FOSTERING INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Countering emerging threats requires equipping our warfighters with cutting-edge technologies. The FY26 NDAA is focused on rapidly deploying innovative, new technologies that our warfighters need to prevail on future battlefields.

Expedites Innovation To The Warfighter

- Accelerates DoW's Authority to Operate (ATO) process to enable rapid software and information technology adoption.

- Authorizes the Office of Strategic Capital to collect fees to help improve the speed of application reviews.

- Establishes an initiative for Special Operations Command to test and procure innovative technologies and equipment that enhance the operational capabilities to meet emerging requirements.

- Requires DoW to review the standards, guidance, and policies that inform the use of digital engineering across the military services to help accelerate program design, development, and testing.

- Expedites program design and development by establishing a digital test and evaluation environment.

- Integrates modern software practices at DoW by establishing a pilot program to leverage commercial software innovations for test and evaluation.

- Mandates a framework to assess, track, and manage technical debt across DoW systems.

Prioritizes Biotechnology Development

- Requires DoW to develop a biotechnology strategy to govern the national security implications of emerging biotechnologies

- Fosters the development, acquisition, and sustainment of biotechnology capabilities across DoW by establishing a Biotechnology Management Office.

- Ensures military requirements allow the integration of biobased products.

- Codifies biotechnology programs that expand DoW's biomanufacturing capacity and support biotechnology innovation across the military services

The FY26 NDAA: FOSTERING INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Capitalizes On Commercial Capabilities

- Fast-tracks promising technologies by small businesses and fosters R&D and the commercialization of innovative technologies.

- Incentivizes contracting managers to look for commercial off-the-shelf solutions before entering into costly new contracts.

- Harmonizes cybersecurity requirements in defense contracts to reduce regulatory burdens on the defense industrial base.

- Improves cybersecurity and maintenance by demonstrating real-time monitoring capabilities on weapon systems.

Spurs Emerging Technologies

- Advances department-wide efforts to develop and deploy virtual environments to support artificial intelligence experimentation, training, familiarization, and development.

- Authorizes the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering to conduct developmental prototyping and provide direction to the services on research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E).

- Requires the Secretary of War to explore additional hypersonic testing corridors in the continental United States to expand access to hypersonic tests.

- Establishes an alternative test and evaluation pathway for new warfighting capabilities.

- Requires a strategy from DoW on the readiness of cryptographic systems to adopt quantum-resistant cryptographic algorithms and practices to protect DoW information and networks.

Strengthens The Innovation Workforce And Research Partnerships

- Allows the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to continue expanding its talent pool by extending the authority to temporarily assign employees from nontraditional defense contractors to the Agency.

- Expands the reach of the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) by authorizing regional outreach centers to be established either domestically or internationally.

- Codifies a program that establishes partnerships between operational Army units and national research universities, including soldiers in the early-stage problem identification process.

- Fosters collaboration between academia, industry, and DoW by developing a strategy to establish incubator programs for secure facilities and networks at select universities across the United States.

The FY26 NDAA: FOSTERING INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Accelerates Safe, Mission-Driven AI Adoption

- Bolsters DoW workforce cybersecurity skills by adding artificial intelligence-related content into mandatory training.

- Establishes artificial intelligence sandbox environments to accelerate experimentation, training, and development across DoW.

- Requires a proactive policy framework for evaluating, adopting, governing, and mitigating risks of advanced AI systems, including artificial general intelligence.

- Directs DoW to develop a policy protecting against threats unique to artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Fortifies The Nation's Cyber Defenses

- Prohibits individuals in covered nations from accessing sensitive DoW cloud computing systems.

- Establishes secure telecommunications for senior leaders and personnel conducting sensitive national security missions.

- Directs a comprehensive study on how to impose costs and reduce incentives for adversaries targeting defense-critical infrastructure in cyberspace.

Modernizes And Protects America's Cyber Warfighting

- Codifies U.S. Cyber Command's responsibilities within the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) system.

- Restricts changes to the authorities of the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command unless specific conditions are met.

- Studies options for integrating reserve components into the Cyber Mission Force.

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE