The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the previous question.

Mr. McGovern. Mr. Speaker, on I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. McGovern. Mr. Speaker, on I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. M. COGAN. Mr. Speaker, on

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 5515.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to express my appreciation to the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SMITH, not only for his work on this conference, but also for his work throughout the process of bringing this bill to fruition. However strongly he and I may disagree on some particular issues, it is always clear that he seeks, first and foremost, to do the right thing for our military personnel and our country’s national security, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to work with him.

Second, I want to thank all the members of the conference committee and of the House Armed Services Committee. Each of them has contributed to this final product, although I suspect none of them is pleased with everything that is or is not in it.

It is the result of a negotiation between House and Senate Members with a variety of interests. Taken as a whole, however, I think all Members who participated, whether in committee, in conference, or here on the floor, can be proud of the result.

NAY—183

YEAS—226

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 5515, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1027, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 5515) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2019 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk reads the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1027, the conference report is considered read. (For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of July 25, 2018, at page H7202.)

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.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 5515.

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, first, I want to express my appreciation to the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SMITH, not only for his work on this conference, but also for his work throughout the process of bringing this bill to fruition. However strongly he and I may disagree on some particular issues, it is always clear that he seeks, first and foremost, to do the right thing for our military personnel and our country’s national security, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to work with him.

Second, I want to thank all the members of the conference committee and of the House Armed Services Committee. Each of them has contributed to this final product, although I suspect none of them is pleased with everything that is or is not in it.

It is the result of a negotiation between House and Senate Members with a variety of interests. Taken as a whole, however, I think all Members who participated, whether in committee, in conference, or here on the floor, can be proud of the result.

Ms. WILSON of Florida changed her vote from ‘yea’ to ‘nay.’

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as follows.
Third, I want to thank our staff, both committee staff and personal staff. They worked long and hard to get this done and get it done earlier than we have in many years. I especially want to thank the committee staff director Jen Stewart, as well Paul Arcangeli and our able staff, Josh Martin, for all of their work.

Mr. Speaker, next, I want to express particular appreciation to a group of folks who often do not get publicly recognized in order to do this conference report in the timeframe we have had available. Those working in legislative counsel have had to work extraordinarily hard, and I am grateful to each of them. Some of those in legislative counsel who have worked on this product include Hadley Ross, Sherry Chriss, Tony Sciascia, Noah Wofsy, Ken Cox, Brendan Gallagher, and Mat Eckstein. There are others who will be named shortly.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the Bipartisan Committee and that staff for helping us work through a procedural issue in the last couple of days.

Mr. Speaker, this bill takes a major step forward in rebuilding our military, reforming the Pentagon, and better preparing this country to deal with the national security challenges that lay before us.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

The Speaker will remind visitors and guests to keep their voices down.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, this bill continues to make readiness a key focus, for if we send our men and women out on missions, then they deserve to have the best equipment, the best training, and the best support that this country can provide.

It advances implementation of the new National Defense Strategy, so we can be better prepared against threats from near-peer adversaries, such as Russia and China. In fact, there are many, many provisions in this bill, Mr. Speaker, directly related to countering the aggressive actions we have seen from each of those countries.

One section of this conference report is the first update to our foreign investment laws in many years. I commend Chairman HENSARLING, Chairman ROYCE, and, of course, Speaker RYAN for negotiating a strong CFISI bill, which helps protect our Nation’s security.

This conference report also prohibits the Federal Government from buying products or services from Chinese telecommunications companies, such as ZTE and Huawei. And, importantly, it prohibits the Federal Government from doing business with any company that buys its products or services.

A more complete summary of the provisions has been provided to all Members, but the top priority of this bill and of our committee remains the men and women who volunteer to serve our Nation in the military. This bill authorizes the largest pay increase in 9 years. It provides additional assistance for spouses seeking employment; it makes transition assistance more tailored to the individual; and it prohibits the use of military healthcare facilities; all of that is more focused on our people, who are our most valuable asset.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of patriotic Americans serving our country, one provision on which the Senate and the House agreed was the closure of military healthcare facilities. We happily agreed to name this legislation after Senator JOHN MCCAIN, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. We do so not just because of his current position but in recognition and in tribute to a lifetime of patriotic service to our Nation.

Navy pilot, prisoner of war, Member of the House, Member of the Senate, Presidential nominee, whatever his job, whatever his role, Senator MCCAIN has carried it out with passion and intensity and with a love for our country that knows no bounds. History will find Senator JOHN MCCAIN to be one of the giants of our time.

While battling cancer at home in Arizona, he has helped guide this year’s NDAA throughout the process. Now, that does not mean that he agrees with every one of the outcomes in this conference report. I know from first-hand experience that he can be a fierce advocate and a tough negotiator.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself an additional 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, Senator INHOFE has done a great job on Senator MCCAIN’s behalf, and this conference report bears Senator McCaIN’s unmistakable stamp. He has, once again, made a strong, positive difference for the men and women in uniform and for the national security of the United States.

We certainly wish him and his family the best in his current fight. We thank him, and we attempt to honor him and his outstanding record of service to our Nation with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his leadership of the committee. Our committee is committed to completing this bill by year’s end, and I think it is a great example of how the legislative process should work. It is bipartisan; it follows regular order; and the chairman deserves a great deal of credit for making sure that both of those things happened.

He has been very inclusive of all the members of the committee, Democrats and Republicans, and also all the Members of this House who have had interest in what goes into this bill to make sure that we have the strongest possible national security policy.

I really appreciate his leadership, but I also share with him the gratitude that we have for our staff and the incredible hard work that they do to pull this process together. As the chairman mentioned, this is the soonest we have completed the NDAA—knock on wood, assuming we complete it—in my entire time in Congress. That took a lot of people doing a lot of work, Members and staff alike.

The chairman mentioned some of the legislative counsel staff. These are the people who when at the absolute last minute we decide, oh, we prefer it done this way, they are going to go back and rewrite the entire thing and redo the entire thing at all hours of the night. They do a spectacular job and are frequently unrecognized.

