

Amendment to the Chairman’s Mark

Offered by Representatives Lee, Yarmuth, Higgins, Khanna, Jayapal, Jackson Lee, and Schakowsky

Eliminate Unrequested Overseas Contingency Operations Funding

1. Decrease budget authority and outlays for Function 970 (Overseas Contingency Operations) by the following amounts in billions of dollars to limit funding to levels our military commanders say are needed for 2018.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
BA	10.000									
Outlays	4.963	2.693	1.262	0.537	0.228	0.081	0.023	0.006		

2. Make all necessary and conforming changes to the Chairman’s mark.
3. Amend the committee report to reflect the following policy assumptions:

The Budget Control Act of 2011 allows discretionary caps to be automatically increased for overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding, which has created a large loophole that has been used to circumvent discretionary funding caps. This practice has implications for the budget’s bottom line and the effectiveness of our military. It obfuscates the true cost of regular government operations, disincentivizes tradeoffs in the budget, and inhibits long-term planning. In short, it is bad budgeting.

Both the Pentagon and Congress have abused this loophole by designating non-war related funding as “OCO.” The Pentagon has funded through the OCO designation billions of dollars of costs associated with active-duty end strength, operating requirements, and weapon system upgrades that normally would be funded within the “base” budget. Likewise, Congress has increasingly turned to this gimmick. It passed an appropriations bill for 2017 that adds an additional \$18 billion in OCO funds above the previous administration’s request, largely for non-war activities.

If discretionary caps are too low and additional funding is needed to address the country’s priorities, Congress should raise the caps by amending the law, rather than through using backdoor loopholes that undermine the integrity of the budget process. Congress owes it to the American people that the government allocate their tax dollars in a transparent manner and in a way that ensures that government runs efficiently and effectively. It

especially owes the men and women who serve in our military the funding certainty they need to plan so they can carry out the missions the country gives them.

Accordingly, in its capacity as custodian of the budget process, the House Budget Committee will endeavor to end this practice.