



## Week of Military Changes



*President Trump addressing the nation on Wednesday (White House video stream)*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate passed the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 on Wednesday, sending it to President Trump’s desk for signature. President Trump had previously [issued](#) a Statement of Administration Policy saying he would sign the bill into law when it reached his desk.

The NDAA is the premier piece of must-pass legislation each year, required to fund the United States’ armed forces around the world. A traditionally bipartisan bill, the annual passage of the bill for 65 consecutive years is a point of pride for members of Congress. They often use the bill as a vehicle to move forward their own policy goals due to the must-pass nature of the bill, though more conservative members of Congress have, in recent years, driven home a “national security nexus” for measures included in the bill to keep the contents of the bill focused on defense. This year’s more than \$900 billion bill passed the House 312-113, with 94 Democrats and 18 Republicans of the 435-member body voting against it. In the 100-member Senate, the bill passed 77-20, with two Republicans and 18 Democrats opposing the bill.

Among the provisions in this year’s bill include a 3.8% pay raise for American servicemembers. Additionally, the bill increases the family separation allowance for

deployed service members from \$250 to \$300, and authorizes more than \$1.5 billion to fund the construction of new barracks, childcare centers, dormitories, and housing. The bill also limits drawdown of troops stationed in Europe and South Korea, a strong rebuke to efforts by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth to reappportion American troops. The bill left out, however, measures that would provide coverage of in vitro fertilization (IVF) for military families who have health insurance provided through the government, known as Tricare. This is the second year in a row the bipartisan measure has been stripped from the final bill.

In another rebuke of the defense secretary, Congress withheld 25% of his travel budget until he turns over the complete, unedited footage of the September 2 strike of a Venezuelan fishing boat. The strike on the boat, accused of smuggling drugs, is reported to have left two survivors clinging to debris. Reports claim that the Secretary of Defense ordered a second strike on the survivors, killing them. These reports led to widespread bipartisan outrage from Congress, and may well constitute war crimes, per legal scholars and retired military officials.

In his primetime address to the nation on Wednesday evening, President Trump also announced the delivery of “Warrior Dividends”. These bonus checks, many already on their way to servicemembers, would provide \$1,776 to nearly 1.5 million servicemembers in honor of the 250 years of military service. President Trump said these bonuses were funded through the returns from the increased tariffs implemented throughout 2025.