The chairman mentioned some of them. I want to mention the rest: Mark Synnes, Hank Savage, I am going to do my best on this name—Kalyani Parthasarathy, Tom Cassidy, Casey Ebner, and Paul Kubicki. These folks do an amazing job for our country and for the men and women in the military. I want to particularly appreciate their tireless work and the outstanding product they produce for us each year.

I agree with the chairman that we have a very strong bill this year. I also agree with the chairman that if any one of us were to write it, we would write it differently. There are things we would like to see in that were left out and things that are in that we prefer were not. But that is the nature of the legislative process. It is a compromise, an effort to work together to hopefully come up with a good product, and I think that is what we did this time.

The chairman mentioned a number of the highlights. I am particularly focused on the fact that we do have language in this bill to take a look at the great American casualties as a result of some of our military action throughout the world, to get a better read on exactly what is happening and how we can minimize those.

There is also language for a review of exactly what our military is doing in Yemen, to make sure that it complies with the law and complies with the interests of the United States.

I am also pleased that, once again, we were able to avoid putting any environmental riders into this bill.

Also, I agree with the chairman that this bill really shores up our ability to contend with the adversaries that most threaten us.

On Russia, we have the largest increase in the European defense initiative that we have had in a defense bill. We also shore up our support for Ukraine and the rest of our NATO allies by reaffirming our commitment to NATO and our commitment to defending them from any Russian aggression.

Where China is concerned, as the chairman mentioned, very strict restrictions on ZTE and also on Huawei and other Chinese companies to make sure they can’t do business
with the U.S. Government or with companies that do business with the U.S. Government.

I do want to address one issue that I heard brought up during the rule. I think there is a popular misunderstanding of how our hostilities are responsible for the deal that led ZTE back into the U.S. market. That is not true. The President of the United States decided to undo what he had done previously, blocking ZTE from doing any business in the U.S., and basically paying $1 billion to get rid of that one. We have to live by the law. This is also mandatory spending, and so if we were to get rid of the ZTE deal and get rid of that $1 billion, we would have literally had to cut retirement healthcare for the men and women who served in the armed forces. I also think that something that was done on this floor would have been willing to do.

So this bill does step up to confront our adversaries in Russia and China. I also think it reflects the values, as I mentioned, of dealing with the civilian casualty issue and trying to get a head on what is going on with Yemen. And it reflects a reasonable compromise between the House and the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to close by echoing the words of our chairman in being grateful that this bill is named after Senator MCCAIN. I know Senator MCCAIN before I even got into politics, just as a prominent national figure, a war hero, and someone to be emulated as one of the great heroes of my career that I have to be proud of in this conference report.

I am particularly glad we are making important investments in our cyber personnel and capabilities, providing increased support for our Special Operations Forces and their families, and increasing funding for key programs to maintain our technological superiority, such as railroad development, directed energy prototyping, and unmanned vehicles.

The threats we face as a nation are diverse and challenging. There is no easy answers for how the United States will continue to promote stability and the rules-based international order.

But I believe that this bipartisan work of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee, and this bill in particular, will improve our national security and help keep our country and our servicemembers safe.

Lastly, I want to thank Kathryn Mitchell on my personal staff, who is serving in the United States Army. She is leaving for South Korea to be with her husband, who is serving in the United States Army. Job well done, Kathryn, and thank you.

For those reasons and more, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this conference report.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to support the bill.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), the ranking member on the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee. It is one of the great honors of my career that I have had the privilege to work with him on the Armed Services Committee process over the course of the last 5 years as ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to support the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act.

Appropriately named after an American hero, the conference report contains some very important initiatives that provide our military with the resources necessary to restore readiness and rebuild combat capability. Chairman MAC THORNBERRY has been very successful, with leadership, to expedite this critical legislation in record time.

As Readiness Subcommittee chairman, I appreciate that the conference report authorizes additional funding for training, spare parts, equipment, and weapon systems.

The conference report also focuses on aviation readiness by increasing flying hours, funding for spare parts, and establishing a commission to examine the tragic rise in military aviation accidents.

Both the House and Senate bills address Navy surface forces improvements in response to last year's collisions and tragic loss of 17 lives on the Fitzgerald and McCain. I appreciate the conference report because it contains a range of provisions that improves the operation of surface fleets.

The conference report provides critical funding for Fort Jackson and continues construction of the mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility at the Savannah River site to protect the environment in South Carolina and Georgia.

It also supports our strongest ally in the Middle East, Israel, by establishing defense partnerships to counter Iran's terrorist activities.

In conclusion, I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY again for his success with his dedicated, professional staff. I also appreciate the Readiness Subcommittee's distinguished ranking member, MADELEINE BORDALLO of Guam, for her contributions to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), the ranking member on the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee. It is one of the great honors of my career that I have had the privilege to work with him on the Armed Services Committee process over the course of the last 5 years as ranking member.

Mr. LANGEVIN of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking Member SMITH, Chairman McCAIN, Ranking Member REED, Senator DUFFIE, and their staff for their tireless work in producing this conference report.

I am especially pleased that this conference report is named after Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a true American hero. Thank you for your service, Senator, and Godspeed.

It was an honor to serve as a conferee throughout this process and to be a part of this undertaking in support of our Armed Forces.

While no bill is perfect, there is much to be proud of in this conference report. We are giving our troops a much-deserved pay raise, taking critical steps to counter Russian aggression and resist Chinese coercive influence, and continuing to ensure the Department of Defense is prepared to mitigate the risks posed by climate change.

We are also increasing funding for the Virginia- and Columbia-class submarine programs, which are made in my home State of Rhode Island, and protect our Nation and our allies and create thousands of jobs back home.

As ranking member of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, it has been a pleasure to work with Chairwoman ELISE STEFANIK.

