

As a Nation, we will be forever grateful for the ultimate sacrifice both of these men made in service to their fellow sailors and their country. In this 75th year of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, please take the time to remember the important role that EOD techs play in our national security and the risks they take every day to keep us safe.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF  
GIBBIE BUCHHOLTZ

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gibbie Buchholtz from Zion, Illinois. Gibbie has lived in Zion his entire life and works tirelessly to bring our community together. He works part time as a cameraman for the Zion Park District filming city council and township meetings.

Gibbie has become a staple in the community, documenting almost every single event in Zion, from local park openings to volunteer events at soup kitchens, to police and firefighter awards. He promotes events and special moments that often go unnoticed, and he recognizes individuals that go above and beyond.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work alongside him in the Zion community. Gibbie never asks for recognition behind the camera, and only asks that people cherish the special moments with others.

Today I am honored to be able to give Gibbie a little bit of recognition for his great service to our community.

Thank you, Gibbie, and keep up the great work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DOLD) at 10 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 2943,  
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION  
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 937, I call up the conference report on the bill (S. 2943) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Depart-

ment of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 937, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House in Book I of November 30, 2016, at page H6376.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the conference report to accompany S. 2943.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring to the House the conference report for the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Once the President signs this measure into law, it will be the 55th consecutive year in which Congresses of both parties and Presidents of both parties have enacted a defense authorization bill.

I want to start by thanking the distinguished gentleman from Washington, Ranking Member SMITH. Not only has he focused on what is good for the troops and good for the country in this bill, that has been his focus throughout this Congress. It has certainly been my pleasure to work with him toward that end. We do not always agree on what is good for the troops and what is good for the country, but we always agree that that comes first. Our work together has certainly been productive, and I appreciate that opportunity.

Ranking Member SMITH and I have a terrific team on the Armed Services Committee; 63 outstanding members, all of whom have contributed to this product. I certainly appreciate the contributions they have made that have made such a large bill possible.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does good things for the men and women who serve our Nation in the military, and it supports our country's national security. I want to just touch on a few of the highlights, starting with the fact that this bill authorizes spending of \$3.2 billion more than the President has requested. Now, that is not nearly enough, and my great hope is that the new incoming administration will submit to Congress a supplemental request that can really get about the job of rebuilding the military, which is so essential.

The \$3.2 billion, in addition to what the President has requested, is focused on people; and that is exactly what the primary focus of this bill is. So, for example, it provides the full pay raise to which the troops are statutorily entitled for the first time in 6 years; that is in this bill. It stops the layoffs of military personnel, which have been going on, and, at least, prevents it from getting any worse.

It starts to stabilize the readiness problems that are making it more and more difficult for our troops to accomplish their mission and increasingly represents a danger to their lives.

It improves the military healthcare system for the benefit of our troops and their families so that they will have a more consistent experience, that they will get better care, more convenient hours, and a number of things that are in this bill.

In addition to the reforms related to military health care, there are a number of very significant reforms in other areas. For example, in acquisition, we try to make sure that not only we get more value for the taxpayer dollars but that we are more agile in being able to get new technology into the hands of the warfighters faster.

We have commissary reform, which maintains the benefit but reduces the burden on the taxpayers.

We have the first comprehensive rewrite of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in 30 years, and that is a big part of the reason that this bill is the size that it is.

We have organizational reform that streamlines the bureaucracy and helps reduce the overhead so more resources can go to the front lines.

There are many items in this bill, Mr. Speaker, from replenishing munitions of which we have shortages to dealing with the California National Guard repayment issue that has come up in recent weeks.

Other speakers will give more detail about many of those provisions. I just want to take this moment, first, to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for their work in producing this product. We have a unified staff on the Armed Services Committee. We work together to solve problems. And through the ups and downs of the political calendar and all of the other issues that impact our bill, they have done a terrific job in getting us to this point and have served the Nation by doing so. I want to express my appreciation to staff on both sides for that work.

Finally, I also want to pay tribute to the members of our committee who will not be with us in the next Congress for a variety of reasons. They include the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING), the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON), the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. NUGENT), the gentlewoman from

California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GRAHAM), and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. ASHFORD).

I particularly want to thank Subcommittee Chairman RANDY FORBES, Subcommittee Chairman JOE HECK, and Ranking Member LORETTA SANCHEZ for their leadership and years of contributions to the military of our country. We will miss them.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to say that this is an excellent product. It was not easy to pull together. It is a very large bill with a lot of very important issues. As Chairman THORNBERRY indicated, a lot of people contributed to it. Certainly, everybody on our committee, but then many Members who aren't on the committee in the House and, of course, our friends in the Senate. We all worked together and found a way to get through the areas of disagreement and to get to a very good bill, with the central thought that it is our job in passing this bill to give the men and women who serve us in the Armed Services all of the tools they need to do the job we ask them to do.

So I really want to echo Chairman THORNBERRY's comments and thank our staff, first of all, for the outstanding work that they have done in putting together this product. I thank the Members for their contribution. Also, perhaps most importantly, I thank Mr. THORNBERRY for his leadership as the chairman of the committee.

I have been on this committee for 20 years, and we have had a tradition from the moment I showed up and before then that this is a bipartisan committee that is focused on getting its work done. Whatever the hurdles, whatever the difficulties, whatever the disagreements, we know how important it is to produce this bill and how important it is to our troops who are fighting to protect us and provide the national security that we need.

Mr. THORNBERRY has upheld that tradition. We have had many chairmen in those 20 years. They have all had that first and foremost in mind. This is not a partisan committee. This is a committee that works together to get its job done. Mr. THORNBERRY has done an outstanding job of that. He has certainly been an excellent partner for me, and we even found a way to work with the Senate and then made that work. So I thank all of those people who contributed to this.

Chairman THORNBERRY is also right. I think that the most striking thing about this bill is how much it does to help reform the way things are done at the Department of Defense. There is much on acquisition reform, all aimed at trying to get the taxpayers more for the money they spent. Because the chairman is right, as in many areas of government, there are more needs than there is money.

What we have to do is try to figure out how to make that money go as far as possible. Acquisition reform is a key part of that. We really struggled in the early part of the 21st century with a lot of programs that went overbudget. We are still dealing with the legacy of some of that, but very proud that, in the last few years, that has declined, as we have passed acquisition reform, and as we have figured out better ways to get things in the field, into service more quickly, commercial, off-the-shelf technology, more improvements in our acquisition. That is critical if we are going to be able to use the scarce resources we have to the best of our ability. So we put together an excellent product.

Also, as Chairman THORNBERRY mentioned, we do have the full pay raise for the troops that they need and desperately deserve. I will just close by saying, I think, that is the thing that you can really see from this bill. It prioritizes the men and women who serve in the military to try to make sure that we provide for them, give them all the training they need and all the support they need so that when we ask them to do something, they are trained and ready to do it. I really believe that is the most important thing that we do on this committee.

We can have many, many debates about what our national security strategy should be, where we should employ our forces, how we should use them, and what equipment we should provide for them. But the one thing that we have to agree on is, whatever we decide the mission should be, we have to make absolutely certain that we provide the men and women everything they need to be ready to carry out that mission so that we do not send them into a fight unprepared. I think we are doing a very good job of that.

There are many challenges ahead, as the chairman noted. We have a lot of demands. We do not have an infinite amount of money. So we are going to keep working hard to try to figure out how to make that money go as far as possible.

Again, I want to thank all the people who worked on this process. This, I think, is an example of how Congress should work, how legislation should work, people working together, having differences, working them out, and producing a product that improves our Nation and, in this case, improves the quality of national security.

Again, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY. I think this is an excellent bill. I urge passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), chairman of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership in bringing to

the floor this National Defense Authorization Act and for his incredible contribution to the national defense of this country. I also would like to recognize the efforts of Congressman SMITH, who is the ranking member, for his dedication and commitment to get this bill to the floor.

During the last 8 years, our military readiness has been impacted and our force structure has declined. For example, naval aviation has only 3 in 10 Navy jet aircraft that are fully mission capable. Aircraft carrier gaps in critical regions persist. Navy ship deployments have increased almost 40 percent, and submarine demand continues to outpace availability.

