



THE NEED FOR SPEED:

**STREAMLINING PROCUREMENT
FOR EFFECTIVE EXECUTION
AND DELIVERY ACT**

THE PROBLEM WITH AMERICA'S DEFENSE ACQUISITION SYSTEM:

The United States faces its most dangerous security environment since World War II. The return of great power competition—driven by China's military buildup, Russia's war in Ukraine, Iran's proxy warfare, and North Korea's nuclear provocations—demands that America maintain a credible deterrent and a decisive warfighting edge. That, in turn, requires delivering critical capabilities to our warfighters at speed and scale. Meeting this challenge calls for serious investment in the U.S. military. However, increased spending alone will not translate into meaningful capability. We must also reform the Defense Acquisition System (DAS).

The current DAS is too slow, rigid, and bureaucratic to meet today's urgent needs. The requirements process alone can take well over two years. This is followed by a rigid budget process that adds another three years, and then a lengthy contracting process. All told, **more than a decade can pass between identifying a capability gap to equipping our warfighters with a solution.** By then, the threat has changed, the technology is outdated, and the program is over budget.

The current acquisition system imposes a maze of costly compliance regulations and requirements that stifle innovation and burden companies of all sizes. The United States has the most dynamic private sector in the world, yet we fail to harness its full potential because of all this red tape. We miss out on cutting-edge commercial solutions and risk ceding our innovation advantage to adversaries who are unencumbered by a similar bureaucracy.

At the core of this dysfunction is a system that prioritizes compliance over capability, process over speed, and certitude over innovation. **The DAS' bureaucracy is optimized to avoid failure, rather than to rapidly deliver capabilities to the warfighter.** As a result, the DAS' culture is dominated by risk aversion and a checklist approach to management. When failures do occur, the response is often to add more rules and regulations instead of addressing the root causes.

These issues have done more than delay the delivery of critical capabilities to the warfighter—they have also hollowed out the defense industrial base (DIB) by discouraging new entrants and stifling competition. Many start-ups and innovative commercial companies cannot take on the compliance burden and costs currently associated with a defense contract. Additionally, **since the 1990s, the number of defense prime contractors has shrunk from 51 to 6.** Recent contingencies, including support for Ukraine and Israel, as well as operations in the Red Sea, have exposed the consequences: **the United States lacks the surge capacity to sustain a prolonged conflict.** This erosion in industrial capacity undermines U.S. deterrence, limits support to allies and partners, and risks ceding strategic advantage to our adversaries.

It's time to fundamentally reform how the Department of Defense (DoD) buys weapons. **Policymakers must recognize that acquisition policy is industrial base policy.** The fragility of today's DIB is a direct consequence of decades of well-intentioned, but ultimately misguided, acquisition regulations. Doing business with DoD is too costly, risky, and unpredictable for private industry, which drives away even the most patriotic companies.

To maintain a decisive warfighting edge, we need an acquisition system that prioritizes the delivery of capabilities to the warfighter at speed and scale in the most cost-effective manner practicable. This will require serious reforms, including reducing the complexity, cost, and risk of doing business with DoD so that innovative businesses of all sizes can contribute to national defense. **The SPEED Act implements these needed changes by establishing a new acquisition architecture centered around five key pillars of reform:**

PILLAR I. Aligning Acquisition to Warfighter Priorities and Operational Outcomes

PILLAR II. Accelerating the Requirements Process

PILLAR III. Striking the Balance Between Regulation and Efficiency

PILLAR IV: Strengthening the Defense Industrial Base and Leveraging Commercial Innovation

PILLAR V. Developing a Mission-Oriented Defense Acquisition Workforce





ALIGNING ACQUISITION TO WARFIGHTER PRIORITIES & OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

The SPEED Act shifts the DAS away from its overemphasis on compliance, process, and certitude by establishing a new central objective:

The defense acquisition system exists to expeditiously provide the armed forces with the capabilities necessary to operate effectively, address evolving threats, and maintain the military advantage of the United States in the most cost-effective manner practicable.

