



September 19, 2016

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United States Congress, Washington, D.C. 20515

On behalf of the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA), we are writing to express support for several amendments currently under consideration for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NCPA is a non-profit, nonpartisan public policy research organization dedicated to developing and promoting private alternatives to government regulation and control. We do not endorse specific pieces of legislation. Nevertheless, we believe that certain policy recommendations within the House-passed version of the NDAA align best with our ideals.

Over the past two years, the president demanded America's military forces be downsized to their lowest levels in generations. The Obama administration and some in Congress plan to use the NDAA to further diminish the capability of our military to protect our country. In an increasingly unstable geopolitical environment, now is not the time to weaken America's defenses. We at the NCPA firmly believe we can achieve a fiscally responsible military that has the capabilities to keep America safe.

First, we support compensating our men and women in the military at a pay rate above poverty level so active duty members do not have to be on federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP. A Marketplace.org report from May 2015 stated that, "in 2014 more than \$84 million worth of food stamps were spent at military commissaries." The USDA estimates that in 2012, "more than 1.5 million veterans used food stamps, about 7 percent of all veterans." That should not be the case.

Additional solutions to a pay raise would involve changing the law to eliminate Base Housing Allowance (BAH) from the food stamp calculation since that number varies depending on zip code and completely misrepresents the actual pay service members receive. Congress could also eliminate the DoD's ineffective Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) program, which has failed at keeping lower-income military families off the government SNAP program.

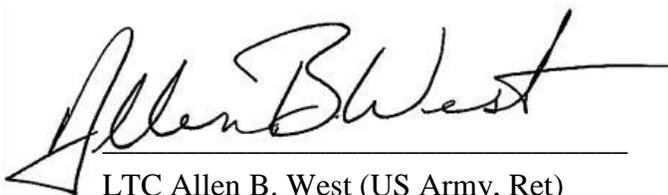
Eliminating this program could save the DoD \$1 million a year and would ensure any pay increases have a more lasting impact on the mission and morale.

Second, we welcome the changes to the Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) fund and feel the House version offers a better road forward. From faulty security assistance programs to funding of obscure military operations, this non-discretionary, “emergency” account has essentially become an executive slush fund to circumvent current spending caps established by the 2011 Budget Control Act. A Stimson Center report found that OCO money has increased significantly relative to the declining number of U.S. troops overseas, from \$1 million per troop to \$4.9 million. And the rather inexpensive fight against ISIS cannot account for the eye-popping jump in expenditures. This fund epitomizes what we call *defenseless debt*, a paradox wherein military liabilities increase alongside a simultaneous deterioration in American security.

Third, we support the House efforts to repair the broken acquisition system by disallowing single-track acquisition careers for active duty military and implementing a scorecard system to measure effectiveness and transparency. Additional changes that avoid adding oversight boards to an already bloated Pentagon bureaucracy and clearer guidance on defense contractors’ performance incentives would only strengthen the bill.

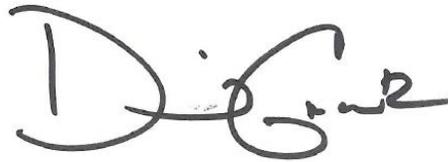
Finally, we firmly agree with the prohibitions against transferring detainees to the United States or to certain other countries. The president appears more eager than ever to give the Castro regime that which it asks for, while expecting little in return. This mystifying level of generosity comes at great expense to U.S. national security since evidence shows that the detention center does not serve as inspiration for terrorists. The plan to slowly empty Guantanamo Bay unnecessarily disadvantages the United States. Congress must remain steadfast in their refusal to transfer terrorists to the United States and other designated countries. Your leadership in these matters is much appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration,



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LTC Allen B. West (US Army, Ret)  
Executive Director and Vice Chairman  
Member, 112th Congress



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David Grantham, Ph.D.  
Senior Fellow  
National Center for Policy Analysis

cc: NDAA conferees