I am particularly glad we are making important investments in our cyber personnel and capabilities, providing increased support for our Special Operations Forces and their families, and increasing funding for key programs to maintain our technological superiority, such as railroad development, directed energy prototyping, and unmanned vehicles.

The threats we face as a nation are diverse and challenging. There is no easy answers for how the United States will continue to promote stability and the rules-based international order.

But I believe that this bipartisan work of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee, and this bill in particular, will improve our national security and help keep our country and our servicemembers safe.

Lastly, I want to thank Kathryn Mitchell on my personal staff, who is serving in the United States Army. She is leaving for South Korea to be with her husband, who is serving in the United States Army. Job well done, Kathryn, and thank you.

For those reasons and more, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this conference report.

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

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor.

I strongly support H.R. 5515, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, the 58th consecutive NDAA passed by Congress.

I also want to thank our leadership—Speaker RYAN, KEVIN MCCARTHY, STEVE SCALISE, and PATRICK MCHENRY—for their focus on the bill being a contribution to readiness. This is about increasing the top line, increasing national defense spending, and increasing support for our men and women in uniform. I want to thank them for their leadership in accomplishing that.

I have the privilege of serving as the chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, and I would like to recognize our subcommittee ranking member, Mr. Nikki Tsongas. I want to thank Niki for her support on the subcommittee and as co-chair of the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus.
Throughout her tenure in Congress, NC1 has worked in a solidly bipartisan fashion to support our warfighters, improve the readiness of our military, and help our service members eliminate sexual assault in uniform. She is leaving behind a strong legacy of accomplishments.

Within our subcommittee’s jurisdiction, this bill recommends authorization for over $97 billion in modernization funding that is necessary to regain our advantage against peer competitors.

This bill recognizes the importance of the fifth-generation strike fighter and supports the President’s budget request for 77 Joint Strike Fighters. It also authorizes the Department to procure an additional F-35 aircraft if funds become available through cost savings and program efficiencies.

The bill includes several oversight provisions to combat the physiological episodes occurring in military aircraft. We must ensure that the Department of Defense certifies that all new aircraft will have the latest technology to keep our pilots healthy and safe.

In the bill, Congress reiterates the importance of the Air Force’s JSTARS program. After 25 years, the aircraft has provided our warfighters command, control, and surveillance of ground battle. JSTARS have flown over 130,000 combat hours and will be an integral piece of the Air Force’s arsenal for years to come.

For the seventh consecutive year, this bill addresses sexual assault. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER).

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all members of the conference committee for their record-breaking work on this National Defense Authorization Act. This bill supports the national security, so I am pleased to support it.

I would particularly like to thank my good friend, Chairman ROGERS, for his bipartisan leadership of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

In addition to authorizing core missions of our nuclear forces to provide a strong deterrent, this defense authorization bill mandates an independent study on increasing the decision time before the Department of Defense can use nuclear weapons; allows negotiations for extending the New START treaty to maintain binding limits on the number of strategic weapons that Russia can deploy; drops a provision that would have all but separated the Nuclear Security Administration from the Department of Energy; and, in direct contradiction of expert recommendations; and allows the Department of Energy to continue terminating the failed and unaffordable MOX boondoggle.

The bill supports effective missile defense efforts, including pressing for near-term solutions such as boost-phase missile defense using kinetic interceptors. Increases accountability of the acquisition of expensive interceptors, and, of course, supports U.S.-Israeli missile defense.

Finally, I strongly commend Chairman ROGERS’ leadership in strengthening our ability to defend our assets in space from threats.

The bill creates a sub-unified command for space and continues oversight of warfighting readiness, presses for a more rapid and agile acquisition process, and mandates a plan for improving our space capabilities.

I look forward to continuing to work with Chairman ROGERS and others toward establishment of a true space corps or space force. I urge support for this bill.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5615, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.

This report authorizes additional funding for nuclear modernization efforts. We make good on promises to improve defense-related infrastructure. It includes full funding for a low-yield nuclear warhead. It also postures the United States to credibly address the threat posed by Chinese and Russian strategic nuclear weapons in the future.

On missile defense, the conference report includes policy support and funding for space-based sensing, boost-phase intercept, hypersonics, and directed energy efforts.

Regarding national security space reform, this conference report establishes a sub-unified command for space. It tasks the Department with developing an alternative acquisition for national security space, and it directs the Department to deliver a space warfighting policy and readiness plan. These steps begin taking us down a path toward implementing President Trump’s directive to establish a space force.

Finally, it also includes significant reforms as to how the DOD calculates defense funding between the base and space accounts to support depot-level sustainment, restoration, and modernization.

The agreement also addresses readiness challenges of the surface Navy following the four incidents that occurred in the Pacific last year.

With respect to military aviation, the agreement establishes a National Commission on Military Aviation Safety that will assess the causes of recent aviation mishaps and make changes for training, maintenance personnel, and policies. It also authorizes $4.9 billion for military construction projects from the services’ unfunded priorities list.

I am also grateful to the conference for including provisions important to Guam. First, the H-2B workforce provision allows us to fully implement the marine relocation from Okinawa, which is vital to the security of the Indo-Pacific region. This is an important step toward stabilizing Guam’s workforce crisis, and I hope to continue working on further legislation needed for civilian relief.

Also, on the Navy’s net negative commitment to Guam, the bill improves transparency by establishing a public accounting of Navy property expected to be transferred to the Government of Guam.

The bill supports the ship repair industry on Guam and in the U.S. The bill authorizes $32 million for the Navy to restore a dry dock capability and prohibits the Navy from redeveloping the former ship repair facility on Guam for any purpose other than to support depot-level ship maintenance.

I continue to stress that it is imperative that the Navy test and sustain depot-level ship repair capability on sovereign U.S. soil in the western Pacific.

I close by extending my gratitude again to the chairman and the ranking member and to my colleagues and the professional staff and all who participated in producing this conference agreement. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. THORNBERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the chair of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this conference report and the
Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the 2019 John McCain Defense Authorization bill.