As to the Air Force, our B-1 fleet was pulled back from the Persian Gulf this year because of engine maintenance issues and replaced with B-52s that are over 50 years old. I think everyone would agree that these are disturbing trends.

It is obvious that we need to concurrently increase readiness and invest in critical capabilities to ensure that our Nation is capable of projecting force and deterring conflict in the future. A 350-ship Navy is a minimal investment in ensuring our Nation's strategic priorities.

I urge that our NDAA does a good job in arresting our national security's general decline. With the increases in force structure for the Army and the Marine Corps and a 2.1 percent pay raise for our servicemembers, these are good first steps, but we have a long way to go with getting our military ready to defend our Nation. With the election of President-elect Trump, I am optimistic as to our ability to make our military truly great again.

With this being my last NDAA, I want to thank all the members of the House Armed Services Committee and, most specifically, Ranking Member JOE COURTNEY. I have often said that our Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee is likely the most bipartisan subcommittee in Congress, and I think that Ranking Member COURTNEY has been a resolute supporter of our national security. I will miss working with him on a daily basis to improve our Nation's military.

Once again, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and urge my colleagues to support the National Defense Authorization Act.

□ 1015

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my strong support for the 2017 defense bill conference report.

This bill is the result of extraordinary work by Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH, who, despite the extremely polarized environment of the 114th Congress, have managed to produce two bipartisan defense bills this year and last. The degree of

difficulty accomplishing that feat cannot be overstated. I congratulate them both.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, I am particularly pleased with the final bill. Working together, the members of our subcommittee produced a strong mark that makes important investments in new shipbuilding as well as introducing new acquisition reform that will strengthen our Navy. Nine new ships are authorized in the final bill, continuing to boost the numbers of our fleet that is on a path to 308 ships by 2021. As the Secretary of the Navy has publicly stated, the Department is on the verge of releasing a new naval force structure assessment that will call for raising that target even higher. Today's bill provides a sound footing to take on that task with enough work in the shipyards that produce amphibians, destroyers, and submarines to go to a higher level in short order.

To be clear, our subcommittee did not just rubberstamp the administration's budget. For example, the agreement pluses up critical advanced procurement funding for the Virginia class submarine program to ensure that the two-a-year build rate continues on its current pace. Given the important role that our submarines play in our Nation's defense, we cannot let that build rate slip by underfunding advanced procurement.

This agreement also authorizes a new national security multimission vessel that will replace the aging training ships at our Nation's maritime academies. This program is vital to ensuring that we retain a maritime workforce in the future, and this agreement puts us on that path.

I am particularly pleased that the measure also includes language that I helped to author with Chairman FORBES in the House bill to enhance the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund. Our language adds new authorities to the fund that will help reduce costs in the Ohio Replacement Submarine by procuring and building key components in an efficient level-loaded manner.

The Navy estimates that we could save as much as 25 percent of the total cost of the missile compartment alone with this new authority. At a time when we are looking to grow the fleet while also meeting the multigenerational commitment of Ohio replacement, this approach to reducing costs in shipbuilding is absolutely vital.

I want to conclude by saluting Chairman FORBES as he begins a new chapter in his life. I have seen firsthand the impact that he has made on our fleet, our shipbuilding industry, and, most importantly, the lives of sailors, marines, airmen, and mariners touched by his work, which has always been conducted in a bipartisan manner. I thank him for his service and express my hope that we will see him continue his work in these areas in whatever opportunity comes his way next.

I also want to salute the staff, and in particular Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Cebik, who is a Navy fellow in my office who is finishing up his duties in the next few days or so. He did great work in terms of advising not just my office, but also the subcommittee.

I thank all the Members of our panel for their hard work on this year's defense bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this agreement.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MAC THORNBERRY for yielding. I am grateful for his success in promoting peace through strength.

I am in strong support of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017. Generations of my family have served our Nation in uniform. My father was a Flying Tiger in India and China during World War II. I served for 31 years in the Army Reserve and South Carolina Army Guard. I am grateful to have four sons who have served in the military overseas in the global war on terrorism.

I know firsthand the positive impact this year's NDAA will have on our troops, veterans, and military families. After passing this bill, I look forward to telling my constituents at Fort Jackson, adjacent to McEntire Joint Air Base, neighboring Fort Gordon, and the thousands of veterans and countless families concerned about the safety of our citizens that Congress has done its job, just as it has for the past 54 years, by passing a defense authorization bill.

In this bill, readiness is first, protecting our servicemembers overseas and on training missions at home. Cybersecurity is enhanced, protecting American families and encouraging public-private partnerships. We are fully resourcing our Special Operations Forces and providing critical support to fight Islamic terrorists, including counter-propaganda measures. We have increased oversight by requiring a report from the President on Iran as it aggressively acts on ICBMs.

This bill is clear, if our enemies attack our soldiers and American families with new and unconventional attacks, we will ensure our military has the tools to respond. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, I am very grateful as a military veteran and as a grateful dad that this is a very positive NDAA.

I would like to close again by thanking Chairman THORNBERRY for his remarkable persistence throughout this year's reforms. We also have been fortunate to have the visionary leadership of subcommittee chairman RANDY FORBES, who has successfully promoted a vibrant Navy. I additionally want to thank our ranking members ADAM

SMITH and JIM LANGEVIN for their bipartisan manner. This bill will enable President-elect Donald Trump and the incoming Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to establish peace through strength.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Readiness.

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I commend Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH and the committee staff who have worked many, many long nights on this year's defense bill.

This conference report provides funding levels that work to address readiness shortfalls, a process that takes time and will continue to require stable, consistent funding. Unfortunately, that is something that we are not afforded under sequestration and reliance on continuing resolutions.

I also appreciated the efforts to fight in conference for the provisions that were important to the territory of Guam. In particular, I am pleased that the restrictions are lifted for remaining water and wastewater civilian infrastructure projects, as well as for the construction associated with the cultural artifact repository, and that military infrastructure projects were authorized at the President's budget request level.

I thank again Ranking Member SMITH for working with me to get a provision through conference mandating a review of distinguished Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans who may have been unjustly overlooked in the Medal of Honor consideration. We must never overlook the past contributions of our brave men and women in uniform.

To that end, I am also heartened to see the inclusion of the Guam war claims. It is time that we bring resolution to the people of Guam after 70 years and all U.S. citizens who have suffered under enemy occupation during World War II. We have advanced this legislation this far in the past numerous times, but I hope that my colleagues in the Senate will also pass this critical legislation. Ultimately, finding an offset for this legislation has helped to bring resolution to the matter. The people of Guam deserve to close this chapter in our history.

I look forward to this bill passing the House as well as the Senate before being signed into law by the President later this month.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Mr. Speaker, consideration of this important bill comes at a critical time

for our Nation and for our military. Under the leadership of Chairman THORNBERRY, this bill, if funded, begins the process of rebuilding our military and restoring readiness back into the force. The bill stops the harmful end-strength reductions in our military service and it begins the process of reversing this damaging trend in reducing our military capacity. I thank CHRIS GIBSON, my colleague, for his efforts in ending those end-strength reductions.

The bill provides an additional \$600 million to address shortfalls of critical munitions. I want to repeat that. We had to put in \$600 million to address shortfalls in munitions. That is how much we are suffering in our military in spending.

The bill also continues to address the needs of the National Guard and Reserve components by authorizing an additional \$250 million for equipment modernization for the Guard and the Reserve. Additionally, this bill calls for continued action to eradicate sexual assault in the military by providing greater transparency in the military criminal justice system. It also acknowledges the need for intensive treatment for male victims and continues to address the critical issues of retaliation.

This bill also includes important provisions on the protection of child custody rights of our members of the Armed Forces. However, it is important to note that the military services submitted over \$22 billion of unfunded requirements for fiscal year 2017 alone. I had hoped we would be able to address these modernization shortfalls, as we did in the House-passed bill. This bill falls short of the House-passed bills. It is also essential that we begin to correct these funding shortfalls in the next Congress. Currently we have a lack of readiness and a heightened level of risk.

I look forward to working with the new Trump administration in regards to an early supplemental request to fully fund these requirements, and I would expect that the House-passed bill would be used as the minimum starting point in order to start the process for rebuilding our military and working with our allies to create conditions for credible U.S. deterrence. It saddens me that we might pass this bill fully funding the military and then pass a CR that underfunds our military.

