

**Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (TX-34) Remarks
House Committee on Armed Services
Member Day Hearing
Wednesday, May 20, 2025, at 10:00AM
4 minutes**

Suggested Remarks:

Thank you, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith for holding today's Member Day hearing.

As you prepare to draft the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026, I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the Committee and discuss two pressing infrastructure issues at the Naval Air Station Kingsville (NASK):

A new "Pass & Tag Facility" and "Fire Station Training Facility."

Located in the 34th Congressional District of Texas, the Naval Air Station Kingsville (NASK) plays a critical role in training the next generation of U.S.

Navy and Marine Corps aviators since it first opened in 1942.

Today, NAS Kingsville is home to Training Air Wing Two and trains nearly 50 percent of Navy and Marine Corps' tactical jet pilots each year.

Last year, I was incredibly excited to bring former Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro to tour NAS Kingsville and discuss ongoing efforts to improve the well-being of the base and its personnel.

NAS Kingsville is not only a premier location for jet and strike aviation training but also plays a vital role in the region's local economy.

The installation is economically important as it employs over 4,000 employees, including over 1,800 active-duty military personnel. It also contributed at least \$1 billion to the Texas economy in 2023.

As you can see, NAS Kingsville plays a crucial role not only to my district but the nation as a whole.

That is why we must act quickly to address these long overdue infrastructure issues.

The installation's current pass & tag facility is located 1.3 miles beyond the South Entry Control Point (ECP), requiring gate security personnel to escort visitors and contractors over a mile into the installation before they can obtain credentials.

This poses a significant security risk for NAS Kingsville, delays vehicle entry into the base, and places an additional burden on base security personnel.

Then there is the issue of NAS Kingsville's fire station which was built in 1956 and is in desperate need of renovation or replacement.

This facility is too small to accommodate modern firefighting equipment and is plagued by a variety of issues including a leaking roof, mildew, and ineffective climate control—in case I need to remind anyone here, it gets very hot in South Texas.

NASK is requesting funding to renovate and expand the fire station to both accommodate modern firefighting apparatus, train NASK firefighters, and increase quality of life for on-duty first responders.

For years, NAS Kingsville command has requested funding to complete the new “Pass & Tag Facility” and “Fire Station Training Facility.”

However, they have been unsuccessful as the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) requires projects to be included in the “Futures Years Defense Program” or “Unfunded Priority List” to be eligible for funding.

Last year I introduced two amendments to the FY25 NDAA highlighting the importance of these two projects for NAS Kingsville, but they were not made in order. I

urge you and your colleagues to consider including similar language in this year’s NDAA.

Thank you, and I yield back the remainder of my time.