First, I would like to extend my congratulations to Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH for their steady, bipartisan leadership as this bill was crafted—the 58th consecutive year in a row that Congress has produced an NDAA, a testament to their superb legislating and the constructive dialogue that results from following regular order.

I also want to salute the hard work of my colleague ROB WITTMAN, at the helm of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, and our professional staff—Phil MacNaughton, Dave Sienicki, and Bruce Johnson—for their talent, expertise, and follow-through for all of our members.

Our subcommittee mark accelerates the timeline toward achieving a Navy fleet of 355 ships, the size needed to meet global requirements according to the Navy’s 2016 force structure assessment.

Our work authorizes financing for 13 battle force ships, three more than President Trump’s request. In particular, at a time when rising adversaries are recapitalizing or expanding their submarine and surface fleets, this year’s NDAA provides $7.6 billion for the Virginia-class program and nearly $4 billion for the Columbia-class development and advance procurement.

The bill authorizes two Virginia-class attack submarines in 2019 and requires the next Block V Virginia contract currently under negotiation to include priced options for additional third submarines in years 2022 and 23. This provision will maintain the option for the next Congress to take advantage of industrial-base capacity that the Navy last February told us is available to increase submarine construction in the future.

Tragically, 2017 was a very difficult year for the U.S. Navy. Our country lost 17 sailors in the fatal collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and the USS John McCain.

This bill directs the Navy to assess the checks and balances in its chain of command so operational demands are appropriately balanced with ship training, certification, and maintenance. It limits to 10 years the period in which ships may be forward deployed and requires that ship readiness inspections be conducted on a no-notice basis, with results made available for the public to see.

These changes are critical. We owe it to our sailors, and we can’t afford to have our naval assets out of commission or out of the combatant command chain so as competitors seek to counter time-honored norms, such as the right to transit international waters freely.

Mr. Speaker, the important provisions of this bill showcase what we in Congress can accomplish when we collectively choose to work with our colleagues across the aisle and trust the committee process to produce a fair and balanced result.

Even more impressive is the fact that passage of this NDAA is the earliest it has been in 60 years. This defies the constant narrative of a dysfunctional Congress. Again, I commend the skillful leadership of Mr. THORNBERRY and Mr. SMITH, as well as Senators MCCAIN and REED across the Capitol, in helping shepherd this legislation to the point where it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all Members to vote for passage of this measure.

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

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, and I thank Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking Member SMITH, all the conferees, and the committee staff for their dedicated, hard work on this important piece of legislation.

This bipartisan bill provides our troops the equipment, resources, and training they so desperately need. It authorizes a 2.6 percent pay increase for our men and women, authorizes 24 additional F-18 Super Hornets, invests in A-10 modifications, fully funds the B-21 bomber program, and funds various bomber modernization programs to ensure our current bomber fleet remains interoperational until the B-21 comes online.

I am delighted that this bill includes a provision that raises the Air National Guard control grade cap to ensure that the ANG is properly resourced. The lack of control grades severely restricts the ANG’s ability to recruit full-time officers separating from Active Duty in the Air Force, many of whom are much-needed pilots. Raising this cap will help fill these needed slots.

The bill also includes a vital provision that prohibits Federal agencies from purchasing certain Chinese-made telecommunications and video surveillance equipment.

The Chinese Government is using every avenue at its disposal to target the United States, including expanding the role of Chinese companies in the U.S. domestic communications and public safety sectors. This provision takes a necessary step to protect the U.S. government from significant vulnerabilities.

These are just a few of the examples of hundreds of provisions included in this bill that invest in our troops and our future. This bill is the result of diligent work by the conferees and the overwhelming support of our conferees, and I urge a quick passage.
First, this bill takes seriously the cyber threats from our adversaries towards this Nation, which is why the bill strengthens our whole-of-government cybersecurity posture by improving coordination and partnering between the DOD and DHS to prevent and respond to cyberattacks against our critical infrastructure.

It also affirms and clarifies cyber space, cyber warfare, and cyber deterrence policy to combat malicious cyber activities from adversaries like China, Russia, and North Korea, who are targeting the United States. We also require the DOD to provide congressional notification of cybersecurity breaches and the loss of controlled information from cleared defense contractors.

Second, we build upon previous NDAs by advancing prototyping and testing of directed-energy weapons and hypersonic vehicles and by accelerating these technologies by authorizing an additional $285 million.

Third, the emphasis on policy and programs to advance AI, machine learning, quantum sciences, and other critical national security technologies. We also establish a National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence to conduct a thorough review of the wide-ranging military applications of this decisive technology.

Additionally, this bill authorizes the largest pay raise for our troops in 9 years. It helps improve employment opportunities for military spouses and increases transparency in the military healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill and vote “yes.”

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 ½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS). Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman THORNBERY and Ranking Member SMITH and the many members of the professional staff for their work in managing such an important and complex piece of legislation in such a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the conference report, so aptly named for the heroic Senator JOHN MCCAIN.

Mr. THORNBERY, Mr. Speaker. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan bill and the accompanying conference report for the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act.

As the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, I am proud of our oversight and legislative initiatives this year, which have included:

- Strengthening our cyber warfare capabilities and policies.
- Energizing our science and technology enterprise.
- Enabling our special operations forces around the globe.

Providing resources and authorities to counterterrorism and unconventional warfare threats.

And advancing programs and activities that counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The bill before the House incorporates three broad subcommittee themes:

Congress this year, and I really appreciate her tremendous service on the Armed Services Committee and to this body.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member SMITH for his always knowledgeable and articulate leadership. I have appreciated it very much as I have served on this committee.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege to serve as the ranking member of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, alongside my colleague and friend, Chairman MIKE TURNER of Ohio. I, once again, thank Mr. TURNER for the spirit of bipartisanship and collegiality he has shown over the years on this subcommittee and on the many other issues on which we have worked closely, including addressing the scourge of sexual assault in the military.

