



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup – Fiscal Year 2015 Defense Appropriations Bill June 10, 2014 Opening Statement As Prepared

Our highest priority as a nation must be our national security – to protect American interests at home and abroad. Reflecting this, the bill before you today targets \$570.4 billion in discretionary funding to important programs that support our brave warfighters and their families; that help ensure the success of our military missions; and that keep all Americans as safe as possible in an ever-changing world.

A strong military begins with well-cared-for service men and women. This bill fully funds the authorized 1.8 percent pay raise for the military – instead of the 1 percent that the President requested. This ensures that our more than 1.3 million active-duty troops and 820,000 Guard and reserve troops have the quality of life they deserve during their service.

In addition, the bill provides \$31.6 billion for the Defense Health Program to care for our troops, their families, and retirees. Within this total, the bill includes increases above the President's request for cancer research, traumatic brain injury research, psychological health research, and suicide prevention outreach programs. The bill also addresses an ongoing challenge facing our military, increasing Sexual Assault Prevention and Response programs by \$50 million above last year's level.

This legislation also prioritizes critical readiness programs and the procurement of resources needed to maintain the most capable and effective military in the world – now and into the future.

Targeted increases are made to important defense technology R&D to help advance the safety and success of our military operations. We have also increased funding to procure the equipment needed to maintain our military readiness. These platforms, weapons, and other equipment help train our troops, maintain our force, and conduct successful military operations. Other funding in this bill supports key readiness programs, flight time and battle training, facility maintenance and base operations.

Lastly, the bill provides \$79.4 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding to support our troops in Afghanistan. This funding will require further evaluation, however, as we have yet to receive an official budget request that reflects current status of our troops in the field.

While this bill funds the core duties of the Department of Defense, it also fulfills our duty to be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars. The bill reflects commonsense decisions to save taxpayer dollars wherever possible and help encourage greater efficiency within the Department of Defense. For example, this bill rescinds \$965 million of unused, prior-year funding.

I will note that none of the reductions or rescissions in this bill will affect the safety or success of our troops and missions.

For that, I would like to thank the Chairman, Ranking Member and the Subcommittee, as I know that achieving these savings was not without a good deal of work and a sharp eye for detail. Thank you, also, to the staff for their support and dedication to creating a fine piece of legislation.

I am proud to put my support behind this bipartisan bill today, and I urge the Committee to approve it today.

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