

Committee will not seek a sequential referral or object to floor consideration of the bill text approved at your Committee markup. This decision in no way diminishes or alters the jurisdictional interests of the Foreign Affairs Committee in this bill, any subsequent amendments, or similar legislation. I request your support for the appointment of House Foreign Affairs conferees during any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

Finally, I respectfully request that you include this letter and your response in your committee report on the bill and in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 4909 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Committee on Foreign Affairs has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES,
May 2, 2016.

Hon. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORNBERRY: I write to you concerning H.R. 4909, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, which contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence ("the Committee"). The Committee recognizes the need for proceeding expeditiously to floor consideration of this important bill. Therefore, I do not intend to request a sequential referral.

This waiver is conditional on our mutual understanding that my decision to forego Committee consideration of this legislation does not diminish or otherwise affect any future claim over the matters in the bill which fall within the Committee's jurisdiction, and that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging the Committee's jurisdictional interest will be placed into the committee report on H.R. 4909 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of this measure on the House floor.

I also intend to seek appointment of Committee members to any House-Senate conference on this legislation and request your support if such a request is made. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this and other matters between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, because it fails to support our troops serving overseas. The House Armed Services Committee reported a bill that uses a budget gimmick to circumvent funding caps Congress passed into law on a bipartisan basis, and by doing so it not only undermines the budget process, it puts our troops at risk. The bill cuts \$18 billion from what our military commanders say is needed to support our troops overseas, and shifts those funds into the base defense budget to purchase billions of dollars of weapon systems the Defense Department did not even request. Consequently, the bill provides only enough funding for the troops deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq through April, 2017. This would then force Congress to pass an emergency supplemental to ensure that troops who are serving in harm's way have the resources they need for the remainder of the year. We shouldn't gamble with the troops we send off to battle. They deserve predictable support for the entire year as they execute their missions, particularly in view of the dangers they face.

Representative ELLISON offered an amendment to undo part of this gimmick. His amendment cuts \$9.4 billion of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds the bill shifted to procurement for weapons DoD didn't ask for and puts it back into operations and maintenance, where DoD requested it for overseas operations. I supported the amendment because it puts the troops first. It gives them the certainty they need while they carry out their missions. It is also what our military com-

manders say they need. Unfortunately, that amendment did not pass.

As the Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, I also have worked hard to defend the integrity of the budget process and to end the abuse of the OCO designation to circumvent budget caps. I offered a bipartisan amendment with Representative MULVANEY that attempts to help reduce this abuse in the future. The amendment codifies criteria developed by OMB to clarify when military spending should be designated as contingency operations. To provide the necessary resources for a strong military and vital domestic investments, it is imperative our budget process be transparent and deliberative. Using budget gimmicks perpetuates bad decisions, increases debt by obfuscating spending, and in this case, puts the troops at risk.

This NDAA once again abdicates Congressional responsibility to revise and update the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). The 2001 AUMF has been used to conduct a broad range of military operations across the world for the past fifteen years. Rather than act to narrowly target that authority to meet our current operational and national security requirements, Congress has continued to provide the Executive with a blank check to deploy American ground troops in many places in the Middle East and elsewhere around the globe. Representative LEE offered an amendment to force Congress to meet its constitutional obligations regarding its war powers. While I do not believe we should totally eliminate all authorities under the 2001 AUMF, I do believe we need to dramatically reduce its scope and end the grant of blank check authority to the Executive.

The NDAA should focus only on soldiers and their needs. However, Republicans have used it as a vehicle to insert inflammatory and non-germane amendments. It includes an amendment that reverses the President's Executive Order that prevents federal contractors from discriminating against LGBT employees. It removes environmental protections, impedes development of alternative fuel sources to decrease our dependence on foreign fuel, and it prevents the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

I applaud certain measures such as the 2.1 percent pay raise for armed services, research to combat the opioid epidemic that is impacting our veterans, increased funding to combat veteran homelessness, and expanding the parental leave policy for active duty service members. I remain committed to fighting for these important issues but I cannot support the unacceptable budget gimmicks and policy riders in the underlying bill.

Mr. Chair, I vote nay.

IN RECOGNITION OF COLONEL
ROCKY McPHERSON

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2016

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of retired Marine Colonel Rocky McPherson, who is retiring after 50 years of service to our nation and the state of Florida.

Upon graduating from the United States Naval Academy in 1966, Rocky was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United