

Conference Report for H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016

FLOOR SITUATION

On Thursday, October 1, 2015, the House will consider the Conference Report for [H.R. 1735](#), the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2016*, under a rule. The bill was introduced on April 13, 2015 by Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX), and passed the House by a vote of [269 to 151](#), on May 15, 2015. The Senate then passed the bill, with an amendment, by a vote of [71 to 25](#) of June 18, 2015.

SUMMARY

The Conference Report to H.R. 1735 authorizes and prioritizes funding for the Department of Defense (DoD) and other select national security programs within the Department of Energy for Fiscal Year 2016. The bill authorizes \$515 billion in spending for national defense and an additional \$89.2 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operations fund (OCO), for a total of \$604.2 billion, which is equal to the President's overall budget request.¹

To find a complete analysis provided by the House Committee on Armed Services of the differences between the bills, please click [here](#). The following information is highlighted in the [summary of H.R. 1735 Conference Report](#) also provided by the House Armed Services Committee:

Overseas Contingency Operations—The agreement fully funds the President's request of \$50.9 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). In order to comply with the Budget Control Act, the agreement includes an additional \$38.3 billion for base requirements. These are specifically authorized, just as they were in the base budget. Examples of base requirements funded by OCO include Airlift Operations, Combat Communications, Training Support, Depot Maintenance, Force Readiness, Operations Support, Army Prepositioned Stocks, and Logistics Operations.

¹ See [House Report 114-102](#) at 9.

Compensation and Benefits Reform— The Conferees agreed on changes to military retirement options allowing the 83 percent of service members not eligible for military retirement to participate in a retirement plan. This system will allow new service members to contribute to a portable Thrift Savings Plan with matching contributions from DoD. The reform also preserves a structure that encourages service beyond 12 and then 20 years of service by maintaining the retirement annuity while adding the benefit of allowing a service member to take part of their retirement pay as an upfront lump sum payment. Those currently serving, and having less than twelve years of service, have the option of remaining grandfathered into the old system or choosing the new TSP option.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)--The Conference Agreement preserves Basic Allowance for Housing for dual-military couples. To help maintain the tax-free BAH benefit in the long-term, the Conference Agreement preserves payments to cover 95 percent of estimated housing expenses, which is a 1 percent annual reduction per year for four years.

Personal Carry of Firearms—The Conference Report provides language making it clear that post commanders are empowered to permit a member of the Armed Forces to carry appropriate firearms, including personal firearms, at DOD installations, reserve centers, and recruiting centers. The bill requires the Secretary of Defense to implement a policy to so empower post commanders no later than December 31, 2015.

Nuclear weapons-- The Conference Report includes language from both the House and Senate bills to implement a GAO recommendation and direct the transfer of NNSA's old, nonoperational facilities to the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management where they can be prioritized and demolished, in an effort to begin clearing the backlog of old, crumbling infrastructure within the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Missile Defense: The Conference Agreement also authorizes \$30 million for planning and design for an East Coast missile defense site, requires the designation of the preferred location for such site, and requires a plan to accelerate its deployment by two years to add to the ballistic missile defense of the United States.

BACKGROUND

The National Defense Authorization Act has historically been the key mechanism through which Congress fulfills one of its primary responsibilities as mandated in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States, which grants Congress the power to provide for the common defense; to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; and to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

Click [here](#) for the previous Legislative Digest for the House-passed version of H.R. 1735.

COST

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate is currently unavailable.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions about amendments or further information on the bill, contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.