

Dear Representative:

During consideration of H.R. 8774, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025, there is one critical amendment that we are asking you to support. Taxpayers for Common Sense is committed to defending the interests of taxpayers and ensuring appropriate oversight of federal spending, and this bipartisan amendment will help on both fronts.

We urge you to vote in favor of Amendment #72 by Reps. Davidson (R-OH), Garamendi (D-CA), McClintock (R-CA), and Jayapal (D-WA) to prohibit funds from being used to carry out the unfunded priorities lists, extrabudgetary wish lists of items not included in the Pentagon's budget request. The Pentagon opposes the requirement for these lists because, in the words of Pentagon Comptroller Mike McCord, "having multiple individual senior leaders submit priorities for additional funding absent the benefit of weighing costs and benefits across the department is not an effective way to illuminate our top joint priorities."¹

Furthermore, these unbudgeted wish lists are frequently funded at the expense of actual priorities included in the Pentagon's budget request, and against the express wishes of the military leaders who submit these lists. For example, Army Chief of Staff General Randy George specifically requested in his unfunded priority list "that these unfunded priorities not displace anything on the Army's FY25 PB [President's Budget] request."² Yet, the House NDAA authorized funding for some of the Army's unfunded requests while making substantial cuts to the Army's Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E), Procurement, and Operation and Maintenance accounts.³

Our national debt is over \$34.7 trillion. Unfunded wish lists are a recipe for deepening this fiscal crisis, ultimately at the expense of national security. With interest payments on our nation's debt set to surpass military spending this year, we simply cannot afford to fund unbudgeted requests that are not weighed against the entire military's needs.⁴

¹ John M. Donnelly, "Pentagon comes out against law requiring military wish lists," Roll Call, March 28, 2023, <https://rollcall.com/2023/03/28/pentagon-comes-out-against-law-requiring-militarywishlists/?ref=com.devaary.cqrc.rollcall.v01>

² Randy George, "Letter to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers," March 2024, <https://www.taxpayer.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/fy25-army-unfunded-priorities-letter.pdf>

³ Gabe Murphy, "Pentagon budgeting shouldn't look like this," The Hill, June 1, 2024, <https://thehill.com/opinion/congress-blog/4697854-pentagon-budgeting-shouldnt-look-like-this/>

⁴ Avik Roy, "CBO: Federal Interest Payments Now Exceed Defense Spending," Forbes, Feb. 7, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theapothecary/2024/02/07/cbo-federal-interest-payments-now-exceeddefense-spending/>

Should you have any questions about this amendment, please do not hesitate to contact me or our policy analyst Gabe Murphy at gabe@taxpayer.net. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steve Ellis
President