

Duckworth Applauds Senate Passage Of Bipartisan NDAA That Gives Troops A Raise, Supports Servicemembers, Bolsters Readiness And More

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years and is a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), secured several important provisions in the *Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* that passed Congress today to support our servicemembers, enhance strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, improve logistics to bolster readiness and energy resiliency as well as continue to restore

American competitiveness. The legislation, which now heads to the House of Representatives, also includes a 5.2% pay raise for our troops.

“The brave men and women in uniform who serve our nation at home and abroad deserve to know that our country fully supports them as they and their families sacrifice to defend our country and our Constitution,” said Duckworth. “While I do not support every provision in this bipartisan compromise, I’m proud the bill we passed includes a well-deserved pay raise for our troops and several of my provisions to support our servicemembers, improve military readiness, ensure Reservists are more fairly compensated for their skills, enhance strategic partnerships and strengthen our national security. I’m glad the Senate passed this bipartisan legislation today to send a message to our troops that we have their backs and I hope the House sends it to the President as soon as possible.”

Each year, the NDAA authorizes funding for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), sets our nation’s defense policy and ensures that our servicemembers have the tools they need to defend our nation.

Additional key Duckworth provisions included in this year’s NDAA would

Support a Strong and Ready Total Force by:

1. **Compensating Reservists for their Skills** by amending the requirement for DoD to pay reservists incentive and special duty pays at the same rate as their active-duty counterparts to allow the Department of Defense to pay out specific, individual incentive pays that are intended to compensate servicemembers for having a specific skill or taking on a hazardous duty, allowing for better implementation of the program.
2. **Paying Reservists for Maintaining their Proficiency** by requiring that Reserve Component servicemembers be paid for flight hours they are required to fly to maintain their proficiency.
3. **Supporting Community Schools and Kids** by authorizing an additional \$50 million for school districts to receive critical Impact Aid from the DoD, rectifying state and local tax base funding shortfalls due to the presence of federal property in their district.
4. **Adding Flexibility for Aiding Military Families in Need** by expanding the Secretary of Defense’s discretionary ability to waive consideration of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) as income when determining eligibility for the Basic Needs Allowance, a program to provide additional resources for military families with a gross household income below 150% of the federal poverty line.
5. **Ensuring Recognition of Underrepresented Veterans** by extending time to review World War I valor medals from six years to eight years in response to

significant review delays by the Task Force. This review was originally authorized in the FY2020 NDAA to make sure that minority Veterans are recognized equitably.

6. **Understanding the Factors that Harm Retention** by addressing the military services' inconsistent and ineffective use of exit surveys, which prevents them from gathering important data about the reasons why servicemembers choose to leave the military.

Lead in the Indo-Pacific Region by:

- **Better Training Our Partners in Southeast Asia.** Duckworth's [*Southeast Asia Partnership Expansion Act*](#) is included in this NDAA to help expand and fund critical training opportunities to build interoperability with our Southeast Asian partners, improving our cooperation on cybersecurity.
 - Duckworth said of the bill: **“By working more closely with our partners across Southeast Asia, we can continue to bolster our cyber capabilities and interoperability and help these key partners better protect against cyber-attacks. I’m proud this was included in the bill and will build on the success of the pilot program I wrote into a previous NDAA—helping enhance our mutual cyber security, resilience and readiness.”**

Build the Logistics Enterprise for a Combat-Credible Deterrent by:

- **Improving Energy Security for Our Troops Overseas and Partner Militaries.** A modified version of Duckworth's [*Energy Security for Overseas Troops Act*](#) is included in this NDAA to conduct a feasibility study regarding a DoD program for collaboration between U.S. forces and partner militaries to implement new operational energy solutions that improve energy resilience and reduce reliance on fossil fuels, critical for militaries operating on islands or in remote locations in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Duckworth said of the bill: **“Through working with our allies and partners across the globe, we can find innovative solutions to bolster our overseas operational energy capabilities in contested environments and help ensure the men and women in uniform are not put at risk because of energy supply chain issues. I’m proud this modified version of my bill was included in the NDAA because it will help improve military readiness, enhance the safety of our troops and increase energy resilience.”**

Tackle Climate Change and Defend the Environment by:

- **Reducing DoD Consumption of Single-Use Plastics** with an increased investment of \$3 million in a proven DoD program that evaluates sustainable products for military use.

Restore American Competitiveness by:

- **Enhancing U.S. Army Helicopter Pilots' Situational Awareness** through increased investment to develop and evaluate a modular, open systems architecture binocular helmet-mounted display system to provide a synthetic vision capability, critical to AH-64E Apache helicopter missions in all weather conditions.

In this year's NDAA negotiations, **Duckworth also secured language to ensure DoD charts a sustainable future for C-40 aircraft.** The Senate committee report, published earlier in the year, recognizes the Air Force's decision to retain C-40 aircraft—like those flown by the 932nd Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base—in the coming fiscal years. The conference committee required the Air Force to provide Congress with its plan for the long-term future of the aircraft.