

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson (PA-15)

Submission for the Record for the House Armed Services Committee Member Day Hearing on
Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act

April 26, 2022

Chairman Smith, and Ranking Member Rogers:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities for Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). As a Member of Congress, I strive to meet the needs of our servicemen and women. I am the father of an active-duty soldier who received a Purple Heart during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a firm believer in the importance of a strong national defense, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to be here today and share my priorities for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23).

I recognize the challenges placed before the Committee and appreciate your ongoing commitment to our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen even when difficult choices must be made. Despite these tough choices, you recognize the troops are on the front lines, in danger, defending the freedoms we all hold so dear. It is imperative our country always maintains the lethality and strategic edge it has had for decades. It is our duty to maintain and ensure robust funding for the defense of our nation.

The most critical asset in the defense of our nation are the men and women who choose to serve. Every day, servicemembers choose to put their lives on the line to uphold our values and Constitution. Not only do they themselves make life changing sacrifices, but so do their families. Therefore, in order to have the most lethal and effective military in the world, our personnel and families deserve to have their most basic needs addressed. This starts with military housing.

For several years now, military housing has been plagued with widespread complaints of neglect, unsafe conditions such as mold, lead-based paint, asbestos, poor water quality and sewage, and careless repairs. The Department of Defense has taken steps to ensure tenants receive quality housing and fair treatment, however, servicemembers do not have a centralized assessment tool to identify, rate, and compare housing.

Therefore, it is my hope the Committee will consider inclusion of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 7144 – the Military Housing Transparency and Accountability Act, in the FY23 NDAA. This legislation establishes a tool and database for all military housing, including privatized and unaccompanied. Specifically, the tool will include several features for servicemembers to use, including an anonymous reporting option. With the current operational tempo as high as it is, our servicemembers deserve to come home to a comfortable, well-maintained home. This bill is an additional step in the right direction for us to provide just that.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine have taught us the importance of having a strong, efficient, and effective domestic supply chain. Thus, it is critical we continue to strengthen our Buy American policies. We cannot allow our military to lack equipment, parts for maintenance, or suffer delays to production. As such, we should consider investing additional funds into Additive Manufacturing. Additive Manufacturing will reduce manufacturing times by

60% at an affordable cost. This program could reduce weight of systems and optimize the manufacturing process to ensure parts can be manufactured fast enough, without defects, at a cost structure meeting overall U.S. military performance requirements.

The United States military has always had a dominating presence, which includes sustaining our overall readiness. Maintaining an edge requires our military technologies be a step ahead of our adversaries. In a time when we face unprecedented challenges from near-peer actors who are making strides in the development of hypersonic weapons and other new programs, we must invest in our own advanced technologies.

As we continue to prepare for the future by optimizing those technologies, we must also ensure our Navy remains the tip of the spear by rebuilding and maintaining its capabilities. Our sailors regularly face aggressive action when navigating our world's waters. The U.S. Navy has taken serious steps in developing and investing into proven programs ensuring the freedom of navigation for all. For instance, we must continue to support evolutionary modifications to programs like the MK 48 MOD 7 Heavyweight Torpedo, which will maintain its capabilities while improving range and payload. Additionally, the lightweight torpedo program designs, integrates, and tests the LWT MK 54 torpedo to make it more effective in shallow water. This type of research and development will give our sailors the edge they need to face our adversaries.

As a former health care professional, I respectfully request we continue to support and fund vital Department of Defense research programs. These include research programs for Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Breast and Ovarian Cancer, as well as the Peer Reviewed Orthopedic Research Program. I strongly believe making critical investments in medical research at the federal level will improve the well-being of our nation, veterans, and active-duty military. I also urge continued research into the long-term effects of Traumatic Brain Injury, PTSD and suicide.

Finally, we must keep in mind more than 80,000 American citizens who served in the Vietnam War, Korean War, and World War II are still missing in action. Last year, I was proud to introduce a bipartisan resolution which encourages our trading partners to continue search and recovery activities for POW/MIA members. The families and friends of these American heroes deserve no less than our greatest efforts to bring their loved one's home. Therefore, I respectfully request the Committee authorize robust funding for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in FY23.

I want to thank you Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and the members of this Committee for your continued dedication to the matters within the jurisdiction of the House Armed Services Committee. I appreciate your consideration of these priorities and look forward to working together in the future.