The SPEED Act aligns every key leader in the DAS around this mission, including the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment; the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E); the Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE); the military departments' Senior Acquisition Executives; and the Service Chiefs. In addition, it requires the Secretary of Defense to ensure that all acquisition workforce guidance upholds six key principles:

1. Mission Alignment: All activities of the DAS must contribute to the expeditious delivery of capabilities in the most cost-effective manner possible to ensure the U.S. Armed Forces can deter aggression and, if necessary, prevail in conflict.¹

2. Resource Effectiveness: The DAS must maximize the effective use of resources by delivering capabilities that provide the greatest operational impact and best value for every dollar invested, which will frequently necessitate embracing commercial solutions.²

3. Integration of Innovation: The DAS must encourage and support the rapid integration of innovative solutions to enhance military effectiveness and responsiveness to emerging threats.

4. Iterative Development: The DAS must promote an iterative approach for designing and testing solutions that enables early identification and, if warranted, elimination of failed efforts, thereby ensuring resources can quickly be redirected toward better solutions.

5. Leadership Culture: The DAS must foster a leadership and organizational culture that encourages responsible risk-taking, collaboration, and learning through iteration, adaptation, and failure.

6. Workforce Development: The DAS must ensure the acquisition workforce is properly trained and equipped with the skills necessary to effectively manage acquisition activities in line with these principles.

If the DAS is to achieve its new central objective and align with the six reform principles outlined above, the acquisition workforce, and specifically Program Executive Officers (PEO), must be empowered to drive their programs to a successful outcome. Today, despite overseeing billions of dollars in programs, PEOs lack statutory decision-making authority, clearly defined responsibilities, the discretion to make informed tradeoffs, and dedicated technical and contracting support. To address this, the SPEED Act formally designates PEOs as the senior officials responsible for the oversight of the plans, budgets, and execution of assigned programs. It also aligns key support functions under PEOs' leadership, including contracting, contract management, program management, technical and engineering authority, financial management, and developmental testing and evaluation. By granting PEOs this authority and support, the SPEED Act ensures they can be held accountable for program performance. Finally, to truly empower PEOs, they must have greater authority to manage budgets and risk across a portfolio. Accordingly, the SPEED Act requires the Secretary to designate at least two PEOs to transition to portfolio budgeting and management in accordance with recommendations from the Commission on Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) Reform.³

1 - As defined in the SPEED Act, "cost-effective" refers to the capacity to deliver better results for the same or lower cost relative to available alternatives.

2 - As defined in the SPEED Act, "best value" refers to the optimal combination of cost, quality, technical capability or solution quality, and delivery schedule of a system.

3 - Report and recommendations of the Commission on Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution Reform, established by section 1004 of the National Defense Authorization Act for the Fiscal Year 2022 found at: <https://ppbereform.senate.gov/>



Another concern with the acquisition process is the fact that Product Support Managers (PSMs) currently have limited authority or influence in the acquisition process. PSMs are charged with planning, developing, and overseeing the sustainment strategy for a weapon system throughout its life cycle. However, because of their lack of influence in the acquisition process, critical early investments in life-cycle sustainment are frequently sacrificed for short-term savings. This in turn can undermine the long-term readiness and affordability of programs. For example, to keep procurement costs down during the acquisition phase of the F-22 program, corrosion prevention measures were reduced. As a result, new aircraft were grounded in a matter of months due to corrosion, and billions of dollars were spent on preventable maintenance and repair costs.⁴ The SPEED Act addresses these concerns by elevating the role and responsibilities of PSMs and codifying the position as a critical acquisition position. In doing so, the SPEED Act ensures PSMs not only have a seat at the table for every major program, but also an authoritative voice in life-cycle sustainment and product support strategies.

Pillar 1 of the SPEED Act includes the following reforms:

Sec 101—Alignment of the Defense Acquisition System with the Needs of Members of the Armed Forces

Amends chapter 205 of title 10, United States Code, to provide that the purpose of the DAS is to ensure that the U.S. Armed Forces are expeditiously equipped with the capabilities necessary to effectively respond to national security challenges.

Sec 102—Program Executive Officer Responsibilities

Empowers PEOs by making them the senior officials responsible for the oversight of the plans, budgets, and execution of the programs assigned, including life-cycle sustainment. It focuses PEOs on management and expeditious delivery of capabilities to the warfighter in the most cost-effective manner practicable.

Sec 103—Major Capability Activity Areas and Pathfinder Programs

Directs DoD to initiate a transition plan to organize PEOs around major capability activity areas (MCAAs) as recommended by the PPBE Commission and includes pathfinder authorities to at least two PEOs to inform the transition plan.

Sec 104—Product Support Manager Responsibilities and Requirements

Elevates and strengthens the role of PSMs by making them responsible for planning and managing the activities required to field and maintain the readiness and operational capability of major weapon systems and components in support of life-cycle management.

Sec 105—Amendments to Life-Cycle Management and Product Support

Amends chapter 323 of title 10, United States Code, to strengthen and clarify requirements related to life-cycle sustainment planning and product support to ensure that systems acquired by DoD are operationally relevant, reliable, and can be operated and maintained in a cost-effective manner.

Sec 106—Navy Senior Technical Authority

Aligns each Senior Technical Authority (STA) in the Navy under the authority of a PEO and requires that any STA-imposed requirement be directly tied to a key performance parameter or key system attribute, ensuring technical support contributes to the timely delivery of capabilities.





ACCELERATING THE REQUIREMENTS PROCESS



For decades, the DAS' requirements process has struggled to keep pace with rapid technological changes and evolving threats. The traditional process—known as the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS)—has become a bureaucratic bottleneck, emphasizing documents, reviews, and rigid requirements instead of the rapid delivery of capabilities to the warfighter. It assumes that we can predict future needs years in advance, but the war in Ukraine has demonstrated that military innovation cycles are measured in weeks if not days. A paradigm shift is required that focuses on outcomes, not process.

The SPEED Act makes three critical reforms to the requirements process:

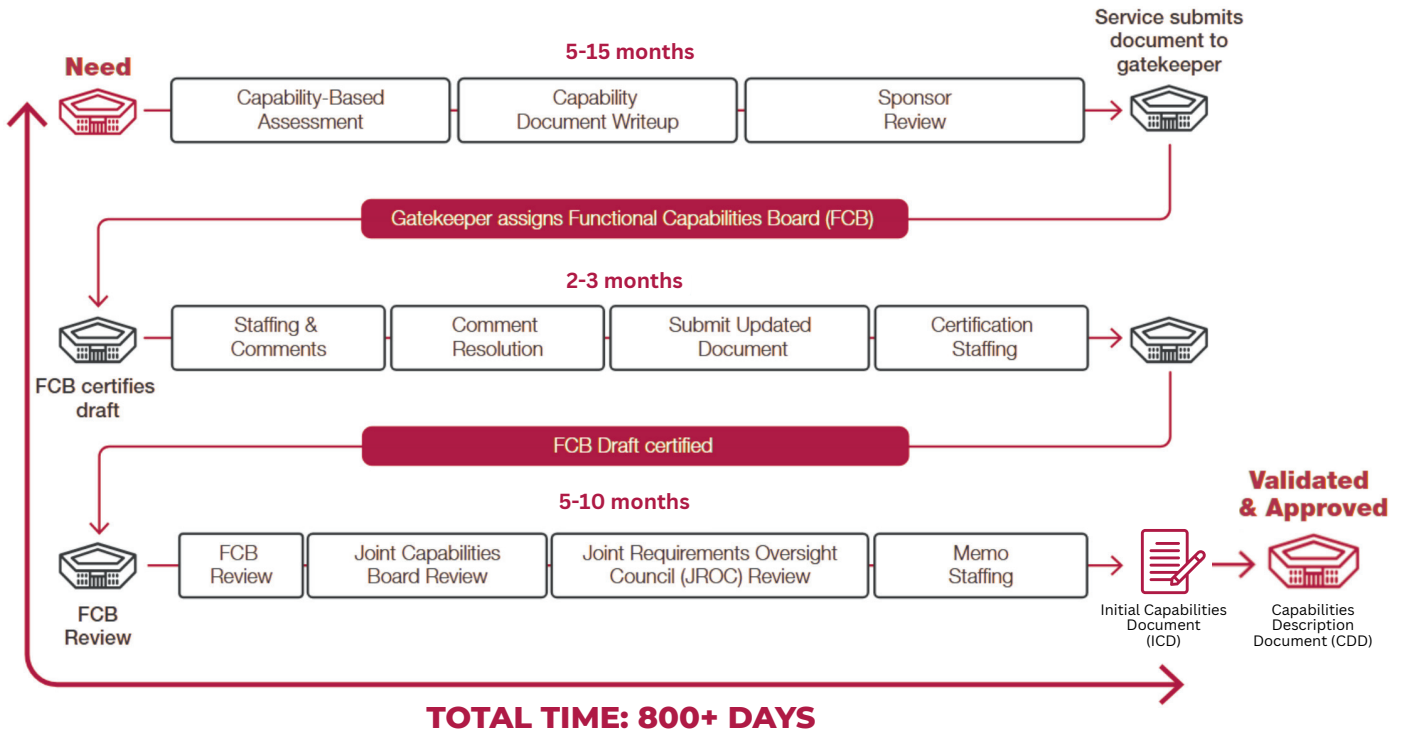
1. Transforms requirements development by redefining the role of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) and renaming it the Joint Requirements Council (JRC). Today's JROC, and the JCIDS process it oversees, is slow, inflexible, and poorly integrated with the acquisition and budget processes. It serves as a chokepoint instead of a catalyst. Under the SPEED Act, the new JRC will be relieved of the mandate to develop and validate highly specific capability documents. Instead, it will focus on assessing evolving threats and technologies, shaping future force design, and identifying the military's joint operational needs, especially those flagged by combatant commanders. JRC recommendations are required to be submitted to a newly established Directorate (more below) for consideration within 30 to 60 days, depending on the urgency of the need.

