

House Passed NDAA includes many ROA spearheaded provisions

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES,
December 16, 2025 /
EINPresswire.com/ -- U.S. House and
Senate conferees released the text of
the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense
Authorization Act (NDAA) last Sunday,
setting the stage for final passage.



The House approved the bill on December 10 with a vote of 312-112, and the Senate is expected to vote on the measure soon. On Monday, the Senate cleared a key procedural hurdle as lawmakers work to pass the NDAA before leaving for the holidays at the end of the week.

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*ROA Executive Director Maj.
Gen. John B. Hashem, U.S.
Army (retired)*

Senators voted 76-20 to advance the annual defense policy bill, moving it one step closer to final passage—a process expected to take several more days. Once approved, the legislation will head to the President’s desk for signature.

The bill includes major provisions to strengthen readiness and modernization across the reserve components. These measures range from stabilizing airlift and refueling capacity to accelerating fighter transitions and improving mobilization planning for large-scale operations.

“This year’s NDAA keeps the Total Force on a firmer footing — protecting airlift and refueling capacity, pacing fighter transitions, investing in munitions and mobilization

planning, and advancing practical readiness reforms,” said Army Maj. Gen. (Ret.) John B. Hashem, executive director of the Reserve Organization of America (ROA). “At the same time, end-strength cuts to the Army Reserve jeopardize aeromedical evacuation depth, and the omission of duty-status reform and dental coverage reminds us that the work is not done. We’ll move immediately from authorization to implementation to ensure these gains show up on the ramp, in sortie lines, and in operational capability.”

The legislation preserves the A-10 fleet through FY 2026 and requires a comprehensive transition

plan before any divestment, preventing a premature loss of capability and personnel. ROA has worked closely with fighter wings and units affected by the Air Force's accelerated A-10 divestment strategy, including the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. Based on the report language, ROA now plans to pursue appropriations to support the wing's follow-on mission assignment.

The bill extends the Army Tactical Wheeled Vehicle modernization strategy through FY 2027 and maintains the C-130 fleet through FY 2026 while requiring a detailed modernization roadmap—a priority ROA advanced through renewed engagement with the Navy Reserve legislative office and close coordination with Rep. Barry Loudermilk's office.

Vice Adm. Nancy Lacore underscored the Navy Reserve's top equipment priority during her May 20 testimony before the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee at an oversight hearing on the National Guard and Reserve Forces: "Recapitalizing the aging C/KC-130T Hercules fleet with KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft is essential to enabling contested logistics ... and remains the Navy Reserve's number one equipment priority," Lacore stated.

In previous public statements, ROA stressed that "older, less capable HMMWV models are not meeting the Army Reserve's readiness needs," urging targeted modernization funding and sustaining the industrial base that supports tactical wheeled vehicles.

While the NDAA's extension of the modernization strategy provides an authorization bridge, ROA will follow up directly with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Army to ensure future investment priorities include Army Reserve HMMWV recapitalization.

For refueling, the NDAA raises the tanker fleet minimum and protects KC-135 inventory during KC-46 recapitalization, while tying additional KC-46A deliveries to corrective action on Category 1 deficiencies.

ROA's modernization priorities were informed by "on-ramp" conversations with aircrews and maintainers during an exclusive look at the KC-46 at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base last July.

The measure also includes provisions to improve readiness through personnel policies.

For the second consecutive year, ROA saw advances in its five-step Transition Assistance Program improvement plan. Last year's bill created an individualized counseling track for reserve members; this year, Section 571 adds flexibility by allowing reserve members to waive TAP requirements under certain conditions. ROA testified twice before Congress on TAP improvements.

Aviation Incentive Pay parity crossed the finish line in the final hours of conference negotiations. ROA spearheaded a coalition letter signed by more than 24 organizations to push Senate language into the final bill. Section 613 now requires the War Department to evaluate and

implement a standardized AvIP framework by 2027 to address pilot shortages and retention challenges.

The NDAA also bolsters readiness through provisions that mandate annual munitions production targets, strengthen missile-defense planning, and require a dual-theater readiness report—addressing critical shortfalls revealed in wargames and recent conflicts.

Section 383 directs a large-scale Indo-Pacific mobilization study, modeled on the historic “Nifty Nugget” exercise, to stress-test reserve integration and identify bottlenecks in logistics and sustainment.

Despite these wins, the NDAA leaves critical gaps. Duty-status reform remains unfinished. Premium-free TRICARE dental coverage for the Selected Reserve was not retained, and the TriService Nursing Research Program was excluded despite its alignment with operational health priorities. While the conference rejected a blanket disestablishment of Navy Reserve readiness centers, further clarity is needed to ensure infrastructure decisions remain transparent and data-driven.

With authorization complete, ROA will now pivot to execution: securing O&M funding for Whiteman’s next mission, ensuring KC-46 fixes are in place before fielding, advancing C-130 recapitalization, tracking AvIP deadlines, and incorporating reserve realities into mobilization studies.

“Authorizations open doors,” Hashem said. “Our job now is to walk through them—aligning appropriations, schedules, crews, and maintenance so these provisions translate into real, reliable readiness.”

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