

Duckworth Secures Provisions To Support Servicemembers And Enhance Military Modernization Efforts In Committee-passed 2022 Defense Bill

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Chair of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee’s (SASC) Airland Subcommittee, highlighted several key priorities she authored and successfully included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that passed SASC on an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 23-3. The FY2022 NDAA, which is now set to be considered by the full U.S. Senate, authorizes funding for the U.S. Department of

Defense (DoD), sets our nation's defense policy and ensures that our servicemembers have the tools they need to defend our nation. The Committee-passed FY2022 NDAA also includes a 2.7% pay raise for our troops.

“Our troops deployed across the globe deserve to know that our country stands behind them as they and their families sacrifice to defend our country and our Constitution,” Duckworth said. “Though I do not support every provision in this compromise, I’m proud that it includes a well-deserved pay raise for our troops and several of my provisions to tackle military hunger, enhance Air Force capacity, strengthen military parental leave, increase monthly incentive pay for Guardsmen and women as well as Reservists with critical skills, improve access to military child care and much more. Congress must send a clear message that we have our troops’ backs, which is why I’ll keep working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue improving this bill and ensure its swift passage.”

Duckworth is an Iraq War Veteran who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years before retiring from military service in 2014 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She served on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) during her four years in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she authored numerous provisions aimed at improving servicemember quality of life, reducing government waste and promoting job creation. Last year, Duckworth also [authored](#) several amendments that were included in the FY2021 NDAA to help make sure our female servicemembers are properly equipped for combat, bolster transportation infrastructure and logistics systems, accelerate rotary wing modernization efforts and invest more DoD resources into emerging regions like Southeast Asia.

Key Duckworth provisions included in this year's NDAA would help:

- **Support a Strong and Ready Total Force by:**
 - **Addressing the Scourge of Military Hunger:** A Duckworth-authored provision would require DoD to create a basic needs allowance for servicemembers below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines to assist them with affording basic necessities, particularly food.
 - This provision codifies a modified version of the [Military Hunger Prevention Act](#), a bill introduced by Duckworth and U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) in April of this year.
 - **“Far too many of our military families experience hunger because of unintended barriers that make them unable to access essential nutrition assistance programs,”** Duckworth said regarding this provision. **“As someone whose family relied on public nutrition programs after my father lost his job, and who served in the uniform for most of my adult life, I’m so glad this**

provision to help make sure our servicemembers and their families have enough to eat has been included in the NDAA.”

- **Increasing Military Parental Leave:** A Duckworth-authored provision would allow members of the Armed Forces to take up to a total of 12 weeks paid parental leave across the one year period following the birth of a child, the adoption of a child or placement of a minor child for foster care. The legislation also creates greater flexibility in the military parental leave program to better serve families and commanders. Another Duckworth-authored provision would encourage DoD to build more flexibility into the Career Intermision Program.
 - These provisions codify parts of Duckworth’s [Service member Parental Leave Equity Act](#) that she introduced with U.S. Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA-14) in May of this year.
 - **“Our military’s recruitment, retention and overall readiness are harmed when a servicemember is forced to return to duty less than a month after the birth of their child,”** Duckworth said regarding this provision. **“This provision would help address this critical issue facing our military families, giving them the flexibility they need. I’ll continue working to make sure it is included in the final version of this bill.”**
- **Ensuring Pay Parity Between Reserves and Regular Component:** A Duckworth-authored provision that would make sure each service is paying its Guard and Reserve members the same monthly incentive pay for maintaining critical skills and taking on hazardous duty as those in the active component.
 - This provision codifies a modified version of Duckworth’s [National Guard and Reserve Incentive Pay Parity Act](#), which she introduced this May.
 - **“Right now, National Guard and Reserve servicemembers who have specific skill sets and qualifications are only paid a fraction of what their active duty counterparts are paid,”** said Duckworth regarding this provision. **“Every member of the National Guard and Reserve, whether active or reserve duty, deserves to be fairly compensated for mission-essential skills and work, and I’m glad to have secured this provision that would help ensure that all servicemembers are paid equally.”**
- **Pushing DoD to Address Military Child Care Issues:** A Duckworth-authored provision that would encourage the DoD to seek creative ways address the lack of access to military child care and require a DoD review and briefing on any health and safety violations at installation Child Development Centers.