Among many important provisions, this year’s bill includes measures aimed at providing increased oversight over key naval aircraft and makes crucial investments in research and development aimed at better protecting the men and women we send into harm’s way.

This is the last NDAA that I will have the privilege of helping craft. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve on the House Armed Services Committee for the last 11 years, a committee that has such a proud tradition of bipartisan cooperation and, as such, is a model for the country during these challenging times.

I commend the committee, under the leadership of Chairman THORNBERY and Ranking Member SMITH, and the many members of the professional staff for their work in managing such an important and complex piece of legislation in such a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the conference report, so aptly named for the heroic Senator JOHN MCCAIN.

Mr. THORNBERY, Mr. Speaker. I rise 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), a distinguished subcommittee chair from the Committee on Financial Services.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of major reforms included in the National Defense Authorization Act conference report regarding the Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States and export controls.

I thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, on the threat that China and other adversaries pose to the national security of the United States.

The House Financial Services Committee held four hearings on CFIUS reform, inviting a diverse set of witnesses that ranged from government officials who currently serve on CFIUS to members of the defense, intelligence, and business communities.

We also held numerous briefings and meetings with experts, equally diverse as those who testified before the committee, on the threat that China and other adversaries pose to the national security of the United States.

At the end, I am proud to see we have a bipartisan, bicameral product that reflects the work and views of these experts.

Specifically, these critical reforms counteract the surge in malign foreign investment from China that threatens our national security by enhancing the review process of transactions where our enemies could steal technologies and infrastructure critical to the defense of our country.

I am proud that we have closed in security that China and other adversaries have circumvented from CFIUS review include noncontrolling investments, joint ventures, and acquisition of real estate near sensitive military sites.

At the same time, these reforms ensure that America’s doors remain open to benign foreign direct investment that in 2016 added $894 billion to the value of the U.S. economy and that support 6.8 million workers today in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman PITTENGER, Senator CORNYN, Congressman HECK, Chairman HENSARLING, Chairman THORNBERY,
Chairman CRAPO, Ranking Member WATTERS, and House and Senate leadership for their dedication to getting these much-needed reforms done in a bipartisan way. And I encourage my colleagues to support the underlying bill, the NDAA conference report.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY).

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for the conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019.

This bipartisan piece of legislation is crucial for our Nation’s armed services, and it is an honor and privilege to be selected again to serve as a conferee.

We have over 15 major military installations in Texas, and NDAA funds key defense and scientific research industries throughout the State, and especially for the constituents that I serve in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. This bill ensures our military is supported with the research they need to complete their missions and face the national security challenges abroad.

This is a crucial time for Democrats and Republicans to find ways to work together for solutions that will ensure the safety of the United States and our allies—now, really, more so today than ever before.

This bill will make great strides in achieving that mission. This bill provides the highest pay increase for our troops in a decade, funds innovation in emerging technologies that will increase aviation readiness, and requires the DOD establish a pilot program to maximize opioid safety in the military health system by monitoring controlled substances for servicemembers.

It is also a great point of pride in Texas that we have some of the most military and defense readiness equipment for our armed services. Many of the Nation’s F-35 Joint Strike Fighters are built in Fort Worth, and Lockheed Martin is one of the metroplex’s largest employers. I will continue to fight tirelessly for additional funding for F-35As to ensure that our Armed Forces have the most advanced jet fighters in the world.

Democrats have also succeeded in taking out funding for the wall, which I think is a very important thing. I was disappointed about taxpayer dollars being spent to fund a very extravagant military parade that I don’t think that we need. I think it shows authoritarianism. However, this bill funding makes great progress in improving our military readiness and continues to demonstrate America’s resilience and strength.

Mr. THORNBERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER), a leader on CFIUS reform.

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his exemplary leadership on behalf of our military and defense of our country. We are deeply grateful for him.

Mr. Speaker, I say today how pleased and grateful I am that our Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act is being included in the NDAA bill. To that end, I thank Chairman HENSLEY, Member WATTERS, Heath Tarbert with the Treasury Department, Clark Fonda, my chief, so many people, ANDY BARR, who contributed to this process to make sure that we are in a position of strength.

For over 2 years, I have fought for these efforts to prevent Chinese and other adversarial nation-states from acquiring our sophisticated technology in our military. This bill, this Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, was the result of countless meetings throughout our assembly, as well as throughout this district, of talking to multiple people in the industry, as well as our intelligence community and defense, to make sure that we had done the job to achieve adequate oversight for these investments.

FIRRMA will broaden the jurisdiction of CFIUS in several key areas, including minority noncontrolling investments and certain real estate transactions. CFIUS has prosecuted more than 20 cases in 12 years. FIRRMA strengthens our export control laws and creates an interagency review to cover overseas joint ventures. Overall, this bill closes several key loopholes in the CFIUS process.

Today, I do believe that the passage of the NDAA and FIRRMA legislation will help improve national security and combat aggressive Chinese efforts to secure our technology.

I thank all who participated in this process, and I commend this bill to our Congress to pass.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENTHAL).

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman’s courtesy in permitting me to speak on this bill.

I am pleased that this bill is being named after Senator McCain. It has been my privilege to work with him in one particular area: dealing with the people who worked with us in Afghanistan and Iraq on special immigrant visas.

Along with the late Senator Kennedy, over the last 10 years, we worked to try and help these people who put their lives on the line to help our forces as guides, as interpreters, who are now being left to the tender mercies of people with long memories, like the Taliban and al-Qaida. Their lives are at risk, as are their family members. We still have 17,000 applicants who want to have these visas to come to the United States to safety.

I am disappointed that we have been unable to have the funding for additional visa allocations. I appreciate that due to an accounting convention, this would be at the expense of other important things that are being fought for.

