

Committee on Armed Services
118th Congress Authorization and Oversight Plan

Introduction

Providing for the common defense of the United States is one of the fundamental duties of Congress. Members of the Committee on Armed Services acutely understand this responsibility. The committee's legislative and oversight responsibilities are critical to the security of our country and that of its partners and allies around the world. That is why the committee will continue to work in a bipartisan manner to conduct oversight of the national defense.

Oversight of the national defense enterprise is complex. Each day, critical decisions are made by military and civilian personnel leading hundreds of agencies, departments, and commands located at thousands of facilities throughout the world. It is the committee's Constitutional duty to conduct the oversight of these decisions to ensure they are consistent with federal law and Congressional intent. The complexity of the current threat environment, with an on-going conflict in Europe, strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party, and shifting policy priorities at the Department of Defense makes the committee's oversight even more essential.

Comprehensive oversight is instrumental in the committee's development of the annual national defense authorization bill (NDAA), which covers the breadth of the operations of the Department of Defense (DoD), as well as the defense activities of the Department of Energy and related agencies. The committee believes that regular oversight and reauthorization of these programs and activities through enactment of an annual NDAA best supports Congress' Article I prerogatives. For over 60 years, the committee has led Congressional efforts to enact an NDAA. The annual enactment of the NDAA provides robust opportunities for congressional review and ensures national security programs and activities are carried out as Congress intends.

Jurisdiction

The committee has jurisdiction over laws, programs, and agencies under permanent authority in numerous titles of the United States Code, including title 10 (Armed Forces), title 32 (National Guard), title 37 (Pay and Allowances of the Uniformed Services), title 41 (Public Contracts), title 42 (Atomic Energy), title 46 (Shipping), and title 50 (War and National Defense).

Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the jurisdiction of the committee is as follows:

1. Ammunition depots; forts; arsenals; Army, Navy, and Air Force, and Space Force reservations and establishments.
2. Common defense generally.
3. Conservation, development, and use of naval petroleum and oil shale reserves.

4. The Department of Defense generally, including the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force generally.
5. Interoceanic canals generally, including measures relating to the maintenance, operation, and administration of interoceanic canals.
6. Merchant Marine Academy and State Merchant Marine Academies.
7. Military applications of nuclear energy.
8. Tactical intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the Department of Defense.
9. National security aspects of merchant marine, including financial assistance for the construction and operation of vessels, the maintenance of the U.S. shipbuilding and ship repair industrial base, cabotage, cargo preference, and merchant marine officers and seamen as these matters relate to national security.
10. Pay, promotion, retirement, and other benefits and privileges of members of the armed services.
11. Scientific research and development in support of the armed services.
12. Selective service.
13. Size and composition of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, and Space Force.
14. Soldiers' and sailors' homes.
15. Strategic and critical materials necessary for the common defense.
16. Cemeteries administered by the Department of Defense.

In addition to its legislative jurisdiction, the committee has special oversight functions with respect to international arms control and disarmament and the education of military dependents in schools, pursuant to clause 3(b) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

Administration of Oversight Activities

The committee carries out its oversight of the DoD and its subordinate departments and agencies, as well as portions of the Department of Energy (DoE), through public hearings, classified briefings, roundtables, and other activities involving the full committee and its standing subcommittees. Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 2(b)(2), each subcommittee with assigned topical or programmatic responsibilities conducts oversight of the programs within its jurisdiction as specified in the committee's rules. Certain issues and activities requiring more extensive, lengthy, and in-depth review may be assigned to a task force or panel pursuant to committee rules to allow for focused or cross-cutting examination. Subcommittees will be assisted by staff from the full committee at the Chair or Ranking Member's discretion to ensure that appropriate resources are available to carry out oversight activities.

Lapsed Authorizations

The annual NDAA authorizes the DoD activities that require recurrent authorization. The current NDAA for fiscal year (FY) 2023 was enacted on December 23, 2022 (P.L. 117-263). It authorizes the programs and activities of the DoD through FY2023. As a result, there are currently no lapsed authorizations within the committee's jurisdiction receiving appropriated funding in FY2023.

Programs to be Authorized in the Current Congress

The committee anticipates authorizing a wide range of DoD and DoE programs and activities in the 118th Congress. Annual funding authorizations in the FY2023 NDAA totaled over 2,800 line items, each reflective of the national security priorities of Congress. These items include procurement programs and accounts, operations and maintenance programs and accounts, military construction projects, research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) programs and accounts, nuclear weapons and associated activities, military personnel programs and accounts, military health programs and accounts, military justice programs and accounts, intelligence programs and accounts, Joint Staff and Combatant Commander accounts, and various other matters relating to the national defense. Each of these authorizations expire at the end of FY2023. The committee anticipates reviewing each these authorizations to determine whether to reauthorize them as part of the FY2024 NDAA.

Oversight to Support Authorizations

In support of the enactment of annual NDAA's during the 118th Congress, the committee will conduct numerous oversight hearings, classified briefings, roundtables, and other activities. The Committee anticipates holding public hearings and classified briefings with the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, individual service secretaries and chiefs of staff, combatant commanders, other officials of the DoD and the military departments, officials from the Intelligence Community, and the Secretary of Energy, the Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, and other officials of the DoE. In addition, the committee will seek views and perspectives from outside experts in industry, associations, advocacy organizations, and those in private life with expertise on matters of national security. The committee will work closely with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Inspector Generals (IG) from DoD agencies to eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement at the DoD. Finally, the committee expects that it will continue to receive credible reports from whistleblowers that it intends to investigate and take appropriate action when warranted.

Discretionary and Mandatory Spending

As part of its annual oversight and authorization process, the committee carefully reviews and determines whether changes need to be made to the manner in which discretionary and mandatory national security programs are carried out. If the committee determines that certain mandatory programs would be better administered through discretionary appropriations, the NDAA would carry out that change consistent with Congressional Budget Act rules and regulations. The committee will continue to conduct rigorous oversight of the mandatory programs under its jurisdiction and will implement reforms when necessary to protect beneficiaries, eliminate waste, and improve administration.

Redundant Programs and Agencies

One of the focuses of the oversight process the committee undertakes annually to produce the NDAA is identifying redundant programs or agencies in the defense enterprise. The committee has a record of enacting laws to realign, streamline, or eliminate these programs and agencies when necessary. The committee will continue to work with GAO and the DoD IG on efforts to uncover redundant and wasteful programs and to pursue legislative remedies in the NDAA.

Other Oversight Activities

The national security enterprise spans beyond the jurisdiction of the committee and includes matters in the jurisdiction of several other committees of the House of Representatives. As the committee has in past Congresses, it will continue to work closely with these committees to conduct important oversight on national security matters of shared jurisdictional interest.