



# ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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Chairman Adam Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith:

As you prepare for the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Conference, the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) thanks you for your thoughtful leadership and caring support for the Total Army (Regular, Guard, Reserve), its Soldiers, Army families, Army civilians, and veterans. Especially noteworthy in the House NDAA bill is your support to continue building Army readiness and support for Army modernization to improve overmatch and lethality. We also thank you for addressing health care, other important quality of life issues, and prevention of sexual harassment in your legislation.

In support of the NDAA Conference, we offer the following recommendations for your consideration.

- For the Regular Army, Army Guard, and Army Reserve accounts for Operations and Maintenance (O&M), we encourage support for the SASC authorization amounts. We also recommend fully supporting the Army's request (Regular Army and Guard) for recruiting and advertising within the O&M accounts. With Operations and Maintenance funding relating closely to Army readiness, the Army's #1 priority, Conference support for the higher amounts for O&M will enable the Army to maintain and grow readiness that much more.
- I am concerned the process of reforming DoD's health care system is moving too fast and without detailed plans and performance metrics to ensure success. Transferring and consolidating medical treatment facilities while simultaneously making significant reductions to the military medical positions can lead to combat readiness and medical readiness shortfalls. Thus, we recommend HASC Section 718 supporting additional review and analysis in order to reduce risk to readiness and health care services for the military and their families.
- Sexual assault and harassment have been among the most difficult challenges across the force and we agree something new is needed to effect positive change. We support the proposals offered by Senator McClellan. I strongly oppose the proposed Service Academy Pilot Program as this will undermine the critical role and authority of the commander.
- AUSA endorses the House provision to extend TRICARE Reserve Select to Federal employees who are in the National Guard and Reserves; an effective date prior to 2030 would convey Congress' strong support for these critical members of the force.
- For widows and their families, repeal of the Survivor Benefit Plan – Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Offset is long overdue. While we all recognize there is a considerable bill associated with fixing the existing legislation, this is simply the right thing to do.
- Please consider supporting the House position on the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A). As with all new programs, initial fielding has not been perfect, but the Army must have this capability as a foundational component of its talent management effort for the Total Army.

- We note the Deputy Secretary of Defense recently issued guidance on August 19, 2019, to proceed with consolidation of the Defense Resale Enterprise. Although the military services have their unique requirements, the consolidation of the Exchanges and Commissaries has the potential to improve quality of service for patrons and achieve efficiencies as well. AUSA encourages the Armed Services Committees to continue providing oversight of this major DoD reform to help ensure success.

Thank you for including helpful legislation in the House bill to improve quality of life (QoL) in the Armed Forces. We look forward to the Conference decisions for the following important QoL enhancements.

- Improving family and single service member housing, to include tenant rights.
- Supporting spouse employment.
- Improving child care availability that is safe and meets quality standards.
- Reviewing planned changes for personal property management.

In closing, thank you for your consideration of these AUSA recommendations for the FY20 NDAA Conference. We know you will make the best decisions possible in support of our Armed Forces.



Carter F. Ham

General, U.S. Army, Retired

President & Chief Executive Officer