2. Establishes the Requirements, Acquisition, and Programming Integration Directorate (RAPID). This Directorate will serve as a new decision hub co-led by the Joint Staff and CAPE. RAPID will bring together key stakeholders earlier in the requirements process, ensuring timely collaboration between uniformed military, such as the combatant commanders, as well as experts in requirements, acquisition, resourcing, and engineering. These stakeholders will assess proposed solutions, evaluate costs, review experimentation results, and make actionable recommendations directly to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Importantly, the SPEED Act allows for just 90 days from the time RAPID begins evaluating proposed capability requirements for an acquisition program to an ultimate decision by the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

3. Creates the Mission Engineering and Integration Activity (MEIA). Under the SPEED Act's new requirements process, MEIA will lead rapid experimentation using the best available technologies to ensure that solutions recommended by RAPID are technologically feasible and aligned with joint systems and operational concepts.

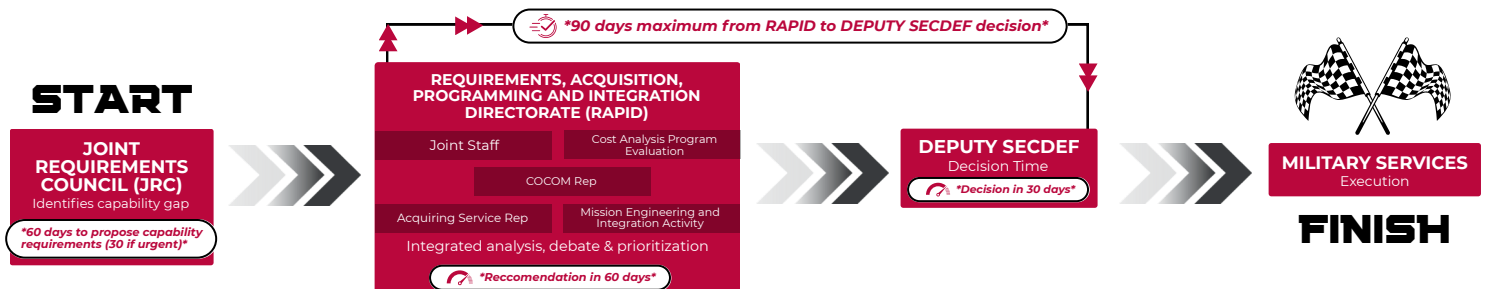


CURRENT REQUIREMENTS VALIDATION PROCESS:



Based on Figure 7 of Required to Fail: Beyond documents—Accelerating joint advantage through direct resourcing and experimentation, Greenwalt, W. C., & Patt, D. Hudson Institute (2025, February).

