



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on December 12, 2024

House Passes Gargantuan \$895 Billion Defense Budget

On Wednesday, the U.S. House of Representatives approved [the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act](#) (NDAA), authorizing \$895 billion in military spending for the upcoming fiscal year. The bill passed with a vote of [281-140](#), with 124 Democrats opposing it, primarily over a contentious provision restricting access to certain transgender-related healthcare for military dependents. Sixteen Republicans, including Representatives Thomas Massie of Kentucky, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, and Andy Biggs of Arizona, opposed the spending as well, citing concerns over unconstitutional foreign aid and lack of appropriate oversight, among other reasons.



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The NDAA outlines funding for the Department of Defense (DoD) as well as military-related expenditures for other federal agencies. While the \$895 billion figure is already significant, it does not account for the full scope of U.S. military-related spending. According to longtime defense analyst Winslow Wheeler, quoted by [AntiWar.com](#), the actual total could climb as high as \$1.77 trillion when factoring in related outlays for Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, debt interest tied to defense funding, and other indirect expenses.

Summary

According to the [summary of the bill](#) posted by the House Armed Forces Committee, it emphasizes troop welfare, modernization, and global deterrence. Anchored by bipartisan recommendations, it features:

Pay and Quality of Life: 14.5-percent pay raise for junior enlisted, 4.5 percent for others, childcare support, housing upgrades, and free barracks internet.

Technological Modernization: \$143.8 billion for Research and Development, \$33.5 billion for shipbuilding (seven new ships), oversight of F-35 program issues, and enhanced nuclear deterrence.

Military Support: New Taiwan Security Cooperation Initiative (modeled after the [Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative](#)), expanded European and Pacific deterrence initiatives, and divestment of aging systems.

Health and Family Support: Copay-free contraceptives, a cryopreservation pilot, and increased mental health support for military families.

According to the report, the NDAA “prioritizes innovation, technology, and modernization” while supporting domestic industrial growth and ensuring readiness against global adversaries.

The committee’s chair, Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), stressed that the bill’s top priority was to improve the quality of life of the servicemen.



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How Does the 2025 NDAA Compare to 2024?

The 2025 NDAA reflects a five-percent increase from the \$858 billion authorized in 2024. The increase underscores heightened military commitments, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Key spending initiatives include the modernization of nuclear weapons, expanded cybersecurity programs, and continued support for U.S. allies.

In contrast, the 2024 NDAA focused heavily on military aid to Ukraine following [Russia's 2022 invasion](#). While Ukraine remains a priority in the 2025 NDAA, the new bill shifts greater attention to Pacific deterrence, particularly countering China's growing influence in the region. This includes bolstering the U.S. presence around Taiwan and providing additional resources to support NATO allies.

Proponents of the spending increase argue that it is essential to maintain military superiority and support international alliances. However, critics note that the budget grows at a pace far beyond inflation, with funds increasingly diverted toward global conflicts rather than pressing domestic needs.

Speaker Johnson: Peace Through Strength

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) praised the passage of the bill, highlighting its emphasis on bolstering U.S. military strength while moving away from the "woke ideology." He emphasized that the bill prioritizes the military's "core mission of defending America" and ensures U.S. troops have "the necessary resources and support to defend our great nation."

A key focus of the legislation is strengthening U.S. military capabilities against global adversaries, particularly China, Russia, and Iran. Johnson stated, "Because we believe in peace through strength, we blocked the Biden Administration's plan to reduce the number of US special forces."

The legislation also introduces several cultural shifts within the military. Johnson highlighted bans on "transgender treatment for minors" and "critical race theory in military academies," as well as the push against the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) bureaucracy and "antisemitism" within the Pentagon. He declared, "Our men and women in uniform should know their first obligation is protecting our nation, not woke ideology."

For Johnson, the passage of the NDAA reflects a firm commitment to national security and the well-being of U.S. servicemembers. "The safety and security of the American people is [our] top priority," he concluded, stressing the House's focus on keeping the U.S. military as "the most powerful force in the world."

Critics

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) criticized the bill's nearly \$900 billion price tag and controversial policy provisions. While reaffirming her support for "our military, our troops, and an overwhelming and powerful national defense," She argued that the Pentagon's lack of financial accountability makes the spending unjustifiable.

Rep. Tim Burchett (R-Tenn.) criticized the allocation of billions of dollars for foreign aid. He also blasted the "transgender language" of the bill.

Rep. Becca Balint (D-Vt.) argued that Congress must prioritize domestic needs over unchecked military



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spending.

Echoing the sentiment, Rep. Greg Steube (R-Fla.) denounced the bill's allocation of funds for foreign aid while U.S. communities face urgent recovery needs. Drawing attention to the devastation caused by hurricanes in his district and across the Southeast, Steube questioned the bill's priorities.

"My district was ravaged by 3 hurricanes in 3 months," he stated, highlighting the severe impact of Hurricane Helene. Despite this, the NDAA directs \$115 million for foreign disaster aid and \$463.8 million for NATO's Security Investment Program to rebuild military infrastructure in Europe.

Noting that "Democrats love to give America's taxpayer dollars to foreign countries," Steube also took a jab at his GOP colleagues, asking, "Why did Republicans support this?"

What's Next for the 2025 NDAA?

The bill now moves to the Senate, where it faces some Democratic opposition but is expected to pass due to broad bipartisan support for increased defense spending. A vote is set for next week.

Lawmakers have one last chance to propose changes, but major revisions are unlikely as the U.S. maintains an expansive military posture, citing perceived threats from China, Russia, and Iran.

All eyes are on the Senate to see if any part of the \$1.77 trillion in projected security spending will be adjusted. The larger question, however, remains: Can the U.S. balance its national security goals with the financial strain of foreign entanglements and rising debt?



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