



November 15, 2023

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Wicker,

We write to you as New Democrats in support of a strong, bipartisan Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA is an essential step in securing our national security interests and we appreciate your continued work in crafting this critical legislation. While the bill that passed out of the House Armed Services Committee was overwhelmingly bipartisan, the bill that was amended and passed on the House floor is not. The New Democrat Coalition stands ready to support bipartisan legislation that strengthens and advances readiness, servicemember support, and a robust defense industrial base. As you work through conference negotiations to resolve the House and Senate versions of the FY24 NDAA, we ask that you consider our priorities in the several key areas:

Continued Support for Ukraine

Ukraine is a key regional strategic U.S. partner and a vital national security interest. Russia's unprovoked invasion is a threat to democracies around the world and the United States has worked with our allies and partners to get the Ukrainian people what they have needed to defend themselves and to push back Russian aggression. As Ukraine continues their counteroffensive to reclaim their territory and secure their freedom, Congress must reaffirm its unwavering commitment to Ukraine at this critical juncture in the war and we urge you to preserve the following provisions:

- Full authorization of the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), and Baltic Security Initiative (BSI) in accordance with President Biden's budget proposal.

Support for Servicemembers and their Families

It is vital that we support the all-volunteer force and ensure that servicemembers and their families receive the compensation and resources they need and deserve. Our servicemembers face quality of life challenges such as inadequate affordable housing, limited high quality childcare options, and lack of mental health resources. The FY24 NDAA passed by the House includes numerous provisions that strengthen and improve the quality of life of servicemembers and their families and we urge you to preserve the following provisions:

- Increase in military basic pay for servicemembers.
- Adjustments to Basic Allowing for Housing that reduce out of pocket expenses for servicemembers.
- Authorizations assisting local educational agencies.
- Authorizations for the construction of new child development centers and expansion of partnerships and pilot programs to increase child care access and capacity.
- Authorizations for new mental health programs to increase awareness and access to treatments and services.
- Expansion of remote work options and eligibility for reimbursement of qualified licensure, certifications, and business relocation costs for military spouses.
- Authorization of programs and initiatives that help address housing needs.
- Authorizations for defense community infrastructure programs.
- Expansion of programs that support servicemembers transitioning to the civilian workforce.

Prioritize Climate Resiliency and Energy Security

The Department of Defense faces a dual climate challenge: improving our military's climate resiliency and ensuring our energy infrastructure is secure and efficient. Extreme weather hazards put our military installations at risk and have implications for international security as they exacerbate geopolitical tensions, further social instability, and disrupt global supply chains. Building on progress made in recent years, the FY24 NDAA includes various provisions that prioritize energy and climate resilience, and we urge you to preserve the following provisions:

- In H.R. 2670, the expansion of the prototype and demonstration program for energy resilience to include hydrogen energy.
- In S. 2226, the authorization of programs and initiatives that support the innovation and growth of the domestic nuclear sector.

- In S. 2226, the authorization and funding for the study on human health impacts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water.

Invest in American Innovation

America's global leadership is made possible through a modern ecosystem that supports our national security objectives. However, America continues to face challenges by adversaries seeking to supplant U.S. global leadership through technological, military, and economic means. Congress must hasten the identification, development and acquisition of new technologies to enable a smarter and more agile Department of Defense. The FY24 NDAA passed by the House includes numerous provisions that help the United States maintain a technological and strategic edge and we urge you to preserve the following provisions:

- Authorization of programs and initiatives that support the research, development, and deployment of emerging and next-generation technologies.
- Authorization of contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (NATO DIANA).
- Expansion of workforce and professional development programs, such as increased funding for minority-serving institutions, expanded Department of Defense cyber scholarships, and expanded leadership training courses.
- Extension of the Pilot Program on Domestic Investment in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.
- Expansion of awards and establishing demonstration projects that help streamline the acquisition process of innovative technologies.