THE SPEED ACT'S NEW REQUIREMENTS PROCESS:





Collectively, these reforms will streamline the requirements process and focus it on addressing capability gaps and urgent needs, rather than prescribing fixed solutions and generating volumes of paperwork. As a result, PEOs and program managers will be unbound from overly prescriptive—and in many cases non-essential—requirements that are all but set in stone once validated by the JROC. Instead, PEOs and program managers will be able to iterate quickly and make informed tradeoffs. Moreover, these reforms accelerate the new requirements process to between 90 and 150 days, which is more than five times faster than the current process.⁵

Pillar 2 of the SPEED Act includes the following reforms:

Sec 201—Joint Requirements Council

Transforms the JROC into the JRC, removes documentation and validation requirements, and shifts focus to identifying capability gaps and recommending solutions to joint operational problems.

Sec 202—Establishment of the Requirements, Acquisition, and Programming Integration Directorate

Creates RAPID to serve as the forum to assess joint capability requirements by bringing together resource analysis, mission-based experimentation, and acquisition program leadership to develop prioritized recommendations for achievable solutions.

Sec 203—Establishment of the Mission Engineering and Integration Activity

Creates the MEIA to lead cross-service activities to develop, identify, and analyze integrated technology solutions to address joint operational problems and provide analysis and recommendations to support RAPID.



STRIKING THE BALANCE BETWEEN REGULATION AND EFFICIENCY

Effective and well-crafted regulations protect taxpayer dollars. However, excessive regulatory and compliance requirements often impose greater costs on taxpayers. Like spending \$100 to protect a carton of eggs from a single crack, it's inefficient for DoD to devote excessive time and resources to auditing all low-risk or low-dollar contracts. In particular, the dollar thresholds that trigger regulatory and reporting requirements must be carefully calibrated to the waste, fraud, and abuse they aim to prevent.⁶ When thresholds are set too low, they slow delivery, needlessly raise compliance costs, and strain the DIB.

This is not a new insight. Past reform efforts, including the FY16 NDAA's congressionally-mandated commission on acquisition reform—known as the Section 809 Panel⁷—have recommended reviewing dollar thresholds to ensure they align with the risk they aim to mitigate and don't stymie mission impact. Despite these repeated findings, meaningful changes have yet to be implemented. The SPEED Act will change this by right-sizing certain dollar thresholds.

The Cost Accounting Standards' (CAS) outdated and duplicative requirements are another example of the need to balance regulations with efficiency. These burdensome requirements can deter innovative startups and other commercial companies from doing business with DoD. Contractors working with the federal government must comply with CAS in addition to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). While GAAP reflects modern, widely adopted accounting practices used by public companies, CAS imposes additional requirements focused on auditing and maintaining government-specified and outdated business systems. This dual layer of regulations adds complexity and administrative burdens. Despite a 2016 mandate to align CAS with GAAP, no tangible progress has been made.⁸ The time is long past due to modernize CAS or develop an augmented GAAP in its place. Accordingly, the SPEED Act includes a provision that requires the Secretary of Defense to provide recommendations on what additional standards are needed to augment GAAP to support the unique requirements associated with government contracting.

Truthful Cost or Pricing Data Act (TINA) regulations are also in need of reform. While well-intentioned and necessary, TINA's current implementation and the resulting compliance costs are out of balance with the potential risk of fraud or abuse on relatively low-dollar contracts. TINA requires defense contractors to submit detailed cost and pricing data for negotiated contracts over \$2 million, unless there is adequate price competition.⁹ TINA plays a necessary role in safeguarding taxpayer dollars and ensuring fair pricing. However, its current application has become overly burdensome, which has driven up compliance costs and delayed contracts. Commercial tech firms and nontraditional vendors routinely cite TINA compliance as a key reason for avoiding defense contracts. Perversely, this leads to less competition and, in many cases, leaves DoD with no choice but to accept monopolistic—and thus higher—prices.



6 - Report of the Advisory Panel on Streamlining and Codifying Acquisition Regulations, Volume 1, January 2018.

7 - Ibid.

8 - Section 820 of the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

9 - 10 USC 2306, formerly known as the Truth in Negotiations Act, or TINA.



