



# ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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November 17, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
Armed Services Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers  
Chairman  
Armed Services Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Armed Services Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Armed Services Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Smith:

The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) is grateful for your leadership in the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to maintain a strong national defense. As you continue to work on the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we offer a few recommendations for your consideration and ask that you pass this critical legislation as quickly as possible.

Sufficient investment must be made in the NDAA in support of the Army (Regular, National Guard, and Reserve) and its Soldiers and families who serve honorably and courageously and sacrifice so much. The Army is vital to national security with recent conflicts across the globe demonstrating that land power is essential, and the land domain is decisive. As such, the Army is focused on warfighting and working every day to provide ready combat formations while seeking continuous transformation through its modernization priorities. Readiness is enabled through the Army's "People First" strategy.

We believe it is essential for the Army and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have the resources needed to deter any adversary, to "Fight and Win" when necessary, and to ensure the continued excellence of the all-volunteer force. Thus, we request that you authorize funding – at least at the levels included in the bills passed in your respective chambers – and add additional resources commensurate with the threats facing our nation. Additional resources could support the Army's unfunded priorities, enable continuous transformation through modernization, support Army and DoD infrastructure, improve both the organic and defense industrial base, and help to mitigate inflation.

AUSA appreciates your commitment to our Soldiers, Army families, DoD civilians, and Soldiers for Life. As you know, providing appropriate compensation is an important incentive for recruitment and retention – particularly as recruitment remains a significant challenge. Inclusion of at least a 5.2 percent pay increase for service members, and a similar increase for DoD civilians, as well as resources to soften the impact of inflation and improve recruitment is very important. The pay increase is particularly important given military pay has not kept up with the Economic Cost Index (ECI) by 2.6 percent over time. Similarly, we support provisions that enhance recruitment efforts such as Senate Sections 592 and 593 as well as efforts to increase and improve educational opportunities through the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) such as Senate Sections 571 and 572.

We support provisions to enhance the quality of life for Soldiers and their families such as improvements to childcare, safe housing, healthcare for Soldiers and families, and we appreciate the inclusion of the Military and Spouse Employment Act in both the House and Senate bills. We support

House Section 701 which would waive fees on the TRICARE Dental Program for all members of the Selected Reserve. We want to ensure that there are sufficient TRICARE providers to guarantee that beneficiaries receive the best care possible in a convenient and timely fashion. Further, we appreciate your dedication to combatting death by suicide and improving the availability of behavioral healthcare and encourage you to include House Section 729, which would work to improve mental health services across DoD. Authorization of robust funding for Impact Aid to assist schools and families will help ensure that military children receive an excellent education. AUSA supports inclusion of H.R. 1282/S. 344, the Major Richard Star Act – a long-held AUSA priority – to ensure eligible Soldiers for Life receive full compensation. We also commend your focus on eradicating sexual assault and harassment. These are top Army “People First” priorities - we support continued efforts along with additional resources.

As threats to our nation grow, the need to modernize and improve readiness is apparent. AUSA requests your continued support for the Army’s modernization priorities to enable future capabilities and support for the Army’s training and sustaining priorities to assure near-term and future readiness – this includes a strong and expandable organic industrial base. The Army’s modernization priorities include secure command and control, long-range precision fires, and air and missile defense, which are proving to be indispensable capabilities for successful ground combat in Ukraine. Inclusion of multiyear procurement authorities provide planning and budget stability, along with flexibility and cost-savings for the Army and the industrial base. While the Army undergoes its most significant modernization effort in decades, it continues to answer the nation’s call domestically and across the globe. Indeed, the Army has positioned capable forces in Europe in the wake of Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine, makes key contributions in the Middle East and Indo-Pacific as part of the joint force to counter Iran and compete with an increasingly aggressive China, and also brings life-saving support in response to natural disasters.

AUSA highlights the Army’s enduring importance to American interests and security, and to that of our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. As our nation faces the multifaceted challenges posed by an increasingly capable and hostile China, and advances made by North Korea, in particular; the Army retains the capacity to provide ground-based deterrent capabilities, facilitate and sustain joint operations, train allies and partners, and maintain stability in the region. We support Senate Section 1341 which would establish an Indo-Pacific Campaigning Initiative and Senate Section 2801 which would provide authority for certain military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law. It is clear, the Army must be properly resourced to meet its mission in the Indo-Pacific and around the globe. Indeed, a ready and capable Army is indispensable to national security. Once again, we urge you to swiftly pass the NDAA and authorize additional resources that reflect the demonstrated need and urgency that our national security challenges require.

Thank you for your continued service to our nation and consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert B. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert B. Brown  
General, U.S. Army, Retired  
President and CEO