



Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, & Related Agencies
Military Installations and BRAC Overview Budget Hearing
March 26, 2019

Today we welcome back The Honorable Robert B. McMahon, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment and our top 4 Service Installations Chiefs: Lieutenant General Gwen Bingham, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, US Army; Vice Admiral Dixon R. Smith, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Readiness, and Logistics; Major General Vincent A. Coglianesse, Commander, Marine Corps Installations Command and Assistant Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics (Facilities); and Brigadier General John Allen, Jr., Air Force Director of Civil Engineers Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection.

We certainly have a lot to discuss this morning. The budget request supports our men and women in the military, supports readiness and works toward addressing much needed military construction needs of older facilities. The FY2020 budget request for military construction and family housing is \$11.4 billion, an increase of \$910 million dollars above the FY2019 enacted level.

Unfortunately, the request also includes \$7.2 billion dollars for construction of a wasteful border wall in OCO, in which would be \$3.6 billion dollars for a new installment of the wall and \$3.6 billion dollars to back fill the projects whose money was stolen to fund this boondoggle.

Let me be clear. I do not intend to use MilCon dollars to fund this wall, and if the Administration follows through and steals money from previously approved projects, the Chairwoman's mark will not provide funding for backfill.

It is troubling that the Administration would want to use the military construction program to construct a wall when the program has ranged from only 1% to 4.6% of the total Department of Defense budget since 1990.

Military construction supports servicemembers and their families. The idea that construction of a border wall takes precedence for this Administration over our servicemembers' safety and readiness is unconscionable.

Additionally, military construction funding should be used to correct other vulnerabilities, such as coastal and riverine flooding, drought, wildfires, and thawing permafrost.

What is most outrageous about this unconscionable raid on our military readiness and national security is that the Department of Defense has consistently reported that 32 percent of facilities are in fair or poor

condition and yet, the President thinks it's okay to divert these badly needed funds for an unnecessary wall for a non-existent emergency that was rejected in a bipartisan, bicameral vote.

Over time, gradual sea level changes magnify the impacts of storm surge, and may eventually result in permanent inundation of property. There are bases that experience massive coastal flooding that regularly floods runways today, for example.

We need to ensure that all life, health and safety issues are addressed, and that we are not frivolously spending military construction funds on un-necessary and non-requested projects.

With that said, the FY2020 budget request does include some beneficial items.

The budget includes \$211 million dollars for critical health and safety repairs for family housing across all installations. And while it is critical to make sure the families of our servicemembers are safe and adequately provided for, *especially during deployments*, I want to know why the private companies aren't picking up these costs because that was the deal: *we* provide the tenants and guarantee funding, and they provide the upkeep and repairs. This is a major red flag that flies in the face of the privatization decision that was made years ago.

The budget request also includes necessary funding for schools and hospitals.

The FY 2020 Budget request includes \$552.4 million dollars for reserve component construction which is \$87 million or 15.7 percent above the FY 2019 enacted level.

As you can see we have many important issues to discuss. I believe this hearing is a great opportunity to identify those crucial areas where we can do more to serve those who serve us.