An analysis of Federal Procurement Data concluded that raising the TINA threshold from \$2 million to \$10 million would still cover more than 80 percent of total contract dollars, while reducing the number of contracts subject to certification by over 60 percent. The SPEED Act makes this change, which will greatly increase the speed of contracting while still providing DoD with visibility into significant contracts. Importantly, this reform will also remove a critical barrier to commercial companies entering the DIB, thereby increasing competition and reducing reliance on sole-source providers that can be both costly and undermine the DIB's resilience and surge capacity.

Pillar 3 of the SPEED Act includes the following reforms:

Sec 301—Matters Related to Department of Defense Use of Cost Accounting Standards

Mandates that the Secretary of Defense reduce or eliminate requirements for compliance with CAS where there is duplicative coverage under GAAP, as well as assess what additional standards are needed to augment GAAP to support the unique requirements associated with government contracting.

Sec 302—Review of Commercial Buying Practices

Directs the Secretary of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of DoD's approach to commercial buying and implementation of the Federal Acquisition Streaming Act of 1994 and to take corrective action accordingly.

Sec 303—Adjustments to Certain Acquisition Thresholds

Revises several contracting thresholds established by title 10, United States Code, including the TINA threshold, to account for economic factors and streamline DoD's contracting processes without sacrificing transparency on critical contracts.

Sec 304—Alternative Capability-Based Pricing

Authorizes alternative capability-based pricing models to determine whether a proposed price or fee for a commercial solution is fair and reasonable based on the value of the solution to the government.

Sec 305—Clarification of Conditions for Payments for Commercial Products and Commercial Services

Modernizes contracting for certain services by clarifying that payments made for a consumption-based or subscription model should not be considered as advance payments, which require collateral from the contractor.



STRENGTHENING THE DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE AND LEVERAGING COMMERCIAL INNOVATION

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Efforts to strengthen the DIB continue to be stymied by persistent barriers to adopting commercial innovation. Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs) were created to address this by quickly prototyping cutting-edge technologies by providing exceptions to the constraints and compliance burdens of traditional federal acquisition regulations. However, these authorities remain underutilized. Current law requires traditional firms to share costs with a nontraditional partner to use OTAs' flexible authorities. A 30 percent cost share might have made sense when OTAs' prototyping awards were capped at \$250 million. However, with the cap now at \$500 million, this requirement is pricing out even larger traditional companies. This is compounded by the fact that there is no guarantee the government will transition technologies to production, which creates uncertainty and adds risk to making significant private investments. This is preventing traditional companies, including mid-sized companies that want to move fast and take risks, from using OTAs to deliver better and faster outcomes for the warfighter. The SPEED Act fixes this by eliminating this constraint on traditional companies from using OTA pathways.

Another issue with the current system is that simply attracting new entrants into the DAS is not enough to sustain innovation or grow the DIB. Many small, agile companies are unable to cross the notorious "Valley of Death"—the purgatory between technology development and full-scale adoption by DoD as a program of record. Given the complexity and burdensome regulations involved, many companies conclude that working with DoD would jeopardize their commercial viability and distract from their core markets. In fact, DoD's 2023 Small Business Strategy revealed a 40 percent decline in small business participation in the DIB over the past decade, despite billions invested in initiatives like the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), AFWERX, and SOFWERX to attract nontraditional companies.¹⁰

For that reason, the SPEED Act establishes the Bridging Operational Objectives and Support for Transition (BOOST) program within DIU to help bridge the Valley of Death. Too often, promising technologies stall because many startups cannot access funding to keep the lights on while waiting on DoD's glacially slow requirements and budget process. To prevent the next breakthrough technology from succumbing to the Valley of Death, BOOST will directly support PEOs by matching DIU-identified technologies and prototyping efforts with the needs of existing programs of record. PEOs' involvement through BOOST will also help provide the necessary planning for sustainment, training and manning of such technologies to ensure successful fielding.

To unlock greater commercial innovation while preserving DoD's ability to integrate, maintain, and sustain critical systems, the SPEED Act will modernize how the Department handles intellectual property (IP) and data rights by promoting a data-as-a-service model. This model allows DoD to access the data it requires for maintenance and repair and keeps sustainment costs down without requiring a contractor to surrender the rights to its privately funded IP. By protecting industry's innovation, this model will also encourage greater participation in the DIB. Moreover, as DoD seeks to mobilize private capital to complement taxpayer investments and strengthen and diversify the DIB, protecting privately funded IP and data rights will remain essential.

