

EMILY RANDALL
06TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

INDIAN & INSULAR AFFAIRS
FEDERAL LANDS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT &
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HEALTH CARE & FINANCIAL
SERVICES
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE

1531 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-5916

DISTRICT OFFICES

345 6TH STREET SUITE 500
BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

98337
PHONE: (360) 373-9725

1102 A STREET SUITE 326
TACOMA, WASHINGTON 98402
PHONE: (253) 272-3515

May 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chair
Committee on Armed Services
2118 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2118 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities for the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). My district is home to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PSNS-IMF), the Army Reserve Center in Tacoma, Naval Base Kitsap Bremerton and Naval Hospital Bremerton. More than 15,000 active-duty servicemembers, reservists, and their families call Washington's 6th District home. I share your goals to ensure that our servicemembers and their families receive the support they deserve and have earned, and that our defense infrastructure addresses the evolving demands of our national security. I urge the Committee to include the following four priorities as you develop this year's NDAA.

Strengthening Relocation Support for Military Families During Permanent Change of Stations (PCS) Moves

In the Washington State Legislature, I spearheaded the creation of a law designed to bolster transition support for military-connected students, making it easier for them to enroll, transfer credits, and access necessary services following a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move. Building on this foundation, I will soon be introducing the bipartisan Assuring Navigation of Compact Help for Ongoing Relocations (ANCHOR) for Military Families Act, and I strongly encourage the Committee to include this bill in the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act.

The ANCHOR Act seeks to enhance support for military families during PCS moves by establishing clearer and more standardized relocation guidance. While all 50 states and Washington, D.C., have adopted the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), many military families remain unaware of its benefits, especially regarding school enrollment, credit transfers, and continuity of special education services. This information gap

can lead to unnecessary stress and disruption for families, particularly those with children in special education or enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

Under this legislation, the Department of Defense (DoD) would be required to provide standardized relocation information at least 45 days before a PCS move. This information would be shared through existing channels, such as PCS briefings and the Military OneSource platform, covering key areas like:

- **Education Support:** Guidance on MIC3 rights, coordination for IEP/504 Plans, and timelines for school transitions.
- **Spouse Employment Resources:** Assistance for career continuity and job relocation.
- **Housing Guidance:** Information about on-base, off-base, and temporary housing options.
- **Mental Health Services:** Resources to help manage PCS-related stress and maintain ongoing care.
- **Legal and Financial Counseling:** Tools to assist with lease terminations, relocation costs, and other common issues.
- **Community Integration:** Information about childcare, local services, and base-community resources.

This legislation has received strong support from military family stakeholders and educational leaders, including endorsements from Blue Star Families (BSF), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASSP), and the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP).

This legislation does not create new federal programs; instead, it builds on existing platforms and resources to provide meaningful and timely support. With military families moving an average of every 2.5 years, the ANCHOR for Military Families Act ensures they are well-informed and supported before arriving at a new duty station, ultimately strengthening family readiness and mission success.

Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP)

The Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) is crucial for improving infrastructure in communities around military installations. By funding various off-base projects, DCIP enhances military readiness and addresses the everyday needs of service members and their families. This program supports essential elements like transportation networks, water systems, educational facilities, and emergency services, ensuring access to safe and supportive communities.

DCIP aims to strengthen ties between military bases and their neighboring areas. Communities across the nation, including mine, are eager to partner with the Department of Defense (DoD) on initiatives that improve safety and quality of life. There's a significant need for support in multimodal transportation projects in my district and increasing funding authorization would help these communities secure the resources needed to address these issues.

The program's success also reveals its limitations. Since its launch, demand for DCIP funding has far exceeded available resources. For example, in FY20, 109 applications were submitted, but only 16 projects received funding. Over the past five years, the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) has funded only 78 projects, totaling \$396 million in federal support, and leveraging an additional \$270 million from state and local governments.

In FY24, just 14 projects were funded under the current \$100 million authorization, highlighting the urgent need to expand DCIP's funding to support high-impact initiatives. Without increased federal investment, many vital infrastructure proposals might remain unrealized. I urge the Committee to prioritize this important initiative to enhance installation resilience and improve the lives of service members and their families.

Expanding Defense Contracting Opportunities for Employee-Owned Businesses

The Committee should consider including language in the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to expand the pilot program created in the FY22 NDAA that supports contracting with companies wholly owned by Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). One recommended change to consider is having DoD use noncompetitive follow-on contracts with ESOP-owned businesses that have demonstrated satisfactory or better past performance.

This change would not alter the process of awarding initial contracts or affect the current small business preferences established under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Instead, it would give contracting officers an additional means to efficiently secure follow-on acquisitions from qualified companies that have already proven their value and reliability.

My district is home to companies like SAFE Boats International, an ESOP-owned firm that manufactures Coastal Interceptor Vessels (CIVs) for the U.S. Navy and international partners. Their success story exemplifies how employee ownership can foster workforce stability and deliver strong results for the Department. I appreciate the Committee's previous backing in the FY22 NDAA for encouraging contracts with ESOP-owned firms, and I look forward to collaborating to strengthen and expand upon this foundation.

The proposed pilot program has the potential to broaden participation in the defense industrial base, support long-term retention within the defense workforce, and assess whether fully employee-owned companies can be effective and sustainable partners in meeting our national security needs.

Access to Health Care at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs)

Ensuring reliable access to health care at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) is crucial for the readiness and well-being of our servicemembers and their families. In my district, we've noticed a worrying trend of significant service reductions at local MTFs, which burdens nearby civilian medical systems and leaves military families without timely access to care.

This decline has particularly affected obstetric and inpatient mental health services. Our local Naval hospital has closed its emergency room and labor and delivery unit, with the last

obstetrician-gynecologist (OBGYN) expected to leave soon. As a result, families must travel long distances for essential treatments, imposing significant logistical and emotional strains.

We must reverse this trend and restore core services at military treatment facilities, especially in regions with large military populations. I urge the Committee to take action to address this decline and ensure the Department of Defense prioritizes high-quality care. Whether through increased funding, retaining essential specialties, or improving coordination with civilian health care networks, we need to safeguard the military health care system and support those who serve.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to present my priorities for the FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act to the Committee. I truly value the leadership of the Chair, Ranking Member, and the rest of the Committee and the hard work of the dedicated staff who make this important work possible throughout the year. My team and I are eager to assist in any way we can and are more than happy to provide any additional information the Committee may require regarding the topics we've discussed.

In service of Washington's 6th district,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily Randall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congresswoman Emily Randall
Washington's 6th District