Before I conclude, I thank our subcommittee's ranking member, Ms. LORRETTA SANCHEZ, who has truly been my dear friend. She will be sorely missed. I will miss her guidance and her friendship.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH for their leadership during this process.

The conference report includes many provisions that will provide the military services flexibility to recruit and retain members of our Armed Forces and to continue our commitment to taking care of military families. One provision I would like to highlight expands maternity leave for military members up to 12 weeks in conjunction with the birth of a child and authorizes 6 weeks of leave for the primary caregiver in the case of adoption. For the first time, it also grants 21 days to the secondary caregiver for both the birth of a child and adoption.

The conference report also begins to reform and modernize the military healthcare system by standardizing military treatment facilities across the services and increasing access for beneficiaries. The conference report reforms TRICARE into an HMO and a PPO system, but, unfortunately, it establishes a two-fee structure for the next 50 years, thus creating an inequity in a defined benefit for military retirees. I sincerely hope we can continue to work towards a better solution in the future.

Although it is not perfect, this bill is a necessary step toward ensuring our servicemembers, retirees, and their families continue to receive the best, the most efficient, and the most economical health care possible.

While I do agree with the increase in end strength for the military services in the conference report, I am still concerned about how it is paid for, especially with a possible continuing resolution until April. If the fiscal year 2017 defense appropriations bill does not contain the \$3.2 billion in OCO for this increase, the services, particularly the Army, may be forced to reprogram from other critical accounts or give pink slips to dedicated soldiers.

Lastly, I thank Chairman JOE HECK for his 2 years of leadership and bipartisanship on the subcommittee. His dedication to working with me and other members of the subcommittee on behalf of our servicemen and -women and their families is a credit to himself and his values as a public servant. I will miss working with him.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces.

(Mr. ROGERS of Alabama asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I commend the chairman for his leadership in bringing the 55th consecutive NDAA across the finish line. This legislation includes vital provisions, such as a pay raise for our troops, a fix to the end strength, and it begins to address the readiness crisis that is literally claiming the lives of our men and women in uniform.

A special thank-you goes to my friend, the subcommittee ranking member, Mr. COOPER. He is a pleasure to work with—Roll Tide.

The conference report includes critical provisions resulting from oversight of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces. For example, regarding the national security space, it enables a rational transition to the end of our reliance on the Russian RD-180 engine. The agreement prioritizes funding for U.S. replacement of the RD-180 engine. It rejects the Air Force strategy to pay for three new launch systems to commercial providers. In fact, the Air Force should only hold its industry day and take no further action until the new administration has a chance to conduct a full cost policy and legal analysis. It gives the Air Force one final opportunity to meet warfighter requirements and bring order to the Department's space-based weather collection program.

Concerning our nuclear forces and nuclear enterprise, the conference report prohibits funding for the administration's misguided proposal to accelerate dismantlement of retired nuclear weapons, authorizes an additional \$100 million in funding to help pay for and address the massive infrastructure problems and deferred maintenance backlogs in the NSA, and gives the Air Force one final chance to appropriately prioritize the strategic missile warning system.

Concerning missile defense, the conference report restricts funding for the Army's Lower Tier Air and Missile Defense radar modernization program. The chief wanted more acquisition authority. The bill gives it to him, and I expect him to use it.

□ 1030

I am also proud to see the conference report includes language to repeal the cold war-minded National Missile Defense Act, which sought to limit U.S. missile defense deployments. It provides full funding of the request of our allies in Israel for \$600 million for co-development and coproduction of Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking Ranking Member SMITH, Chairman THORNBERRY, and Chairman WILSON for their tireless work on this bill, as well as all the work on behalf of the staff of the full Armed Services Committee and my personal staff, Kathryn Mitchell and Amanda Donegan.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to be proud of in the conference report before us today. This legislation both provides for the needs of our warfighters and ultimately takes strong steps towards strengthening our national security.

The Emerging Threats and Capabilities portion of the NDAA, which I serve as ranking member of, first and foremost recognizes the importance of the cyber domain. After careful consideration, my colleagues and I came to the

conclusion that the execution of cyberspace operations and the readiness of the Cyber Mission Forces warrants a new unified combatant command, now currently a sub-unified command under STRATCOM.

The bill reiterates the importance of transparency and regular updates to Congress on cyber operations, internal policies and authorities, and other relevant issues and activities. This sets the stage for creating a formalized framework for oversight of U.S. Cyber Command next year.

The legislation also formalizes the relationship between the principal cyber adviser to the Secretary of Defense and Cyber Command, aiding the successful execution of their respective roles and responsibilities. We have come to realize how important these distinctions are to both parties. Thus, the bill clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

Now, on research and development, my ETC colleagues and I strive to champion innovation wherever possible, so this bill authorizes a demonstration pilot program that allows select DOD laboratory directors more flexibility in the day-to-day operations of their labs. This will ensure they can use best management practices to advance science and technology breakthroughs with greater levels of agility.

As directed energy technologies continue to mature and may be ready to be fielded in the near future, the bill designates a senior official within the DOD for coordination of directed energy efforts to reduce redundancy, leverage lessons learned, and advance key policy considerations for uses of such technology.

Earlier this year, the Global Engagement Center was created by executive order within the State Department and tasked with coordinating U.S. counterterrorism messaging with our allies around the world. This year, the ETC portion of the bill formally authorizes the Global Engagement Center and expands the scope of its mission to include countering propaganda of state actors by permitting the DOD to transfer funds to the organization. Mr. Speaker, it is time we counter the dangerous rhetoric both ISIL and Russia are using to influence populations across the world and here at home.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation continues to address the critical policies and programs within the scope of emerging threats and capabilities. Beyond that, I am also particularly pleased that this bill makes the necessary investments in our Navy's nuclear submarine force, the most survivable leg of the triad. The Virginia class submarine and the Ohio Replacement class submarine are critical to our Nation's defense, and I am very pleased that they are prioritized and properly resourced in this legislation.

I want to again thank the leadership of Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking

Member SMITH, and Chairman WILSON, and I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in strong support of S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

First, I would like to thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH for their leadership here, and also our Readiness Subcommittee ranking member, Ms. MADELEINE BORDALLO. I thank them so much for all of their help and constant and tireless efforts in this endeavor. The efforts behind the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act were truly bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the year, we heard testimony from all of our service branches about the necessity to address our military's alarming readiness shortfalls. Their accounts were sobering, to say the least. We now confront the maintenance, sustainment, and readiness issues that we put off until tomorrow. Today, we have the responsibility of reducing the risk for our warfighters by making sure that they are well-trained and have combat-ready equipment.

There are a number of provisions in this conference report that aim to bolster our military readiness. In addition to the pay raise and increases in end strength, this report directs several assessments of the military departments' plans to rebuild readiness, enhance exercises, and modernize training requirements. It also provides for increased military construction above the President's budget request. It provides the Department of Defense with flexibility for hiring civilians to fill critical manpower capability gaps, in particular, at our defense industrial base facilities: our depots, arsenals, and shipyards. It increases funding to the military service operations and maintenance accounts, critical elements we need to do to restore readiness.

None of these readiness provisions were included arbitrarily. They were specifically targeted to begin to reverse the decline in the readiness of our Armed Forces and bring them closer to achieving full-spectrum readiness levels. That is an absolute must if we are to combat and deter the threats to our national security from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, in that vein, I strongly urge support for S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, and encourage my colleagues in the House to support it as well.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the ranking member on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and who also was enormously helpful with a

number of different aspects of this bill. I appreciate his help and support in that.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

I have the honor of representing the Hampton Roads area of Virginia, the heart of our Nation's shipbuilding industrial base. I want to underscore my support for the shipbuilding and ship maintenance provisions in the bill, including the language urging the Secretary of the Navy to speed up the procurement schedule for aircraft carriers to ensure that our carrier fleet is not again reduced to just 10 carriers. These provisions will not only significantly benefit my region, but will be critical to our Nation's security.

I want to particularly commend my colleague from Virginia, the chair of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, Mr. FORBES, and the ranking member of that subcommittee, Mr. COURTNEY, for their hard work on the shipbuilding aspects of the bill.

As ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am pleased to see that the final conference report eliminated three matters of grave concern that would have adversely affected working conditions for shipyard workers and employees of government contractors.

The first provision eliminated from the bill would have severely undermined the workers' compensation benefits that many shipyard workers now receive. A second problematic provision would have authorized taxpayer-funded employment discrimination. A third provision eliminated from the bill would have significantly diminished the application of the executive order on fair pay and safe workplaces. This order will now remain in effect and it will help level the playing field so that those contractors who willfully and repeatedly violate workplace safety, labor, and civil rights laws will not gain competitive advantages over those law-abiding contractors who faithfully comply with employment laws.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the exceptional effort made by the ranking member of the committee, Mr. SMITH, with the cooperation of the chair of the committee, Mr. THORNBERRY, to produce a bill that addresses the defense needs of our Nation, but also ensures that workers are treated fairly.

Before addressing matters of concern to the Education and the Workforce Committee, I want to underscore my strong support for the shipbuilding and ship maintenance provisions. I have the honor of representing Hampton Roads, Virginia, the heart of our nation's shipbuilding industrial base. I strongly support the conference report's shipbuilding and ship maintenance provisions, specifically language urging the Secretary of the Navy to speed up the procurement schedule for aircraft carriers to ensure that our carrier fleet is not again reduced to 10 carriers. These provisions in the

conference report will not only significantly benefit my region, but will be critical for our nation's security. I'd like to commend Congressman FORBES and Congressman COURTNEY for their efforts on this area.

As a conferee and Ranking Member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I was pleased to see that the final conference report eliminated matters of grave concern.

First, the Conference Report removed Section 3512 of the House bill which redefined "recreational vessels" across almost all states.

The aim of this provision was to exempt workers repairing vessels over 65 feet in length from coverage under the Longshore and Harbor Workers Act (LHWCA), such as very large yachts and luxury watercraft. By stripping injured workers of the protections under LHWCA, these workers would have been shifted into coverage under state workers' compensation laws. Many state workers' compensation benefit levels are substantially inferior to LHWCA coverage, especially in states such as Florida.

Earlier this year, the Florida Supreme Court found that the Florida workers' compensation law was unconstitutional because the duration of disability benefits was so truncated and the benefit levels so anemic that they did not constitute "a system of redress" that "functions as a reasonable alternative to tort litigation."

Both the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) opposed Section 3512.

The DOL noted that Section 3512 would "lead to uncertainty and foster litigation regarding Longshore Act coverage" because the new definition of "recreational" vessel introduced subjective criteria. For example, would vessels with paid crews or which are leased out for commercial purposes be deemed recreational or commercial? DOL also expressed concern that this "legislation will simply encourage employers to shift their employees out of the more protective federal longshore workers' compensation system," and into inferior state workers' comp coverage.

The Coast Guard noted changing the definition of "recreational vessel" under Section 4301 of Title 46 (the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971) would have adverse impacts on Coast Guard regulatory and enforcement authorities.

Second, I was pleased to see that Impact Aid has been preserved for Local Educational Agencies consistent with past precedent.

Third, there were two provisions that adversely impacted employee protections in the workplace, which were deleted in the conference report.

One such provision was Section 1094 of the House bill, which was misleadingly labeled "Protections Relating to Civil Rights and Disabilities" authorized taxpayer-funded employment discrimination in every grant, cooperative agreement, contract, subcontract, and purchase order awarded by every Federal agency doing business with a religiously affiliated organization.

Section 1094 would effectively nullify the protections from workplace discrimination for LGBT workers that were provided in Executive Order 13672 (Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity by Contractors and Subcontractors) that was signed on July 21, 2014.

Further, the provision would incorporate an exemption from the Americans with Disabilities

Act that could permit taxpayer-funded discrimination not only against employees and applicants who are not members of the same religion, but also against those who fail to adhere to the organization's religious tenets.

Accordingly, religious organizations in receipt of federal dollars could use their religious viewpoint to: discharge working women who use birth control or who is pregnant and unmarried; fire employees who engage in premarital sex; deny employment or health benefits to married same-sex couples that they already provide to married opposite-sex couples; or refuse to consider for employment anyone, however qualified, whose religion is inconsistent with the employer's religious tenets.

Ninety-one religious, education, civil rights, labor, and women's organizations wrote to express their opposition in a letter dated August 25, 2016. The groups noted that: "effective government collaboration with faith-based groups does not require the sanctioning of federally funded religious discrimination."

I am pleased that the conference report did not authorize religious employers to discriminate in hiring using federal funds. I want to applaud Senator BLUMENTHAL for his leadership in helping to remove this provision.

In addition, Sections 1095 of the House bill and Section 829-I of the Senate bill would have eliminated or diminished the application of the "Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces" Executive Order.

This executive order requires companies to disclose whether they have engaged in serious, repeated, willful or pervasive violations of any of 14 long-standing labor laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act, and nondiscrimination laws.

Each year, thousands of federal contractor workers are deprived of overtime wages, denied basic workplace protections, forced to endure illegal discrimination, and made to tolerate unwarranted health and safety risks. Companies supported by and entrusted with federal government contracts should be expected to represent the gold standard in the American workplace.

The executive order aims to level the playing field so that those who repeatedly violate those laws do not gain competitive advantage over those law abiding contractors who expend the funds and make the effort to ensure full compliance.

Finally, I want to recognize the exceptional effort made by Ranking Member SMITH and his staff to work with the Education and Workforce Committee to produce a final bill that meets the defense needs of this nation and also ensures workers are treated fairly.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON), a member of the conference committee and a combat veteran who has played a key role in formulating this bill.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this conference report. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership.

This may very well be the most significant piece of legislation to come out of the House Armed Services Committee since Goldwater-Nichols. I say that for five reasons:

One, it reforms the strategic planning process, reclaiming Article 1, section 8 responsibility for the Congress with regard to providing strategic guidance.

Two, it empowers the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think this is really important for unity of effort, efficient use of resources, and, quite frankly, also for civil military relations.

Three, bold acquisition reforms; it has been mentioned in terms of agility, transparency, and accountability. We bring forward major reforms here, and, quite frankly, we are empowering the services. This is some of the testimony we received, and, in the process, we have provided incentives and also consequences for noncompliance. I think this is all going to be good news for the taxpayers who are counting on us to get this right.

Four, decisive steps to improve readiness. We are entering a new era, Mr. Speaker. The drawdown is over; in fact, we are increasing end strength. I think this is really important.

On a congressional delegation trip I led this summer listening to the commanders in the European Command, including the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, this bill and all the resources that come with it are going to help strengthen deterrence. This is also a good bill for NATO.

I mentioned resources. This was so important to the Joint Chiefs and to their senior enlisted advisers. They said they welcomed the end strength, but it had to come with the resources. They did not want to hollow out the force. We have listened and we have done this.

Money for training; it is a very dangerous business, and it is important the training be realistic. We have reinforced the account for the CTCs, flying hours, and the spare parts to come with it.

Five, Mr. Speaker, the pay raise, which is so justifiably earned.

I am proud of this bill. I want to thank the staff. The staff on both sides of the aisle are second to none, and it has been a great privilege to serve on this committee.

God bless this Nation.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time each side has remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington has 13 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Texas also has 13 minutes remaining.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI), a member of the committee.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. THORNBERRY; the ranking member, Mr. SMITH; and the members, my colleagues, for an exceptional piece of work here. This is an extremely important bill. I do support it;

however, I do have some reservations. I would like to speak to at least one of them at the moment.

I want to bring to the attention of the Members section 671 of the NDAA concerning the ongoing bonus clawback issue affecting thousands of California National Guardsmen. While I am pleased that a permanent legislative fix is one step closer to the President's desk, I think some of the language needs to be clarified further to ensure that guardsmen are treated fairly.

First and foremost, I have concerns with the standard use to determine if a guardsman's debt should be waived or not. The current language says the DOD needs to produce a preponderance of evidence to demonstrate fraud on the part of the guardsman and withhold their bonus.

What does that mean in practice? We are not sure. This is vague and subject to interpretation. I believe this standard must be better defined, and we will continue to work on that in the future.

