

**Congressman Gabe Amo (RI-01) Testimony for the Record**

**House Armed Services Committee**

**April 15, 2026**

Chairman Mike Rogers and Ranking Member Adam Smith, thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts as the House Armed Services Committee works on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027.

I strongly urge you to include strong support for the submarine industrial base. A strong submarine industrial base is essential to producing the submarines needed to meet our Navy's needs, support our national security, and defend our allies. It is also needed to produce additional submarines needed to support the Australia under the Australia, United Kingdom, United States security partnership (AUKUS). Our submarine industrial base provides high-skilled, good-paying jobs in Rhode Island and across the country, and strong support for the industry will increase the number of jobs it supports. Additionally, supporting our submarine industrial base strengthens our high-tech manufacturing capabilities for advanced technologies, which can also support other defense and commercial industries.

Additionally, I strongly urge you to maintain the authorization for two Virginia-class submarines. The production of two Virginia-class submarines is essential to meeting our Navy's needs in the Indo-Pacific and to providing Australia with Virginia-class submarines under AUKUS. Furthermore, the production of two Virginia-class submarines supports workers in Rhode Island and across the country.

I also strongly recommend that you include provisions that support the continuation and effectiveness of AUKUS. AUKUS is essential to maintaining free trade and security in the Indo-Pacific and enabling increased coordination on sensitive and advanced defense technology.

Inclusion of the AUKUS Improvement Act in the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, which removed duplicative approval requirements for AUKUS coordination, will help strengthen and streamline the AUKUS agreement, but we must continue to support AUKUS in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027. We must also continue to prioritize domestic research, producers, and procurement as we work on AUKUS coordination.

As part of the work to support AUKUS, I recommend that you include language to authorize APEX Accelerators to assist small businesses in acquiring procurement contracts for defense articles for AUKUS. This language was included in the *Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026* when it passed the House last year. APEX Accelerators support small businesses in navigating the complicated landscape of defense contracts. Authorizing APEX Accelerators to assist small businesses in acquiring AUKUS procurement contracts will allow them to participate in AUKUS in the future. As AUKUS continues to develop and we transition into doing more with Pillar 2, we must take this step to ensure that our small businesses are supported and included in these opportunities.

Additionally, I strongly urge you to include support for the research, development, and production of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs). UUVs provide the Navy with a low-cost solution to deploy across extended ranges in the Indo-Pacific and allow for dangerous missions to be conducted without placing service members at risk. I also recommend that you continue to support the Defense Innovation Unit's efforts to competitively demonstrate the capability of commercially available extra-large unmanned underwater vehicles (XLUUVs) to deploy large payloads across extended ranges in contested environments.

I also strongly recommend that you include language temporarily repealing the waiver authority under Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act for Azerbaijan until Azerbaijan stops its ongoing aggression against Armenia. Azerbaijan has continued to occupy Armenian territory, forcibly displacing thousands of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, and destroying Armenian heritage sites. Until Azerbaijan ceases this aggression and allow Armenians back to their homes, we must not provide military aid to Azerbaijan.

Thank you for considering these priorities in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027, which are critical to the residents I represent in Rhode Island's First Congressional District.