



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Veterans Strengthening America

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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June 26, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of The American Legion and our 1.5 million dues-paying members, your support for the United States' uniformed services, veterans, and their families is greatly appreciated. As an organization of veterans who understand the complexities of today's strategic environment, The American Legion believes national security is upheld by a well-funded Department of Defense (DOD), heightened quality of life standards in the military community, and a sensible transition between service and separation. We also believe the Department of State is crucial as a first line of defense against a myriad of security threats. To carry out its diplomatic missions and prevent the unnecessary escalation of conflict, the Department of State must have the financial resources necessary to operate at its full capacity. Finally, The American Legion recognizes the crucial role of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in protecting our domestic liberties. We believe that DHS components must be well-equipped and properly supported to counter terror threats, secure land and maritime borders, and curb transnational crime.

As you consider the budgets for fiscal year 2025, we urge Congress to include the following provisions in the bill's final version.

Defense Appropriations Act:

The timely passage of the Defense Appropriations Act of 2025 is paramount to the readiness, resiliency, and modernization of the joint force. By increasing pay for our most junior servicemembers, this legislation will ensure that our troops have the resources to be mission-focused and not worry about substandard quality of life conditions. The Defense Appropriations Act also prioritizes key investments in the defense industrial base by focusing on innovation, expedited procurement, and integrating the private sector. Through these actions, this legislation aims to preserve the United States' strategic advantages in the Indo-Pacific over adversaries while ensuring safety and prosperity on the home front. The American Legion urges Congress to act swiftly to enact the Defense Appropriations Act of 2025 and bolster our national security.

Within the Defense Appropriations Act, The American Legion emphasizes its support for the following provisions:

- Increased pay for servicemembers, totaling at a 4.5% raise across the board and a 15% raise for our junior enlisted, to ensure servicemembers are well-paid and mission-focused

- Investment of \$400 million for the Accelerate the Procurement and Fielding of Innovative Technologies (APFIT) Program to accelerate fielding and production of key technologies
- Allocations to the Defense Innovation Unit for increased modernization and accelerated acquisition
- Prioritization of defense articles to Taiwan through a \$200 million allocation to Taiwan's international security cooperation programs
- Reinforcement of the Pacific Deterrence Initiative

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act:

The American Legion believes that a well-funded Department of State is vital to international stability and can prevent unnecessary deployment of American military forces into harm's way. The security assistance authorized by the bill is a crucial diplomatic tool for containing conflict and protecting our allies. Moreover, the legislation emphasizes the need for a diplomatic, cooperative approach to curb transnational crime and the illicit drug trade. The American Legion calls on Congress to enact the 2025 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Act and ensure that the United States diplomatic arm is performing at its highest potential.

Within the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, The American Legion emphasizes its support for the following provisions:

- Foreign Military Financing to our allies facing imminent threats, specifically Israel and Taiwan
- Partnerships to stop the flow of fentanyl and precursor chemicals for fentanyl production across borders
- Prioritized funds for our allies helping offset large-scale, irregular migration in the Western Hemisphere.

Homeland Security Appropriations Act:

The Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2025 is indispensable for safeguarding America's sovereignty. The American Legion's position on immigration reform requires the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to be fully manned and equipped to properly carry out their assigned mission. Similarly, The American Legion urges Congress to plus-up and modernize the Coast Guard's resources so they can effectively protect the United States' maritime border from malign actors at home and abroad. Without the funding provided by this legislation, the Department of Homeland Security will not have the necessary resources to counter transnational crime, thwart terrorist threats, curb illegal immigration, and protect our maritime and land borders. The American Legion is a vigorous supporter of the Department of Homeland Security and urges lawmakers to authorize these appropriations without delay.

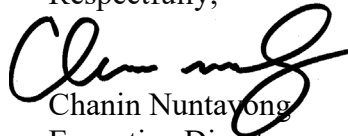
Within the Homeland Security Appropriations Act, The American Legion emphasizes its support for the following provisions:

- Increased hiring for Customs and Border Patrol, particularly the funding necessary for 22,000 border agents
- Investments in border security technology totaling \$300 million and additional \$600 million for barrier construction
- Enhanced allocation for custody operations to ensure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement has the resources needed for detainee management.

- Additional funding for the Coast Guard, including \$335 million for Fast Response Cutters and \$60 million for the deployment of a Medium Endurance Cutter.
- Allocation of \$4.2 million for maritime engagement with allies in the Indo-Pacific.

The American Legion applauds the tremendous work of the House Appropriations Committee in their continued effort to maintain a robust national defense and a whole-of-government approach to international security. We urge the House to quickly pass this legislation and appreciate your continued leadership and support of these issues which are essential to servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Respectfully,



Chanin Nuntayong
Executive Director
Government Affairs