I am also concerned about subsection (c)(1)(B), which gives the Department of Defense far too much leeway in determining which cases warrant review. Though Secretary Carter has pledged to review every case, this gives DOD the option of ignoring about 2,000 cases. That would be a problem.

Our job isn't yet done. There will be a hearing next week on this issue. We will attempt to get further clarification to protect those men and women who accepted a bonus, went to war, performed their duties, and are now subject to a clawback. That should not happen.

One more thing to bring to the attention of the committee is the strategic arms portion of this bill, which continues a trillion-dollar project of recapitalizing our entire nuclear arsenal. We should pay attention to that in the future. It is extraordinarily expensive and dangerous.

□ 1045

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and for his leadership on this bill, as well as Ranking Member SMITH, and the hardworking dedicated staff. This is a great bill. It is a win for our troops and it is a win for national defense, and I fully support it.

I do want to also convey, though, my concern about and the importance of the Russell amendment, which passed this House but was not in the final bill. The attacks on this commonsense language have been dishonest and grossly inaccurate. The truth is that this language uses existing Federal civil rights laws to clarify hiring practices of religious organizations when they partner with the government through grants and contracts.

Religious charities are selfless and crucial providers who often go where no one else will go to help the vulnerable. They resettle refugees, counsel victims of sex trafficking, pray for soldiers in war zones, and comfort veterans suffering from PTSD. The White House has lauded these partnerships with the government, and Senate Democrats included a nearly identical provision in ENDA in 2013, a bill which most of the Senators publicly opposing this provision voted for in the past.

We need to protect these basic rights and preserve these vital partnerships, and I look forward to working with the chairman next Congress to address these most basic of interests.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. HARTZLER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the importance of this issue to House majority conferees. For many years, organizations of faith have been able to both contract with the Federal Government and hire according to their faith practices. That has been especially true with religious universities, chaplain services, and refugee service providers; yet executive action under the current administration has created a direct conflict between the White House policy and these longstanding legal protections for these organizations' religious tenets.

While the NDAA was always an imperfect vehicle for this discussion, majority conferees believe that these executive orders must be reviewed; and we look forward to working directly with the incoming administration to address the concerns, not just for DOD, but for the government nationwide.

I certainly appreciate the leadership of the gentlewoman from Missouri on these very issues.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) for the purpose of a colloquy with the chairman, Mr. THORNBERRY.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding and wish to engage the gentleman from Texas, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, in a colloquy.

Mr. Speaker, let me first start by thanking the chairman and the committee staff again for working diligently with us to address a number of provisions important to our territory, our island, and U.S. posture in the Asia-Pacific region.

I especially appreciate your support for our efforts to address workforce issues through the inclusion in the House bill of a targeted remedy for the H-2B visa denial issue particularly affecting military health care and construction projects on Guam.

Though the House Judiciary majority and minority approved the language, it is my understanding that the provision was not included in the final conference agreement due to concerns

raised by the Senate Judiciary majority. As we look toward next year, will the chairman commit to working with me to address this issue to ensure the realignment of U.S. Marines to Okinawa is not adversely impacted?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BORDALLO. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. First, I want to thank the distinguished ranking member of the Readiness Subcommittee for her hospitality. I learned a lot about the issue that she raises during my recent visit to Guam. I understand the workforce issues there much better, as well as the unacceptable impacts it is already having on our military activity on Guam.

Our strategic presence there, Mr. Speaker, and the U.S. Marine realignment are critical national security interests, and this issue must be addressed soon. We need to ensure an adequate workforce is available to support the current military presence, as well as the activity associated with the increase to come; and I look forward to continuing to work with the gentlewoman from Guam and with the Members on the other side of the Capitol to find an acceptable solution in the coming year.

Ms. BORDALLO. I thank the chairman, and I appreciate that he took the time to stop on Guam in October to see and understand the strategic value of our island and also better understand, firsthand, some of the unique challenges. It was a real honor, his visit, for the people of Guam, and I thank both the chairman and our Ranking Member SMITH for their assistance.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK), the distinguished chair of the Military Personnel Subcommittee.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report to S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017.

This conference report contains significant policy and funding priorities to continue our commitment to maintaining the readiness of our military personnel and their families.

Included in this conference report are many important initiatives:

Specifically, it provides a fully funded pay raise. This is the largest pay raise for our military in the last 5 years and the first full pay raise in 4 years. After 3 years of lower pay raises than allowed by law, it is time that we give our troops and their families the pay increase they deserve.

It stops the troop reductions in our Armed Forces, thereby increasing readiness, while reducing the stress and strain on our force and their families.

It reforms the military health system to ensure that we have a ready medical force and a medically ready force, while providing a quality healthcare benefit valued by its beneficiaries.

It modernizes the Uniform Code of Military Justice to improve the system's efficiency and transparency, while also enhancing victims' rights.

It reforms the commissary system in a way that preserves this valuable benefit, while also improving it so that the system remains an excellent value for the shoppers and a good value for taxpayer dollars.

In conclusion, I want to thank the ranking member, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS), for her contributions and support in this process. It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to work with her.

I also want to thank the subcommittee members and offer my sincere appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the subcommittee staff.

Lastly, I want to thank the chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), for his support and for entrusting me with the great privilege and honor of chairing this subcommittee.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the conference report to S. 2943.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I rise in support of the conference report to S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

This act is designed to meet the threats we face today as well as in the future, and I thank the chairman of the committee from Texas, as well as the ranking member from Washington, both having worked together in this enormous task to be able to defend our Nation.

The results of our work here today will reflect our strong commitment to ensure the men and women of our armed services receive the benefits and support that they deserve for their faithful service. Building on these efforts, this bill contains initiatives designed to provide resources and support for these men and women.

This legislation recognizes the reality that we live in a dangerous world where threats are not always easily identifiable and our enemies are not bound by borders. Confronting this type of enemy deserves a well-prepared, ready military, which I strongly support.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted and very pleased that the work that we did together with the chairman and the ranking member, amendments that I offered, are in this legislation:

The Jackson Lee amendment expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance of increasing the effectiveness of NORTHCOM in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in the event of war, and to provide support to local, State, and Federal authorities that we work with all the time in times of national emergency.

The Jackson Lee amendment calling for a report on American efforts to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria and the countries in the Lake Chad region by way of provision of technical training and evidence-gathering strategies, to name a few. Having gone to the region, having been dealing with the missing Chibok girls for, now, some 4 years plus, we know devastation there.

The Jackson Lee amendment requiring the Department of Defense to conduct outreach programs to assist small-business concerns owned and controlled by women, veterans, and social and economic minorities.

And the Jackson Lee amendment requiring annual report to Congress listing the most common grounds for sustaining protests including and relating to bids.

This is important to pass this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And let me just personally thank the gentleman from Washington for always welcoming Members and the ideas and needs that they have for their districts, but also for this Nation. We are better for it, and we are better that we are preparing the men and women of the United States military to keep them safe.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Conference Report to S. 2943, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017."

The National Defense Authorization Act is designed to meet the threats we face today as well as into the future.

The results of our work here today will reflect our strong commitment to ensure that the men and women of our Armed Services receive the benefits and support that they deserve for their faithful service.

Building on our efforts from previous years, this bill contains a number of initiatives designed to provide the resources and support needed for the men and women who keep our nation safe.

This legislation recognizes the reality that we live in a dangerous world, where threats are not always easily identifiable, and our enemies are not bound by borders.

Confronting this unique type of enemy requires unique capabilities.

As we have seen time and time again, our military has the ability to track down violent extremists who wish to do our country harm, regardless of where they reside.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that four of my amendments adopted during House consideration of the NDAA are included in the final legislation or in language in the accompanying report:

1. Jackson Lee Amendment expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance of increasing the effectiveness of the Northern Command ("NORTHCOM") in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in the event of war and to provide support to local, state, and federal authorities in times of national emergency or in the event of an invasion.

2. Jackson Lee Amendment calling for a report on American efforts to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria and the countries in the Lake Chad Basin, by way of provision of technical training and evidence gathering strategies to name a few.

3. Jackson Lee Amendment requiring the Department of Defense to conduct outreach program to assist small business concerns owned and controlled by women, veterans, and socially and economically minorities.