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The fragility of the DIB has become a full-fledged national security crisis. America's ability to deter and, if necessary, prevail in a prolonged conflict is threatened by parts obsolescence, dwindling manufacturing sources, and dangerous single-source dependencies. To confront this challenge, the SPEED Act establishes the DoD Industrial Resilience Consortium (IRC). The IRC will serve as a collaborative forum of manufacturers, tech developers, supply chain experts, and research institutions focused on strengthening the DIB's resilience and competitiveness. It will enable industry and academia to inform government efforts to eliminate impediments to a healthier DIB, address critical supply chain gaps, accelerate adoption of advanced manufacturing, and help DoD identify and, if necessary, access private-sector industrial capabilities to meet surge demands.

Pillar 4 of the SPEED Act includes the following reforms:

Sec 401—Defense Industrial Resilience Consortium

Establishes the DoD Industrial Resilience Consortium to serve as a collaborative forum for cutting-edge manufacturers, technology developers, supply chain stakeholders, and research institutions to address critical challenges related to parts obsolescence, diminishing manufacturing and sources of supply, and dependencies on non-allied nations for critical materials.

Sec 402—Amendment to Other Transaction Authority

Removes the obstacles to the use of OTAs for prototyping to enable best-value evaluations that reward efficiency, innovation, and credible business models.

Sec 403—Data-As-A-Service Solutions for Weapon Systems Contracts

Establishes preference for data-as-a-service solutions to provide government access to proprietary data and information that may be needed in the maintenance and repair of weapon systems.

Sec 404—Requirements for Modular Open System Approach (MOSA) and Modification to Rights in Technical Data

Clarifies MOSA requirements for the design and development of defense systems to further the adoption of MOSA and accelerate the integration of evolving technologies.

Sec 405—Qualification, Acceptance, and Supply Chain Management of Products Manufactured Using Advanced Manufacturing

Requires the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement recommendations related to the qualification, approval, acceptance, and inclusion of items that have been produced through manufacturing processes other than those used to manufacture the part DoD originally procured.

Sec 406—Amendments to the Procurement Technical Assistance Program

Amends chapter 388 of title 10, United States Code, to enhance the Procurement Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program and to clarify associated authorities.

Sec 407—Report on Surge Capacity in the Defense Industrial Base

Directs the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy and the Director of Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy to jointly submit a report on the regulations or policies that discourage or prevent DoD contractors from maintaining or investing in surge capacity.

Sec 408—Bridging Operational Objectives & Support for Transition Program

Creates the BOOST Program within DIU to support PEOs by matching identified technologies with program requirements and serving as an on-ramp to technology integration into programs of record.



DEVELOPING A MISSION-ORIENTED DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE



The DAS envisioned by the SPEED Act is not possible without a well-trained, high-performing, and mission-oriented acquisition workforce. The American people will continue to rely on the rigor with which today's acquisition workforce safeguards taxpayer dollars while ensuring compliance with the law and regulations. However, it is critical that the acquisition workforce culture prioritizes speed, mission outcomes, and responsible risk-taking. This will require ensuring acquisition professionals are taught to make informed trade-offs and enabled to act decisively.

To begin the necessary transition, the SPEED Act recommends two Government Accountability Office reviews to assess the current workforce's posture, strength, and career development, along with a comprehensive evaluation of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU).

Pillar 5 of the SPEED Act includes the following reforms:

Sec 501—Report on Strengthening the Defense Acquisition University

Requires the Secretary of Defense to direct the Acquisition Innovation Research Center to conduct a comprehensive assessment of DAU with a focus on enhancing operations and performance in training and developing the defense acquisition workforce for the future.

Sec 502—Comptroller General Review of the Management, Training, and Development of the Acquisition Workforce

Requires the Comptroller General to conduct a review to examine the composition and capabilities of DoD's acquisition workforce to provide the U.S. Armed Forces with the equipment and services necessary to effectively respond to national security challenges.

Sec 503—Comptroller General Review of Matters Relating to Individuals Assigned to a Critical Acquisition Position

Instructs the Comptroller General to conduct a review of DoD's workforce education, training, experience, and career development programs related to key leadership positions and individuals' progression to critical acquisition positions.



