluation to meet the immediate and projected force protection challenges. It invests \$18.9 billion for science and technology programs, including \$114.6 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions. It invests more than \$19.7 billion in military construction projects and more than \$20 billion in shipbuilding funding.

To bolster capability and readiness, the FY26 NDAA maintains oversight and, where appropriate, authorizes divestment of legacy programs to boost investment in modern systems, including incremental retirement authority for F-15E and A-10 aircraft.

To address service members' and military families' quality of life needs the FY26 NDAA focuses on pay and compensation, housing, health care, childcare, and support for civilian personnel. That includes a 3.8% pay raise for service members and an increase in the Family Separation Allowance. It authorizes \$1.5 billion in new construction of barracks, dormitories, housing, and child development centers; \$50 million for local educational agencies with military dependent students; and \$20 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 \$400 million for FY26 and \$400 million for FY27 and extends a limitation on recognizing Russian sovereignty over any part of Ukraine.

TABLE 1: FY26 NDAA Funding Levels

Budget Item	Amount (in billions of dollars)
DoD Discretionary Base	\$855.7
DoE Discretionary Base	\$34.3
Defense-Related Activities	\$0.5
FY26 NDAA Discretionary Topline*	\$890.6

*Does not include national defense authorizations outside of HASC jurisdiction and other adjustments. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

REFORMING THE DEFENSE ACQUISITION SYSTEM

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 onerous bureaucracies 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.

It works to shift the Defense Acquisition System from a compliance-driven focus to what is the most effective and efficient way to get service members what they need when they need it. 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 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



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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.

CONDUCTING CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

The duty of Congress to conduct oversight over the people and programs that provide for our national security and national defense is among our most important obligations. The FY26 NDAA increases oversight of the Trump Administration by fencing funding for the Secretary of Defense until the Department complies with oversight requirements, including providing copies of all execute orders, complying with keeping the congressional defense committees informed of updates, and providing all unedited video of strikes conducted against designated terrorist organizations in the area of responsibility of the United States Southern Command."

The FY26 NDAA further adds to oversight of DoD's cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security's immigration enforcement efforts, including notification and reporting requirements on the use of DoD aircraft for removal operations, the number of migrants being held at DoD installations, and other efforts to support immigration enforcement operations.

To safeguard disciplined and lawful conduct, the FY26 NDAA requires:

- Congressional notification to include the reason if a Member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Combatant Commanders, and/or Service Judge Advocates General is removed from their duties.
- The Service Judge Advocates General to provide sufficient qualified uniformed legal counsel to military commanders involved in planning and organizing military operations,
- The standardization of management, oversight, and administration of civilian employees of the military departments; and
- The annual training of all members of the Armed Forces on government ethics and standards of conduct.



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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.

The FY26 NDAA increases oversight by requiring DoD to study how to better align force management, budgeting, and requirements processes, including using data-driven commercial technologies. And it brings audit-related defense systems under the purview of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

INVESTS IN PEOPLE

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;
- Requires a pay and benefits education campaign for service members and their families; and
- Expands access to food on military installations by granting the Services authorities to conduct pilot programs to reform their food programs.
- Reaffirms the prohibition on privatization of the military commissary system.



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Civilian Personnel

- Strengthens safeguards against arbitrary or ad hoc reductions of the civilian workforce by requiring DoD to fully justify major reductions with a standardized analysis; provide clear guidance on reductions in force that considers lethality, readiness, operational effectiveness, stress on the military force, and fully burdened costs; and notify Congress of significant reductions;
- Protects public shipyard workers from the federal hiring freeze as well as a reduction in force;
- Protects childcare workers and DODEA personnel from arbitrary reductions in force;
- 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.

Housing

- Requires an analysis of alternative methods for calculating the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to better reflect market trends; and
- Increases transparency of the calculation of the BAH to include how the rates are determined.

Education and Childcare

- Impact Aid: Authorizes \$50 million for the purpose of aiding local educational agencies with military dependent students, and \$20 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

- Establishes a military-civilian medical surge program in support of the National Disaster Medical System.
- Codifies the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER), which serves as a central repository of occupational and environmental exposure data.
- Access:
 - Expands mental health services to meet the unique needs of the Cyber Mission Force;
 - Prohibits the DoD from reducing military medical personnel;



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- Improves Military medical cooperation arrangements among Five Eyes countries; and
- Increases access to specialty care by lowering the threshold for travel reimbursement for a medical appointment from 100 miles to 75.
- Studies:
 - Requires a phased study of cancer among rotary-wing pilots and aviation support personnel; and
 - Requires a comprehensive study on the psychological and mental health effects of unmanned aircraft systems on military and civilian operators.

INVESTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE, READINESS, AND MODERNIZATION

Infrastructure

The FY26 NDAA authorizes more than \$19.7 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 \$364 Million for the INDOPACOM Military Construction Pilot Program to support minor MILCON projects; and
- \$460 million for environmental cleanup at Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) sites, including a \$50 million addition for Navy BRAC.

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;
- Water management plans in drought prone areas to identify and decrease water loss due to failing utilities infrastructure, execute conservation plans, and ensure the Department is 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



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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.