4. Jackson Lee Amendment requiring annual report to Congress listing the most common grounds for sustaining protests relating to bids for contracts.

The passing of this bill today brings us one step closer to enacting the 54th consecutive National Defense Authorization Act.

This particular bill is seen as the gold standard for Congressional bipartisanship and transparency.

Despite disagreements on key issues, Members have not failed to reach consensus on behalf of our fighting men and women.

I am proud of the work we have done here today.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), a valued member of the committee.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report to accompany S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. Congress has upheld its constitutional duty to "provide for the common defense" by passing the NDAA 55 years in a row, and I am looking forward to making this the 56th.

This bipartisan bill contains a number of vitally important provisions to support our troops deployed overseas, stop the dangerous drawdown of the military, and begin rebuilding our force for the future. It increases the end strength of our Armed Forces, gives our troops a substantial pay raise, and maintains restrictions on the administration's ability to bring terrorist detainees from Guantanamo to U.S. soil.

One provision I am particularly proud of is the Joint Trauma Education and Training Directorate. Too often we take for granted the readiness of our military healthcare teams, doctors, and surgeons when, in reality, their skills and knowledge are earned through work in grueling, dangerous conditions and must be maintained through frequent practice.

The Joint Trauma Education and Training Directorate will support partnerships, allowing military trauma surgeons and physicians to embed within civilian trauma centers to treat critically injured patients, maintaining medical readiness and deployability for future armed conflicts. By connecting the Department of Defense with civilian hospitals, these partnerships will serve the needs of our military medical professionals and our local communities, to the benefit of the whole Nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our ranking member for yielding and for his tremendous leadership on so many of these very critical issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, though, in strong opposition to the National Defense Authorization Act, which would authorize another \$618 billion in spending to our already out-of-control defense budget. It would also expand funding for wars that Congress has never debated. Once again, my Republican colleagues have used an off-the-books spending gimmick to further expand the already-bloated Pentagon budget.

Enough is enough. Instead of writing blank checks to the Pentagon, Congress needs to live up to its constitutional obligation to debate matters of war and peace. We need to rip up the 2001 blank check for endless war. We need to stop funding wars without end, with no debate on the costs and consequences to our troops or to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to say that I am pleased that my amendment, which I coauthored with my good friend Congressman BURGESS, to report on the audit-readiness of the Pentagon, that amendment passed, but much work remains.

So I call on our Speaker to act to bring some accountability to Pentagon spending and to bring forth an authorization to use force to support or oppose these new wars. We need to do our job.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this bill and reject this wasteful spending.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), the distinguished vice chair of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the FY17 NDAA conference report.

I want to first thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his dedication and continuous support for our troops and for his leadership during the conference committee process.

I am proud to support this critical bill that truly hits home for my district and for our brave men and women in uniform across our great Nation. My district is the proud home of Fort Drum, and this bill provides for the ongoing combat operations where troops from the 10th Mountain Division continue to selflessly serve. It also fully supports our Navy’s nuclear community, from operational capabilities, to nuclear training sites at Ballston Spa, New York.

□ 1100

One of the most important provisions is a full 2.1 percent pay raise for our troops—to our Nation’s dedicated and brave servicemembers who risk it all to provide us with protection and security—and to their loved ones who are anxiously awaiting their return.

This bill also prevents a possible readiness crisis by investing in our military personnel and preserving their expertise.

In order for our military to continue its superiority in any battlefield and

through countless combat deployments, this bill ends the misguided drawdown of troops. It ensures we have the land forces end strength to face the world’s challenges and protect our Nation.

Every day I am grateful and humbled to represent so many brave men and women in uniform and their resilient loved ones. I encourage all of my House colleagues to vote in support of this vital bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington has 6½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 6½ minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) who is a very valued member of our Armed Services Committee.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the NDAA. I thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership on this issue and being a member of that committee.

As a retired Air Force colonel and A-10 pilot, I am deeply troubled by the dangerous atrophy of our military in recent years. For example, we once had 134 fighter squadrons. Today we have 55. We had 946,000 total force military and civilian airmen, and now we are down to 660,000. We are short 700 fighter pilots, 4,000 maintainers, and critical munitions. Yet the world isn’t getting any safer.

This bill takes crucial steps to reverse the readiness crisis and helps ensure our military has the training, manpower, and resources they need to keep us safe. It increases end strength and funds the weapons systems we need to take on ISIS and other emerging threats, such as the Tomahawk missile.

It fully protects the mighty A-10 Warthog, our best close air support asset. It includes critical language I authored to require a fly-off between the A-10 and the F-35 before a single A-10 can be retired. It fully funds the EC-130H Compass Call, the Air Force’s only dedicated electronic warfare asset. It fully funds the vital missions we need for the future, like cyber, intelligence, and electronic warfare—all of which are housed at Fort Huachuca in my district.

I am proud to have worked on the committee with Chairman THORNBERRY and Chairman MCCAIN on these important issues. I want to thank them for their leadership. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this critical bill and support our troops.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) who is the distinguished chair of the House Committee on Small Business, which has

made a number of contributions to this conference report.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in strong support of this conference report because it provides for our national defense and also supports America’s small businesses. As was mentioned, as chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, I have seen firsthand just how vital small businesses are in providing the Department of Defense with the goods and services it needs in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Also included within this conference report are contracting reforms which will provide small businesses with greater access to defense contracting opportunities, as well as extend such important programs as the SBIR and the STTR research programs.

Finally, this conference report calls on agencies to provide cybersecurity resources to small businesses to protect themselves from cyber attacks which are becoming a greater and greater threat to businesses all across this country and really all across the world.

I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his hard work and his leadership. He has done a tremendous job in getting this crucial legislation finally across the finish line. I also want to thank all the members of the Small Business Committee. Many of the small business provisions included within this report came out of our committee with strong—if not unanimous—bipartisan support. Working together through regular order, we have been able to strengthen the small business industrial base which is so fundamental to the health of our Nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank all the members of Mr. THORNBERRY’s committee for their hard work on this. It is really a job well done.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers other than myself to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I just want to make three issues, and some of them were raised during the course of the debate. First of all, I like a lot of what is in this bill. I think it is also important what is not in this bill. There were a number of issues that were extraneous to the actual business of national security that had been put in by one side or the other that, in conference, we were able to remove. One of the most prominent ones was one that was raised earlier, the so-called Russell amendment having to do with the ability of companies and businesses that are receiving government contracts to discriminate. I was very much opposed to the Russell amendment. I am happy that we agreed to take it out.

I just want to explain a little bit exactly what it is because it is really rather simple. All the President accomplished in this is that there already

is an executive order saying: if you do business with the Federal Government, then you cannot discriminate against certain classes of people. I don't remember all the different classes, but certainly one of the big ones is you can't discriminate based on race. So in other words, if your religious tenets are racist—say, for instance, you don't like Black people and don't employ them and don't want to do business with them—we, as the Federal Government, have decided that that is not acceptable, and we will not allow you to do business with the Federal Government.

All this executive order did was add the LGBT community to those protected classes. So, basically, what we are saying is: not only is it not acceptable to be racist, but it is also not acceptable to be homophobic. I completely agree with that, and I would hope our country would get to the place where it would agree with that as well; that if you feel that you must discriminate against people simply based on their sexual preference, then we are not going to do business with you. That is a policy that, I think, we should have. That is what the executive order does.

To reverse that in the Defense bill, I think, would be an abomination, particularly since we have made such progress within the Department of Defense. We have finally gotten rid of Don't Ask, Don't Tell so that gay and lesbian people can serve openly in the military. They have served in the military for decades, and now they are allowed to serve openly. We have recently allowed transgender people to serve openly as well, which I think is a tremendous step forward. The Russell amendment would take us back.

So, again, I really want to emphasize that all the executive order does is say that it is not all right to be racist and it is also not all right to be homophobic. I think that is a principle that we should stand for as a country.

I want to further add that even without that executive order, there are many exceptions that already exist. Now, even though I am a lawyer, and even though lawyers have tried to explain this to me, I don't fully understand all those exceptions, but religious groups are allowed to discriminate based on the tenets of their belief within the existing executive order that was already passed. So even though the people who were pushing the Russell amendment already have what they want—even though, in my opinion, they shouldn't—there is no need to further emphasize the fact that we are going to allow people who do contract with the Federal Government to discriminate against the LGBT community. I think that is basically wrong and should not be allowed.