I think it would be great if we are able to put all the costs to have these people to come to the United States to safety. And like you, I have met with people whose lives were saved because they did not want to leave the service. Our military produces remarkably talented and well-trained individuals, but too many of these warriors struggle to transition to the civilian world. That is why I am so pleased that the core of my bill, the BATTLE for Servicemembers Act, was included in the NDAA. This provision improves DOD’s Transition Assistance Program, which helps departing servicemembers prepare for life after their service.

Specifically, my provision ensures departing servicemembers take a specialized 2-day course to prepare them to attend college, learn a trade, or start a small business. These targeted courses are optional under current law, and, as a result, few servicemembers can take advantage of them. I am hopeful my provision will lead to increased participation in these courses so that more men and women in our military will be prepared to make a successful transition to civilian life.

I am also proud the NDAA includes the full text of my bill to modernize SBA’s microloan program, which provides small-dollar loans to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, including veteran entrepreneurs.

I urge my colleagues on both sides to support this bill.

Mr. THORNBERY. Mr. Speaker, I inform the Chair that at this point I am désirous of adjournment.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENTHAL).

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman’s courtesy in permitting me to speak on this bill.

I am pleased that this bill is being named after Senator McCain. It has been my privilege to work with him in one particular area: dealing with the people who worked with us in Afghanistan and Iraq on special immigrant visas.
Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon for his comments because this is an issue we wrestle with in conference committee every year. We should be getting visas to those people who helped us out.

For some reason, it is a mandatory score in terms of what it costs; and as I mentioned on the other issue, we struggle to find mandatory money. But rest assured, this is a priority that we will continue to fight for because I know how important this issue is, and I thank the gentleman for raising that.

On the bill itself, let me say I intend to support the defense bill. I haven't always supported the defense bill. It is part of a collaborative process. We worked together and tried to generate a good piece of legislation, and I think, on balance, we did that this year.

Number one, when you start with the top-line number, the budget agreement that was put into place for FY18 and FY19 helped a great deal because it put in place clear top-line numbers for defense and for the rest of discretionary spending. And that has been the battle.

Let me just say clearly that ever since the Budget Control Act was passed in 2011—and I know they have reasons for why that was passed—the military and the rest of our discretionary budget has had to live under. I think it is, three or four government shutdowns, multiple threatened government shutdowns, continuing resolutions, and, in general, complete uncertainty on how much money they were going to have from one month to the next.

This is a horrible way to run the government. We need to come up with a fiscal policy that sets clearly what we are going to spend on discretionary spending and gets it done as close to October 1 as possible.

This has a devastating impact on our military’s ability to be prepared to defend this Nation, to be prepared to fight the fights that we ask them to fight.

It is worth noting, it also has a devastating impact on all other aspects of the discretionary budget: on infrastructure, education, just to name a couple. So getting back to regular order on fiscal policy is enormously important.

I yield also note—and I chose not to belabor the point this year, though I have talked about it in the past—that the Budget Control Act alone is not the problem. We do need to get rid of the Budget Control Act because it is a terrible way to budget and govern, but even once we do that, we still have a $22 trillion debt.

We just passed another massive tax cut. We need to look at where our budget is going to be, we are looking at trillion-dollar deficits for as far as the eye can see and the largest debt that we have ever had as a nation, even as a percentage of GDP.

The most important thing that we can do is to give a guarantee of predictability to the men and women who serve in the military is to address the fiscal issues that we face as a nation. If we honestly address those issues, we are going to have a devil of a time paying for everything in the military that I know some on this floor would like.

So we need to get to a consistent fiscal policy if we are going to have the dependability that I know the chairman wants, that I know everybody in this committee wants going forward; and if we don't do that, that uncertainty is going to continue going forward.

I yield just say that to get the proper fiscal policy is going to require us to be honest. I have never—I have not voted for the tax cut. I haven't always supported the defense bill. I will continue to fight for because I rest assured, this is a priority that we are going to need to make sure that every dollar we spend at the Pentagon is well spent. Acquisition reform is one of the keys to getting us to that point, to more efficiently spending our money.

I want to close by thanking the chairman, thanking Senator MCCAIN, Senator INHOFE, who was also a big part of the process this year, and Senator REED, and all the members of the Armed Services Committee and their staff.

Once again, I want to reiterate, in this committee, we do legislate the way it is supposed to be done: bipartisan and under regular order. This place can work. The legislative process can work.

We had a very long markup in the Armed Services Committee in which we considered a lot of issues, debated them, had votes, then we went to the floor, then we went to conference committee, and we produced what I think is an excellent product for the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the conference report and again thank the chairman for his leadership.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to all of the Members who came to speak on the conference report today. Yet, I have the feeling we have only begun to scratch the surface of all of the issues that are addressed in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is a big bill. It is about 1,800 pages big. About 200 pages of that is the CPIUS reform, led by the Financial Services Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee, but there is a lot that is in this bill. The distinguished ranking member just talked a bit about reform.

This bill eliminates a number of requirements that Congress had put on the Department of Defense in previous years. It streamlines some decision-making. It begins to put us in a more capable position. We face Russia and China and Iran and North Korea and terrorist organizations spread out all over the globe. It is incredibly complicated and difficult, and it is going to be very expensive, unless we make some smart choices. So we are going to have a tough time meeting the budgetary requirements that we have, no matter what.

But in this bill, I think we addressed all those issues. I think we addressed them very well and in a bipartisan fashion. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we do work with our allies to confront the challenges in Russia and China, which are critically important to us going forward.

We also, thanks to the chairman’s leadership, continue our effort at acquisition reform, because one thing is for sure: Given the budget reality that I just described, no matter what, we are going to need to make sure that every dollar we spend at the Pentagon is well spent. Acquisition reform is one of the keys to getting us to that point, to more efficiently spending our money.

I just want to reiterate, in this committee, we do legislate the way it is supposed to be done: bipartisan and under regular order. This place can work. The legislative process can work.
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not been addressed before. I could go on and on.