Strengthen our Defense Industrial Base and Supply Chains

A healthy industrial base and resilient supply chains are critical to maintain U.S. national security objectives. In recent years, the fragility of U.S supply chains has been exposed and has shone a light on the need to strengthen our defense industrial base in the shifting international security environment. Congress has recognized this need and included numerous provisions in the FY24 NDAA passed by the House bolstering supply chains, increasing opportunities for entrants, and maximizing production capabilities. We urge you to preserve the following provisions:

- Requirements and recommendations to bolster critical mineral and rare earth metal supply chains.
- Assessment of Department of Defense acquisition and contracting.
- Assessment of various ongoing efforts, including semiconductor supply chain resilience and defense industrial base cybersecurity efforts.
- Authorization of a pilot program for monitoring key supply chains for covered weapons platforms.

- In S. 2226, the authorization to allow the training of Australians on submarine security activities.

In addition to the priorities listed above, we are focused on supporting Israel's security needs as the nation battles Hamas terrorists. As Israel continues to defend itself and its citizens, Congress must reaffirm its ironclad support of Israel through the NDAA, and we urge you to preserve provisions that enhance U.S. security cooperation with Israel and provide any additional necessary resources to aid Israel in the ongoing conflict.

These priorities invest in a full range of tools, programs, and initiatives that will promote the safety and prosperity of Americans and enhance the security of our allies and partners. Additionally, we urge you to remove the partisan portions of the House-passed NDAA that marginalize swaths of our country and attack reproductive rights and access to basic health care for servicemembers and their families. Those partisan provisions will worsen our recruitment crisis, make our military less capable, and weaken our national defense.

We commend you on your leadership and commitment to the safety and prosperity of Americans. We look forward to continuing to work with you to finalize the FY24 NDAA and fulfill our responsibility to the people who proudly wear our uniform, and our national defense and national security.

Sincerely,



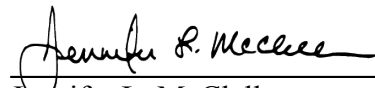
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



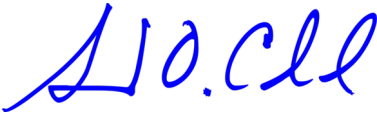
Ann McLane Kuster
Chair
New Democrat Coalition



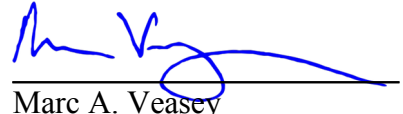
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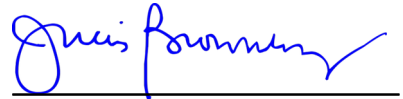
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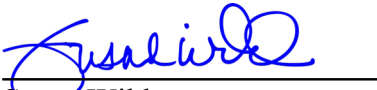
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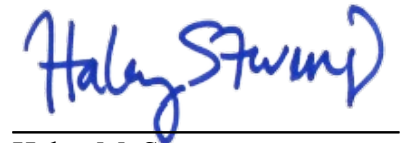
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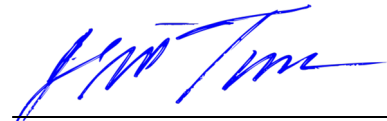
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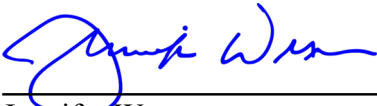
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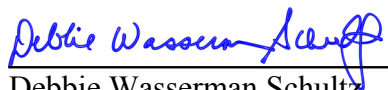
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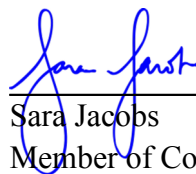
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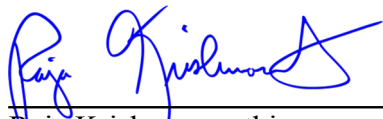
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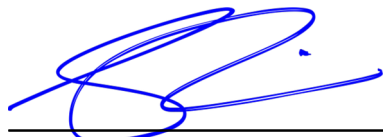
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