The second point I want to make is on the money. We have heard over and over again about how underfunded everything is, and I get that. But we are spending \$619 billion on the Depart-

ment of Defense—far and away more money than any other country in the world, and we have been spending more money on defense for decades than any other country in the world. We ought to be able to build a military that can protect our national security interests for that amount of money, and not only should we be able to, we are going to have to because we are \$19 trillion in debt. I forget exactly what the deficit is this year, but it is somewhere in the \$500- to \$600-billion range.

We have a President coming into office who is promising trillions of dollars in additional tax cuts. We also have a crumbling infrastructure in this country, and it is just as important that we maintain the strength of our country at home—that we have a transportation infrastructure, an education infrastructure, and a research infrastructure that continues to make us as strong as it is and that we have a national security apparatus that will protect our interests abroad. If we spend all of our money in tax cuts and defense, then we will wind up with a very hollow country.

We have got to make some tough choices going forward, and I believe that we can meet our national security needs, frankly, for less money than we spend. There are greater efficiencies; there are programs that we don't need to continue with.

Those are the choices that we are going to have to make in the years ahead because right now we are planning on more programs and more national security than we could possibly have money for in the next decade. We cannot continue to duck the tough choices that get us a national security apparatus and a Department of Defense that we can actually afford that also provides for our national security.

Lastly, I just want to close where I started and say that the product of this bill—I don't know how many pages it is this year, but it is a lot—requires a lot of work, and the people you see sitting behind us are the staff that do that work tirelessly night after night. It is a yearlong process to put it together and to negotiate with the Senate to get there. We have the most outstanding staff that I can imagine. I want to make sure that we thank them for that incredible work that they do, not just for us but for the men and women who serve in the military.

Again, I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY. We work in a bipartisan manner on this committee, and, as many of you are aware, that is not easy. I have been here 20 years, and the country and this place have suddenly become more partisan. It has become more and more difficult to do anything, to pass any kind of bill where Democrats and Republicans actually work together.

The National Defense Authorization Act is a shining example of the way the legislative process should work, and many people are to thank for that, but it all starts with the chairman. It all

starts with Mr. THORNBERRY and also with Senator MCCAIN on the other side being dedicated to the principle, number one, of bipartisanship—of working together—and, number two, to the absolute commitment that we will get our job done. Sometimes it takes until December. I think we went all the way up to December 16 a couple of years ago, so we are way ahead of schedule this year by those standards. Sometimes it takes a long time, but we always get it done, and it is a credit to those chairmen that we do.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge passage of this very important bill, and I thank the chairman again for his great work and all the staff for the work they did to make this possible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the distinguished ranking member that to produce this bill requires a great deal of effort by a number of people, starting with him, other members of the committee, and other Members of the House. It is also essential that our staff, who support our work, be thanked, and he has done a great job of doing that.

I agree with him also about the leadership of Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a man who, I think, is unique in the country's military history at this point. His leadership, along with the ranking member, Senator JACK REED, has been obviously essential, not only in this bill but in Congress being able to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities.

I know there are disappointments with this bill, Mr. Speaker. There are things that people would like to see in here, a lot of them not really core defense issues, but those matters had to be dropped to get this bill to this point.

I am confident that the new administration will review the executive orders that the ranking member was talking about and that those unconstitutional restrictions on the First Amendment will be reviewed, modified, or repealed. All of that facilitated getting this bill before us today.

I am also hopeful that the new administration will send us a supplemental request, because there are desperately needed modernization items from ships, airplanes, munitions, and other things that are not authorized in this bill but are needed desperately by our troops. So I hope—and I expect—that we will do better in the coming year to, again, fulfill our responsibilities under the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I would just end with this: I believe the first job of the Federal Government is to defend the country. The Constitution puts specific responsibilities on our shoulders to raise, support, provide, and maintain the military forces of the United States. The most important part of that responsibility deals with the people, and this bill, if it is nothing else, supports the men and women who volunteer to

risk their lives to defend us and protect our freedoms. For that reason alone, it deserves the support of every Member of the House. I hope it will receive that support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I voted against the Conference Report to Authorization S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 (Roll No. 600). Though the legislation contains several provisions that I support, and I commend the House and Senate Armed Services Committee for tackling some difficult issues, I am concerned about many components of the bill, including the continued use of a budgetary gimmick to avoid making the tough decisions we need to make about our defense spending.

This NDAA includes \$67.8 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding, which isn't subject to budget caps, and \$8.3 billion of this funding would go to base defense budget operations. Congress and the Administration should not be able to use the account, initially used to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to pad their budgets in an era of fiscal uncertainty. The legislation also keeps intact funding for several unnecessary and outdated weapons programs and includes extraneous funding, unsolicited by the Navy, for an amphibious ship replacement program known as the LX (R).

The legislation also maintains prohibitions on closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and on transferring any detainees to the United States. It's past time that we closed this military prison.

Finally, it's concerning that the bill includes new language that marks a significant shift in U.S. missile defense policy which dates back to 1999. This adjustment could cement U.S. proliferation of nuclear weapons, while sending a counterproductive signal to other countries.

There are provisions of this legislation that I support. I've fought to defend and strengthen the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program since I helped establish the program with my colleagues in 2009. This legislation extends the program through 2020 and authorizes an additional 1,500 visas for our allies. Though the bill, unfortunately, restricts the eligibility of applicants—eligibility requirements that I sought to remove from the legislation when it was being considered by the House—I look forward to continue fighting for the viability of the program next year.

I'm also glad that we're taking a small step towards cost accountability with the bill's transparency requirements for the Air Force's new B-21 bomber. I offered an amendment to have the Department of Defense disclose the total cost of the bomber program in the House version of the bill.

Though I cannot support this legislation, I will continue to support our armed forces, while fighting for reductions in the bloated defense budget.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I will ultimately vote today for the National Defense Authorization Act because it's a necessity, and I think it's important we authorize this spending so that procurement, research, and a host of other long-term projects stay on track.

That's the good news.

The bad is that there are many wrongs tucked into this bill. It continues to use war-

time contingency funds for recurring operations. It has an earmark for New Balance shoes. I could go on, but I write to highlight what I think will be the most damaging part of the bill—exempting women from the draft.

In the spring, Secretary Carter made women eligible for combat roles, and this was supposedly about equality. This bill goes a step further and makes it law that woman will be preferentially treated. Doing so is not good for morale and readiness because troops know you can't have it both ways in life. Either we are all on the team together and treated equally—or we are not.

I said in February that the Secretary of Defense's new policy of opening front-line combat roles to women would unleash political forces that in the end would make our military weaker. All this could have been avoided if we had been allowed a national debate, but the administration rushed to stack up perceived political wins while it could—and so we are where we are.

What happened in this bill is the first of many inconsistencies that will come to weaken one of our military's real strengths: its leadership as an institution in treating people equally as it focuses on but one outcome—the defense of our nation. It needs to be remembered that 6 years before Brown vs. Board of Education, the armed forces had already been desegregated. Actions like this and its focus on equality of opportunity have something to do with Gallup polls showing our military as the most respected of American institutions.

The bill creates a daring double standard. Women are now eligible for combat roles but not the draft. It codifies the draft for men but not for women at the very time women are now eligible for combat roles. How is this equal?

To be clear, I'm not a fan of women in a draft or being a part of Seal Team 6. I just think we should offer equal roads to getting to the Seal unit, if billets are open to men and women. Our nation asks people in the elite units to do remarkably rugged things that pose serious physical challenge. The Marines have actually looked deeply at this and recently completed a 1,000-page study that concluded that male units overwhelmingly outperformed integrated units in physical tasks. Indeed, Navy Seals comprise but 1 percent of the Navy, Force Recon is about the same within the Marines—while Delta Force numbers are actually classified, and the problem in the elite forces is that physical prowess is not a part of what you do; it is part and parcel to what you do.

There is a reason we don't see a lot of women in the NFL, and if we really want to try a social experiment, let's make one-third of the Army football team female and see how it does next year against Navy. For that matter, my sister is a wonderful woman and a far better shot than I am, but she can't carry me very far. We begin to affect unit cohesion when members of a unit believe their counterparts can't carry them out of a bad spot in which they may have found themselves . . . but all this is a debate for another day.

