

THE JOHN S. MCCAIN NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of 2019, NDAA, provides crucial resources to our Armed Forces and our national defense. Although I have serious concerns with this law, many of its provisions play a vital role in strengthening our national security.

I championed numerous initiatives in this law that directly benefit the people of Maryland and our nation as a whole. The NDAA increases pay for our brave men and women in uniform by 2.6 percent. It authorizes essential funding for Federal agencies in Maryland, including the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command. It includes resources for important infrastructure projects in Maryland, such as cleanup efforts in Edgewood and Aberdeen Proving Ground and road improvements at Fort Meade. It also ensures that the mission of the Defense Information Systems Agency and those working on it at Fort Meade will continue and protects thousands of jobs from potential loss.

I also support the NDAA's reforms to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. These reforms, which I debated and supported in the Senate Banking Committee, balance our ability to maintain an open environment for foreign direct investment and to protect our national security. The reforms are essential in responding to foreign nations that strive to gain a strategic advantage over the United States through the acquisition of our advanced technologies.

However, I find several elements of this law detrimental to our national security. For instance, the law eliminates the requirement for congressional authorization for the development of low-yield nuclear weapons. It also authorizes \$65 million in funding for a new low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile, an unnecessary new weapon that increases the risk of miscalculation and unintended escalation.

In addition, the NDAA authorizes over \$716 billion in defense funding for fiscal year 2019, a \$133 billion increase in the defense budget since President Trump assumed office. I look forward to working with the Defense Department to ensure additional funds are prioritized to improve readiness, enhance training, and focus our procurements on tomorrow's challenges—particularly those in the information space—but this steep expansion in military spending may reduce the Pentagon's incentives to address cost overruns of weapons systems. This dramatic increase in defense spending follows massive tax cuts for the wealthy and proposals from the administration to slash healthcare and other basic needs for middle-class families, which sets a fiscal course that weakens the Nation's long-term prosperity and security.

Furthermore, in his fiscal year 2019 budget request for the Defense Department, President Trump elevated the possibility of great power conflict with China. Secretary of Defense Mattis reiterated this in the 2019 National Defense Strategy, asserting that China was a "revisionist power" and "strategic competitor using predatory economics" to its advantage. Despite this, Republican conferees stripped a bipartisan provision that imposed tough sanctions on ZTE—a Chinese telecommunications company that has stolen U.S. technology, repeatedly violated our laws, and poses an espionage threat. Republicans removed this critical provision at the request of President Trump, who tweeted his intention to provide ZTE with sanctions relief because "Too many jobs in China lost." I remain deeply disappointed that Republican conferees caved to White House pressure and ZTE's lobbying efforts at the expense of the American people and our national security. I will continue to work with like-minded colleagues in the Senate to hold ZTE accountable.

Ultimately, however, the benefits of this law—for our country, for our security, and for the American people—outweigh my concerns; therefore, I voted in support of the fiscal year 2019 NDAA.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES DOWD

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Charles Dowd of Deer Lodge County, MT for his honorable service in uniform at a pivotal time in our Nation's history and as a leader in his community.

In January of 1941, at the age of 17, Charles volunteered for service at sea in the U.S. Navy. He completed boot camp in Newport, RI, and later communications school in San Diego. In September, as a basically trained radio operator, he was transferred to his first permanent duty station: Pearl Harbor, HI. Three months later, he would take his place in history.

On Sunday morning, December 7, just after completing a night shift, he and his fellow shipmates came under attack by more than 300 enemy aircraft. The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service conducted a successful military strike on the heart of the U.S. Pacific Fleet—destroying or severely damaging 21 ships and claiming the lives of 2,400 Americans. In only a t-shirt and trousers, he sprinted from the barracks to the armory, where he climbed to the roof with a .30-06 Springfield rifle and began firing at the pilots of low-flying torpedo bombers. He suffered burns on his arms and neck from the nearby USS *California*, which was engulfed in flames.

Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Charles volunteered for duty in Solomon Islands during the bloody Guadalcanal campaign, where he earned the nickname "Devil Dog Dowd," harkening to the marines of

Belleau Wood in World War One. Once U.S. forces secured the islands, Dowd would climb a signal tower on the island of Tulagi and message a nearby destroyer that he was willing to exchange duties with any willing radioman. The ship's commodore, CAPT Arleigh Burke, accepted his request. Burke would later reach the rank of four-star admiral and serve as Chief of Naval Operations. In Burke's stateroom, Dowd shared his experiences at Pearl Harbor and Tulagi. Burke was so impressed by Dowd's fighting spirit, that he assigned Dowd as his flag radioman.

During the course of his service, Dowd was awarded seven Bronze Star medals. After the war, Charles and his wife returned stateside, where he worked in masonry and carpentry construction, before completing his degree at the University of Florida. After graduation, he spent the next 18 years passing on his knowledge of industrial arts and drafting to high school students. An avid sportsman with a passion for the outdoors, Dowd later relocated to Anaconda, MT. He has been an active member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, dedicated to preserving the memory of the events of World War II and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Charles continues to speak for civic groups and museums around the State.

It is my privilege to honor the life of this esteemed Montanan, who contributed so much to the preservation of freedom and improving the lives of others. On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to thank Charles, whose courage and selfless dedication to others are a hallmark for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO RICKY RALEY

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Purple Heart recipient Mr. Ricky Raley for his valiant service in the Indiana National Guard Alpha Company, Task Force 1-151. Also known as the Avengers, Task Force 1-151 covered more than 250,000 miles in convoy escorts and were continuously involved in combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Ricky served in Iraq from 2007 to 2008 and was stationed near Tikrit at COB Speicher. He served as a lead gun truckdriver for various patrols and security missions. In 2008, Ricky's truck activated an improvised explosive device, leaving Ricky with sustained traumatic brain injuries.

On April 17, 2009, Ricky was involved in a car accident causing paralysis from the waist down. Since then, Ricky has joined the Boot Campaign, a non-profit organization providing life-improving programs for veterans and military families. He also works with the Paralyzed Veterans of America, serving on the board of directors for the Kentucky-Indiana Chapter.

To remain active, Ricky has become a devoted handcyclist, training up to 6 days a week. Currently, Ricky is