



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

Thad Cochran of Mississippi, Chairman

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2015

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FY2016 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL CLEARED BY SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE

Bipartisan Senate Bill Promotes National Security, Makes Critical Investments in Readiness & Personnel

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense today approved its FY2016 Defense Appropriations Bill, which recommends funding increases to improve the readiness of the Armed Forces and makes significant investments to sustain U.S. force structure.

The measure, which is scheduled to be considered by the full Committee on Thursday, recommends \$489.1 billion in base funding and \$86.8 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding, consistent with the FY2016 budget resolution and the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation.

The bill provides \$213.9 billion for operation and maintenance accounts, which will enable the services to continue addressing their most urgent training and maintenance deficiencies. The measure funds an active duty end strength of 1,305,200 and reserve component end strength of 811,000, as requested by the President and incorporated in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. It also strengthens the National Guard and Reserve equipment account.

“Our work in a bipartisan manner to craft a fiscally responsible bill is encouraging. There appears to be broad support for the amounts provided in this bill to meet our national security requirements,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

“Our hearings provided an opportunity for us to engage our nation's top military and civilian leadership. In response, we have worked diligently to support the top priorities of our military services and defense agencies,” he said. “The bill before us today recommends funding to increase readiness, sustain U.S. force structure and provide stability to our national military manufacturing capabilities.”

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Highlights of the Senate FY2016 Defense Appropriations Bill:

Readiness – \$213.9 billion for operation and maintenance accounts, which will enable the services to continue addressing their most urgent training and maintenance deficiencies while reconstituting the force to become smaller and more capable over the next several years. The bill also recommends an additional \$182 million to reduce readiness shortfalls.

Shipbuilding – \$18.2 billion for Navy shipbuilding programs, an increase of \$1.6 billion and one ship from the request. In total, the bill funds the construction of 10 new warships.

Missile Defense – \$8.2 billion for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), an increase of \$262 million above the President’s request. The bill also makes robust investments in Israeli missile defense programs, as requested by the Government of Israel.

National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account – \$1 billion for National Guard and Reserve equipment to modernize our reserve forces and ensure full interoperability with the active duty force.

Basic Research Investments – The bill adds \$228.5 million to basic (non-medical) research for the Army, Navy, Air Force and DoD, a 1.7 percent increase over FY2015 levels.

Military Personnel and Pay – The bill funds an active duty end strength of 1,305,200 and reserve component end strength of 811,000, as requested and authorized. It funds a 1.3 percent pay raise for military personnel, as requested by DoD and authorized by the Senate Armed Services Committee. The bill also supports the President’s request to slow growth of the basic allowance for housing (BAH) for enlisted servicemembers, which will save \$3.9 billion in personnel costs over the next five years.

Troops and Families – The bill maintains a strong commitment to taking care of the troops and their families and recommends an additional \$14 million for behavioral health counseling, an additional \$25 million for the continued implementation of the Sexual Assault Special Victims’ Counsel program across the services, and an increase of \$37 million to develop a financial education program to educate servicemembers on best practices with regard to career transition, health benefits, retirement planning and savings, and overall financial readiness.

Defense Health – \$32.5 billion for the Defense Health Program, which provides medical services for our military personnel and their families, continues advancements in medical research, modernizes and maintains medical infrastructure and develops the next generation of electronic health records. The bill also increases DoD core medical research budget as well as congressionally-directed medical research funding by \$835.5 million, including \$278.7 million for the competitively awarded peer-reviewed medical research program and \$177.3 million for the Department to advance its own medical research priorities.

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Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) – The bill transfers \$36.5 billion from base operation and maintenance accounts to OCO in order to meet the overall defense funding levels requested by the President while avoiding sequestration by breaching the Budget Control Act caps. This transfer moves funding for operation and maintenance budget lines that have executed both base and OCO funding in the past. The amounts provided will also enable the Department of Defense (DoD) to meet emerging threats and support ongoing military operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Program Reductions – The Senate bill proposes reductions to 486 programs based on schedule slips, cost growth and poor budget justification. It reinvests those funds to support unfunded requirements identified by the Services, increases authorized by the Senate Armed Services Committee, and readiness and military modernization priorities.

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