The debate that needs to come in the wake of this bill is how we reconcile equality of opportunity in the military with people in this bill being treated quite differently. Our nation's defense is not a social experiment. Lives hang in the balance. For the sake of morale—so important to what makes our military strong—it's

important we circle back on the draft issue this coming year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 937, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the conference report.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the conference report will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 375, nays 34, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 600]

YEAS—375

Abraham	Courtney	Green, Gene
Adams	Cramer	Grothman
Aderholt	Crawford	Guinta
Allen	Crenshaw	Guthrie
Amodei	Crowley	Hanabusa
Ashford	Cuellar	Hanna
Babin	Culberson	Hardy
Barletta	Cummings	Harper
Barr	Curbelo (FL)	Harris
Barton	Davidson	Hartzler
Beatty	Davis (CA)	Hastings
Benishek	Davis, Danny	Heck (NV)
Bera	Davis, Rodney	Heck (WA)
Beyer	DeGette	Hensarling
Bilirakis	Delaney	Herrera Beutler
Bishop (GA)	DeLauro	Hice, Jody B.
Bishop (MI)	DelBene	Higgins
Black	Denham	Hill
Blackburn	Dent	Himes
Blum	DeSantis	Hinojosa
Bonamici	DesJarlais	Holding
Bost	Deutch	Hoyer
Boustany	Diaz-Balart	Hudson
Boyle, Brendan	Dingell	Huelskamp
F.	Doggett	Hulzenga (MI)
Brady (PA)	Dold	Hultgren
Brady (TX)	Donovan	Hunter
Brat	Doyle, Michael	Hurd (TX)
Bridenstine	F.	Hurt (VA)
Brooks (AL)	Duckworth	Israel
Brooks (IN)	Duffy	Issa
Brownley (CA)	Duncan (SC)	Jackson Lee
Buchanan	Edwards	Jeffries
Buck	Ellmers (NC)	Jenkins (KS)
Bucshon	Emmer (MN)	Jenkins (WV)
Burgess	Engel	Johnson (GA)
Bustos	Eshoo	Johnson (OH)
Byrne	Esty	Johnson, E. B.
Calvert	Evans	Johnson, Sam
Capps	Farenthold	Jolly
Cárdenas	Farr	Jordan
Carson (IN)	Fitzpatrick	Joyce
Carter (GA)	Fleischmann	Kaptur
Carter (TX)	Fleming	Katko
Cartwright	Forbes	Keating
Castor (FL)	Fortenberry	Kelly (IL)
Castro (TX)	Foster	Kelly (MS)
Chabot	Fox	Kelly (PA)
Chaffetz	Frankel (FL)	Kildee
Cicilline	Franks (AZ)	Kilmer
Clawson (FL)	Frelinghuysen	Kind
Clay	Fudge	King (IA)
Cleaver	Gallego	King (NY)
Clyburn	Garamendi	Kinzinger (IL)
Coffman	Gibbs	Kline
Cole	Gibson	Knight
Collins (GA)	Gohmert	Kuster
Collins (NY)	Goodlatte	LaHood
Comer	Gosar	LaMalfa
Comstock	Gowdy	Lamborn
Conaway	Graham	Lance
Connolly	Granger	Langevin
Cook	Graves (GA)	Larsen (WA)
Cooper	Graves (LA)	Larson (CT)
Costa	Graves (MO)	Latta
Costello (PA)	Green, Al	Lawrence

Levin  
Lieu, Ted  
Lipinski  
LoBiondo  
Loeback  
Long  
Loudermilk  
Lowenthal  
Lowey  
Lucas  
Luettkemeyer  
Lujan Grisham  
(NM)  
Luján, Ben Ray  
(NM)  
Lummis  
Lynch  
MacArthur  
Maloney,  
Carolyn  
Maloney, Sean  
Marchant  
Marino  
Matsui  
McCarthy  
McCaul  
McClintock  
McCollum  
McGovern  
McHenry  
McKinley  
McMorris  
Rodgers  
McNerney  
McSally  
Meadows  
Meehan  
Meeks  
Meng  
Messner  
Mica  
Miller (FL)  
Miller (MI)  
Moolenaar  
Mooney (WV)  
Moore  
Moulton  
Mullin  
Mulvaney  
Murphy (FL)  
Murphy (PA)  
Napolitano  
Neal  
Neugebauer  
Newhouse  
Noem  
Nolan  
Norcross  
Nunes  
O'Rourke  
Olson  
Palazzo

## NAYS—34

Amash  
Bass  
Becerra  
Blumenauer  
Capuano  
Chu, Judy  
Clark (MA)  
Clarke (NY)  
Cohen  
Conyers  
DeSaulnier  
Duncan (TN)

## NOT VOTING—25

Aguilar  
Bishop (UT)  
Brown (FL)  
Butterfield  
Carney  
DeFazio  
Ellison  
Fincher  
Flores

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1137

Messrs. POLIS, COHEN, and NADLER changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Shimkus  
Shuster  
Simpson  
Sinema  
Sires  
Slaughter  
Smith (MO)  
Smith (NE)  
Smith (NJ)  
Smith (TX)  
Smith (WA)  
Speier  
Stefanik  
Stewart  
Stivers  
Stutzman  
Swalwell (CA)  
Thompson (CA)  
Thompson (MS)  
Thompson (PA)  
Thornberry  
Tiberi  
Tipton  
Titus  
Tonko  
Torres  
Trott  
Tsongas  
Turner  
Upton  
Valadao  
Van Hollen  
Vargas  
Veasey  
Visclosky  
Wagner  
Walberg  
Walden  
Walker  
Walorski  
Walters, Mimi  
Walz  
Wasserman  
Schultz  
Waters, Maxine  
Weber (TX)  
Webster (FL)  
Wenstrup  
Westerman  
Wilson (FL)  
Wilson (SC)  
Wittman  
Womack  
Woodall  
Yoder  
Yoho  
Young (AK)  
Young (IA)  
Young (IN)  
Zeldin  
Zinke

Messrs. GALLEGO, CICILLINE, and RICHMOND changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for votes on Friday, December 2, 2016 because I was home in San Bernardino, CA to mark the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attack in our community. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 600, the adoption of the Conference Report to accompany S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EMMER of Minnesota) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, December 2, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 2, 2016, at 9:55 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6014.

That the Senate passed S. 3492.

That the Senate passed S. 10.

That the Senate passed S. 2058.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring of the schedule for the week to come.

(Mr. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and

2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning hour and noon for legislative business.

On Thursday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business, and no votes are expected in the House on Friday.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business today.

The House will also consider H.R. 5143, the Transparent Insurance Standards Act of 2016, sponsored by Representative BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, which specifies U.S. objectives regarding international insurance standards to ensure that our State-based system is preserved.

Additionally, the House is expected to consider the final Water Resources and Development bill as well as the continuing resolution to fund the government.

□ 1145

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman knows, the current CR expires on December 9. He has announced the CR will be on the floor next week, and it is my understanding that December 9 may be our last day in session, so I presume we need to act before December 8.

Does the gentleman have a perspective on the specific scheduling of the CR and when it will be on the floor?

I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, the Appropriations Committee is continuing to work on the CR, including the length of time and when. As soon as it is done, it will be posted. It is our intention to have it done next week, and it would be our hope that we could finalize it on Thursday.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment that I know the CR will be the vehicle. I know Mr. TOM COLE made a comment—and I have talked to him about it—with which I agree. I am disappointed, our side is disappointed, and I think some on your side with whom I have talked are disappointed that we were unable to do an omnibus appropriations bill which would reflect the work of the committee on our side and, indeed, the work of the committees on the other side of the aisle.

A CR is not helpful to management, obviously, not knowing specifically what resources they will have available for the balance of the year. Very frankly, although there will be anomalies in the bill to reflect the changes from last year's funding levels, they will undoubtedly not take care of a funding stream which will be appropriate for good management in the Federal Government.

I would hope in the year ahead that we would certainly work toward having bipartisan appropriation bills done bill by bill. Both sides have had trouble