There was a Secretary of Defense who wrote a book a few years ago, who complained about this bill, who said that it is too much that Congress is doing to do it. Yet, I would remind all of us, Mr. Speaker, that the Constitution puts that exact responsibility on our shoulders. It says that it is Congress’ job to raise and support, provide and maintain, and make the rules and regulations for military forces of the United States.

This is the bill by which we carry out that responsibility. It is our job to do it. And this bill is the product, as you have heard, of Members of both sides of the aisle throughout the process.

There have been, approximately, 1,055 amendments that have been proposed at some point in this process: subcommittee, full committee, floor consideration, and then on to conference. About a third of them were Democrats and Republicans.

We have come together, as we have for each of the past 57 years, to exercise our constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the men and women who risk their lives to protect us.

I would certainly join with the ranking member and other Members, who have said: Now, in order to get the full benefit of this, we need to have an appropriate process that matches, on time, the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of this debate today, you have heard a lot of thanks. It is appropriate because, obviously, it takes a lot of work, by a lot of people, to put together an 1,800-page bill and try to think through the consequences of what it means for us, what it means for our servicemembers, and what it means for our allies around the world.

It truly is a team effort, a bipartisan team effort. And I believe the reason that is so, the reason it has passed every year, and has been signed into law every year for the past 57 years, is because of the men and women, of whom we are so proud, who risk their lives to protect us and our freedom. They continue to be at the forefront of our thoughts. It is on their behalf, and for their benefit, that we bring this conference report, urge its adoption, and appreciate their service to the United States of America.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the Conference Report on the National Defense Authorization Act for 2019. I support the NDAA legislation and will vote for its adoption on the House Floor today, but I have serious reservations about how the Speaker’s protocol on outside conferences was implemented for the conference on this bill. As a response to this problem, I chose not to sign the conference report.

The Speaker’s protocol is not new, but it has become increasingly problematic for the Foreign Affairs Committee, on which I serve as the Ranking Member. Every year, the NDAA includes more than a hundred provisions that affect the jurisdiction of our committee. I take our responsibilities to review and negotiate these provisions extremely seriously. Unfortunately, under the Speaker’s protocol, we are not appointed as outside conferees on provisions that the Speaker or parliamentarians consider to be minor.

I understand the motivation behind this protocol. The conference process has to operate efficiently. However, many provisions that are deemed minor under the protocol are in fact far from minor. They fund programs that mandate or mandate congressional oversight of critical issues. The Foreign Affairs Committee brings an important perspective that is distinct from the perspective of the Armed Services Committee, and we should have a formal role in all provisions under our jurisdiction.

If the committee of jurisdiction on foreign policy matters is not allowed to have conferees on important areas of the bill, then our only alternative is to claim sequential jurisdiction over the conference-reported NDAA and act as our own “House committee.”

I want to thank Ranking Member SMITH, and his staff, for working closely with us during the conference this year. They included us fully in the process, and we are deeply grateful for your cooperation. Because we were not just consulted, but also named as outside conferees on the entire range of provisions that fall into our jurisdiction. I strongly support the goals of the National Defense Authorization Act, and I look forward to working with the Speaker and the Office of the Parliamentarian next year to ensure that the Foreign Affairs Committee is a full participant.

Mr. DeFazio. Mr. Speaker, today, I will vote against the Conference Report for H.R. 5515, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. The legislation includes several provisions that I strongly support, including providing servicemen and women a well-deserved raise of 2.6 percent. Those who serve in uniform have made extraordinary sacrifices for our country and have earned and deserve a pay raise. It also includes $6.3 billion, the largest amount ever, for the European Deterrence Initiative to help protect Eastern Europe from further Russian aggression.

Despite these important initiatives, I have strong concerns with a number of provisions included in the Conference Report. This legislation authorizes more than $708 billion, including $69 billion to the Overseas Continuation Operations (OCO) fund, an account which is not counted in the budget and is not paid for. It adds to the deficit and is used as a slush fund by the Pentagon.

Unlike every other federal agency, the Department of Defense (DOD) has yet to complete a financial audit. Congress can make responsible cuts to our military services to increase mission readiness while reducing strain on service members and their families.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5515, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. I wish to thank Chairman THORN-BERRY, Ranking Member SMITH, Chairman MCCAIN, Senator INHOFE, and Ranking Member REED for their leadership throughout the conferencing of this bill. The bill contains a number of significant policy and funding initiatives that continue our commitment to maintaining military personnel and family readiness.

To that end, this bill: Increases end strength across the Services and reserve components allowing the military services to increase mission readiness while reducing strain on service members and their families;

Extends pay and bonuses for service members in high demand fields, providing the military services with necessary tools to attract and retain critical talent;

Improves the Transition Assistance Program to ensure that service members who are leaving the military receive training and resources tailored to their post-military career plans;

Requires a comprehensive review of wounded warrior care and mental health care services, ensuring the highest possible quality of care to those who have sacrificed for our nation;

The bill also continues to provide oversight of critical issues, including additional protections for victims of sexual harassment, improvements to the Department of Defense’s process for reporting crimes to the FBI database, the establishment of a Department of Defense prescription drug monitoring program to share information with state drug monitoring programs.

In conclusion, I want to thank my fellow conferees for their contributions to this truly bipartisan conference report, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 2019 National Defense
Authorization Act due to its importance to our national security. However, I do signifi-
cantly concern over a last minute change to the bill that stripped funding for an in-
portant recapitalization program for the Joint Surve-
lance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS). When the House passed this legislation in a
veto recommendation, it included $623 million to continue the JSTARS Recapit-
alization program. This program was aimed to con-
tinue a vital combat capability for our ground forces as a battle management command and
control asset. However, during the conference process, this funding was eliminated from the
bill.

Although this legislation provides for signifi-
cant improvement to our national security, in-
cluding pay raises for servicemembers, modern-
ization efforts for equipment, cybersecurity
enhancements, and many benefits for our mil-
tary families, amongst other notable improve-
ments, the absence of this capability is worri-
some.