Energy Resilience

To ensure DoD installations can meet our national defense and energy needs, the FY26 NDAA:

- Requires the Secretary of Defense to designate an executive agent for installation and operational nuclear energy to ensure continuity of effort across the military departments on both installation and operational nuclear energy;
- Requires 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
- Establishes a Department of the Navy pilot program for small modular nuclear reactors to enhance installation energy resilience.
- \$684 million for the Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program to include efficiency measures and microgrids for energy resilience.

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;



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- 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.
- Designates an official to serve as a Product Support Manager for certain acquisition programs to ensure that sustainment and support are considered during the early acquisition phases of weapon systems.

Seapower and Projection Forces

The FY26 NDAA authorizes over \$20 billion in shipbuilding funding, including the procurement of the third Columbia Class Ballistic Missile Submarine and over \$5 billion in advance procurement for future submarines as well as:

- \$1 billion for Carrier Replacement program and \$1.6B for an aircraft carrier currently under construction;
- Over \$1.5 billion for Virginia Class submarines (VCS) which, along with advanced procurement, and would procure one VCS. This funding includes wage and performance increases to help improve the workforce and production schedules;
- Nearly \$4 billion for advance procurement of Virginia Class submarines to include continuous production authority that enables the Navy to procure critical parts in a more efficient manner;
- \$612 million for one Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance ship (T-AGOS);
- Over \$1.5 billion for completion of prior year programs including aircraft carrier, submarine, and surveillance vessels.
- \$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.
- Authorizes multi-year procurement for Tomahawk missiles to boost the production rate and inventory of a vital munition.
- Contract authority for aircraft carrier block purchases to ensure we maintain a robust and consistent carrier workforce and cadence;
- Authorizes 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 the development and implementation of a strategy for investment and support for the maritime industrial base that includes the use of artificial intelligence;



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- 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; and
- 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 \$14 billion for key tactical and air and land forces procurements that include:

- \$3.285 billion for three AH-64E Apaches, 24 H-60M Blackhawks, 11 CH-47 Block II Chinooks, and 13 CH-53K King Stallions;
- \$7.294 billion for 24 F-35A, 11 F-35B, and 12 F-35C aircraft;
- \$846 million to continue rapid prototyping efforts for the E-7A aircraft;
- \$362 million for 14 T-7 Advanced Trainer aircraft; and
- \$2.847 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, sustains the prohibition on the retirement of Air Force F-22 Block 20, and includes incremental retirement authority for F-15E, and A-10 aircraft. It also:

- Authorizes multiyear procurement authority for the UH-60 Blackhawk aircraft;
- Authorizes early production of the FLRAA tiltrotor aircraft;
- Prohibits cancellation of the Air Force E-7A Rapid Prototype program;
- Extends for five years an annual report by the Government Accountability Office on the F-35 program;
- Requires a plan to integrate an open mission systems computer in the F-35 aircraft; and
- Requires the Deputy Secretary of Defense to create a Small UAS working group to develop strategies to meet defense requirements while fostering a strong commercial industrial base.

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



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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 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 requires the general officer be assigned to the position for a 4-year term, ensuring tenure in this critical position; and
- Requires the Secretary of the Air Force to establish regulations that codify that as a prerequisite for promotion to general officer in the Space Force, candidates have both acquisition and operational experience.

It addresses the development and procurement of missile defense capabilities by:

- Increasing oversight through requiring reports and briefings on the Golden Dome for America architecture, and places a limitation on development of a Space-Based interceptor constellation until reporting requirements are met; and
- Authorizing multiyear procurement for THAAD, Patriot, Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense interceptors.

It supports the safety and security of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent by:

- Supporting the modernization of the U.S. nuclear triad; addressing aging infrastructure across the National Nuclear Security National Laboratories; and expanding authorities for the Department of Energy to counter unmanned aerial vehicles at nuclear weapon labs and production sites.
- It also prohibits the reclassification of waste at the Hanford site in Washington State to ensure nuclear waste cleanup continues as planned.

INVESTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science and technology are prioritized along with our domestic industrial base and military readiness. The FY26 NDAA authorizes \$145.7 billion in research, development, test, and evaluation to meet immediate and projected force protection challenges, including \$18.9 billion for science and technology programs. 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;



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- 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 to cover costs associated with transactions;
- Implements recommendations of the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology, including authorizing key programs, creating guidance for biobased products to meet DoD requirements, and requiring policies and guidelines on responsible development and deployment of biotechnology and the storage of biological data for advanced computing;
- Protects colleges and universities by restricting the change or modification of facilities and administration cost rates;
- Builds on the FY25 NDAA to improve reporting and accountability for the Authority to Operate (ATO) process and streamlines timelines for approving an ATO; and
- Authorizes the creation of additional Defense Innovation Unit OnRamp Hubs.

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.

It resources the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and continues related reporting requirements, including an independent assessment of the Commander of USINDOPACOM. It authorizes \$1 billion for the Taiwan Security Cooperation Initiative. It 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 also reauthorizes USAI for \$400 million in FY26 and \$400 million in FY27, ensures funding for EUCOM security cooperation programs, including the Baltics, 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. Further, it formally authorizes the Baltic Security Initiative (BSI), and it extends a prohibition on recognizing Russian sovereignty over any part of Ukraine.