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Chairwoman Granger's Opening Statement on Defense Spending Bill for FY18

WASHINGTON, DC – House Defense Appropriations Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-Texas) today delivered the following opening statement at the [full House Appropriations Committee's markup](#) of the defense spending bill:

“Today we are marking up the defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2018.

“Congress’s number one responsibility is to provide for the defense of this nation. It is this bill that fulfills that most fundamental constitutional duty.

“The world is more dangerous and unstable than any time in recent history. Our adversaries – North Korea, Russia, China and Iran – continue to become more aggressive. Terrorist threats from ISIS, al Qaeda and their affiliates continue. Technological advances are creating new and more lethal threats.

“Since becoming chair, I have made it my priority to listen first and foremost to our defense and intelligence experts so that we can ensure they have what they need to face both current and future threats.

“The bill before you reflects the advice we received from them. It provides Secretary Mattis with the resources he needs to implement his plan to restore our military.

“The subcommittee held numerous briefings, hearings, and hot spots meetings to ensure we had the most accurate and current information needed to write this bill.

“It has been an honor to work with my ranking member, Mr. Visclosky. His knowledge and passion for our national security have been extremely valuable.

“I want to thank Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey. Your strong leadership enables this subcommittee to do what is necessary to provide for our national security. I also want to thank all members of the committee and subcommittee for your ideas on how we can best address the needs of our military. This bill incorporates your ideas and priorities. The bill also takes into account the over 5,000 requests submitted by our committee and house colleagues.

“Today we are taking the next step to help Secretary Mattis’ plan by continuing to address military readiness but also beginning critical investments in increasing capabilities, lethality, and modernization.

“The bill provides a total of \$658 billion for fiscal year 2018. This is \$28 billion above the president’s request, and \$60 billion over last year.

The levels in the bill match the levels of the authorization committee.

“General Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, ‘The U.S. military’s competitive advantage against potential adversaries is eroding. Over the last decade, sustained operational commitments, budgetary instability, and advances by our adversaries have threatened our ability to project power and we have lost our advantage in key warfighting areas.’”

This bill addresses his concerns regarding readiness and modernization requirements by:

- Fully funding end strength growth requested in the budget;
- Fully funding the 2.4 percent pay;
- \$1 billion above the request for key programs to prepare our troops, including the national guard and reserve, for training, equipment, maintenance, spare parts and base operations.

Depot maintenance is funded at \$16.6 billion to get our planes and ships back in working order.

- \$1.1 billion above the request for army ground mobility, including \$855 million to ensure our army brigade combat teams are fully equipped;
- \$4.3 billion above the request to maintain our air superiority. The bill increases quantities of key platforms such as Joint Strike Fighters, Super Hornets, Chinooks, Lakotas, Ospreys, Black Hawks, and C-130s;
- \$1.6 billion is added above the request to provide for 11 Navy ships, including one carrier replacement, 3 littoral combat ships, 2 guided missile destroyers, two attack submarines, and 1 expeditionary sea-base;
- Full funding to continue the Ohio replacement submarine program;
- \$84 billion, an increase of \$10 billion over the current year, for research, development, test and evaluation to ensure we can maintain our technological edge against our adversaries;
- \$37 billion for defense health programs, including \$644 million for critical research programs.

“Secretary Mattis said, ‘Without sustained, sufficient, and predictable funding, I assess that within 5 years we will lose our ability to project power; the basis of how we defend the homeland, advance U.S. interests, and meet our alliance commitments.’”

To ensure this does not happen, the bill includes \$28.6 billion, above the president's request, for a National Defense Restoration Fund. This fund is available to the secretary to increase end strength, improve military readiness, modernize equipment, and invest in future technology, subject to appropriate congressional oversight.

“The secretary and the Joint Staff are expected to deliver a new defense strategy in September, a much needed update to the last review conducted in 2014. The results of that review will inform the investments we need to make to rebuild our military.

“The Defense Restoration Fund will enable the secretary to make necessary investments resulting from that review now, instead of having to wait until 2019.

“We have had an incredibly compressed timeline to put this bill together and we have produced a bill we can all be proud of. Both majority and minority staff have done an incredible job to put this bill together and we all owe them our sincere gratitude. Without their commitment and ability to work without sleep, we could not have put this bill together. I thank the majority and minority staff for really wonderful work.

“Our military has made it very clear that must predictable funding. Secretary Mattis told the subcommittee that ‘continuing resolutions -- coupled with sequestration -- blocked new programs, prevented service growth, stalled industries' initiatives and placed troops at greater risk.’”

“We must listen to our military leaders and pass the FY18 Defense Appropriations bill out of committee today.

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