The 116th Air Control Wing based at Robins
Air Force Base, the “Eyes of the Night,” exe-
cutes the JSTARS mission, and has been doing so since 1991. Our combat-
ant commanders rely heavily on JSTARS, and for nearly 20 years, this capability has been
consistently utilized in support of our ground forces.

Although I am pleased with the recent an-
councement that the Air Force will be making
Robins Air Force Base the home for the Ad-
vanced Battle Management System (ABMS), this
capability is years off. Strip funding for recapi-
talization will put current combat control capabil-
ities at risk, potentially for over a decade,
resulting in significant impact to our ground forces and this decision will have
significant repercussions.

To reiterate, this bill does ensure we are con-
stituting our Constitutional responsibility of
“Raise an Army.” However, I will continue to
act with my oversight capabilities to ensure
JSTARS remains available to our combat sol-
diers until the Air Force employs a solution
that can be employed for our servicemen
whom desperately need this capability.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong oppo-
sition to the conference report to H.R. 5515, which is the 2019 National Defense Authoriza-
tion Act. This bill authorizes more than $708 billion in defense spending. Yet we know that there is
at least $150 billion in waste, fraud, and abuse currently over at the Pentagon. Now we are
giving them more money. Shame on us.

This is an already out-of-control, bloated
Pentagon budget.

Mr. Speaker, it would also increase funding to
$69 billion for wars that Congress has never even voted on. Once again, my Repub-
clican colleagues have used off-the-
books spending gimmicks to further expand
the bloated Pentagon budget.

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. Instead of
writing blank checks to the Pentagon, Con-
gress needs to live up to its constitutional obli-
gation to debate matters of war and peace. I
will offer an amendment to the bill that
requires the Secretary of Defense to provide a report and update on the United States-
Kabul compact, and also oversees con-
tingency operations reporting requirements.

I can assure you we are spending all this
money on a slush fund through OCO, and we
do not know what is going on with that ac-
count.

The underlying bill is still a disgrace.

In conclusion, I just want to reiterate that
authorizing wars with no end, no debate, and
no vote is unconstitutional, and it is wrong.

I call on Speaker Ryan to bring forth an au-
thorization because every step of the way, we
are trying in a bipartisan fashion to do this,
and it is the Speaker’s call. He should do that
so that we can debate and vote up or down on
these wars.

So, this final bill should not be passed just
based on the amount of money that we are
giving to the Pentagon to do more than ensure
our national security and fight terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge no vote and reject this
shameful bill.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the conference re-
port.

The question was taken; and the
question is on the conference re-
port. They include clarifying that
when their hard-earned tax dollars are
being wasted on a battle management command and control asset, we see
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Unfortunately, Republicans refused to allow
my bipartisan amendment on the Floor.

When in the world will this body have the
backbone to debate the costs and con-
sequences of these wars? Our brave troops
deserve better.

We need to do our job.

I am pleased, through, that some of my amend-
ments—which are very important amend-
ments—were included in the con-
ference report. They include clarifying that
nothing in this bill can be construed as author-
izing force against North Korea—that is the
use of military force.

Also, we included reporting requirements for
auditing the Pentagon. We need the Pentagon
audited so that taxpayers will really begin to
know where their hard-earned tax dollars are
going and what weapons systems they are
contributing to in terms of the building of
weapons systems which probably will never be
used, a report and update on the United
States-Kabul compact, and also oversees con-
tingency operations reporting requirements.

Can you believe we are spending all this
money on a slush fund through OCO, and we
do not know what is going on with that ac-
count?

The underlying bill is still a disgrace.

In conclusion, I just want to reiterate that
authorizing wars with no end, no debate, and
no vote is unconstitutional, and it is wrong.

I call on Speaker Ryan to bring forth an au-
thorization because every step of the way, we
are trying in a bipartisan fashion to do this,
and it is the Speaker’s call. He should do that
so that we can debate and vote up or down on
these wars.

So, this final bill should not be passed just
based on the amount of money that we are
giving to the Pentagon to do more than ensure
our national security and fight terrorism.
Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that, for too long, many countries have taken advantage of our country's patience and open trade practices. Our country must achieve fair trade.

I understand and support going after bad actors like China, who engage in notoriously unfair trade practices and steal intellectual property. It appears progress is being made with the European Union with yesterday's announcement. While achieving this, we need to protect our domestic industries and producers.

I have heard concerns from farmers and manufacturers back home in Michigan who are being threatened by retaliatory tariffs from our trading partners. Growth for American agriculture lies in export markets. Domestic manufacturers often have complex supply chains, and sometimes imported materials are their only option.

My constituents support holding unfair trading partners accountable. They just ask for support and protection while we achieve fair trade for all Americans.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF AIR FORCE STAFF SERGEANT JAMES GROTJAN

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of one of our Nation's brave servicemembers, Air Force Staff Sergeant James Grotjan, who lost his life in an accident while in the line of duty in the United Arab Emirates earlier this month. His untimely passing while supporting our Nation's mission to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria is a reminder of the risks our brave servicemen and -women place themselves in each and every day to protect our country.

Staff Sergeant Grotjan, who went by the name of Grot, was born in Waterford there is a sign that reads: 'Fly free with the angels.'"

Mr. Speaker, I know that I join with all of Connecticut and the whole House in offering our thoughts and prayers to Staff Sergeant Grotjan's wife, Taylor; his mother, Laura; his father, Randy; his seven brothers and sisters; family; and friends, and pray that he will "fly free with the angels."

CELEBRATING THE 28th ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In 1990, the bipartisan effort to identify disability rights as civil rights became law.

This Saturday his family and friends will gather in the garden to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the ADA. The sculpture displays 83 clear cranes in the middle of the garden that represent those who lost their lives.

As he would say, "Fly free with the angels."