- This provision cites a number of initiatives that would be implemented by Duckworth's [*Military Childcare Expansion Act*](#) that she introduced with U. S. Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA-14) in May of this year.
 - **“Our military’s recruitment, retention and overall readiness are harmed when a military family can’t find quality childcare for their children,”** Duckworth said regarding the provision.
“Accessible childcare is a necessity—not a luxury—for military parents just as much as it is for any other parent, so I urge DoD to quickly implement the initiatives outlined in this provision.”
- **Prohibiting the Use of Burn Pits:** A Duckworth-authored provision that would prohibit the use of burn pits unless explicitly waived by the U.S. Secretary of Defense for extraordinary reasons.
- **Punishing Violent Extremist Activity Under the UCMJ:** A Duckworth-authored provision requiring a report from DoD on adding a punitive article on violent extremism to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). If adopted, such an article would provide DoD additional tools to prosecute extremists within the ranks.
- **Improving Entry-Level Language Testing:** A Duckworth-authored provision requiring DoD to report on the gaps in administering Defense Language Proficiency Tests to entry-level servicemembers who possess critical language skills, in order to improve and increase testing. Due to a lack of testing, the DoD fails to identify talent and critical language capability already present in the force, and servicemembers miss out on incentive pay and possible opportunities that could otherwise arise if the service was tracking their language proficiency.
- **Supporting Critical Medical Training for Our Reserve Components:** A provision authored by Duckworth that would support training that provides members of the military medical corps and public health professionals with state-of-the-art knowledge and hands-on skills required to provide advanced acute management for trauma patients and prevention, interventions and treatment for infectious disease outbreaks.
- **Improving Body Composition Standards:** A provision authored by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) that Duckworth urged the Committee to include that would require the DoD to revise body composition standards so they are based on health science, not physical appearance. The science-based standards that would be developed under this provision would lead to better physical fitness and readiness for servicemembers.
- **Promoting Equipment Parity Between the Reserve and Active Components:** A Duckworth-authored provision encouraging DoD to consider aging non-aircraft equipment, including older-model platforms, that are often

housed in the Guard and Reserves when prioritizing and fielding new equipment sets across the force. Outdated platforms present operational and readiness risks and can leave units with reduced capabilities when deployed.

- Lead in the Indo-Pacific Region by:

- **Increasing Engagement with Taiwan:** A Duckworth-authored provision requiring the DoD to identify specific opportunities to engage with Taiwan in multi-lateral exercises and forums.
 - Duckworth recently [travelled to Taiwan](#) with a bipartisan group of Senators to underscore U.S. support for Taiwan, including on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. During the trip, the Senators announced a U.S. donation of 750,000 COVID-19 vaccines to Taiwan as part of President Biden's plan to provide vaccines to our global partners in need.
- **Promoting Further Partnership with Taiwan:** A Duckworth-authored provision that would encourage a partnership between Taiwan and the National Guard and require an annual briefing by the U.S. Secretary of Defense on this cooperation.
 - This provision codifies the Cornyn-Duckworth [Taiwan Partnership Act](#).
 - **“Taiwan is an important strategic partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region and we should evaluate the feasibility of enhanced cooperation between our two peoples on important issues like emergency response, cyber defense, education, cultural exchange and advisor programs,”** Sen. Duckworth said regarding the provision.
- **Accelerating Rotary Wing Aircraft Modernization:** A Duckworth-authored provision authorizing an additional \$3.5 million for Future Vertical Lift, one of the Army's six modernization priorities and essential technology for competing in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Enabling USINDOPACOM to Enhance Deterrence with Regional Partners:** A Duckworth-authored provision that secures funding for INDOPACOM's Mission Partner Environment (MPE) system, a top Unfunded Requirement for the Command, which helps enhance interoperability and communications throughout the Indo-Pacific for the U.S. and our partner nations.
- **Integrating Existing Testing and Training Locations in the U.S. and the Indo-Pacific:** A Duckworth-authored provision that secures funding for INDOPACOM's Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimentation Capability (PMTEC), a top Unfunded Requirement for the Command, which supports the integration of existing ranges, training areas and test facilities to support USINDOPACOM's initiative to levy cutting-edge experimentation and increase the overall readiness and interoperability of U.S. forces across all domains.

- Build the Logistics Enterprise for a Combat-Credible Deterrent by:
 - **Establishing a Minimum Total Aircraft Inventory for C-130s:** A Duckworth-authored provision mandating a minimum total aircraft inventory of 292 C-130s for the Air Force, ensuring that the Air Force has sufficient capacity to carry out critical missions both domestically and overseas.
 - Last November, Duckworth [joined](#) a bipartisan group of Senators in advocating for a large enough C-130 aircraft fleet in Illinois and across the country to support active duty missions as well as respond to disasters and emergencies at home.
 - The effort supported [state requests](#) led by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and 13 other Governors.
 - Duckworth also recently [secured a commitment](#) from General Charles Brown, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, to address the gap in advanced air mobility capability that is suitable for distributed warfare in the Indo-Pacific and to work with the National Guard on C-130 issues.
 - In Peoria, Illinois, the 182nd Airlift Wing's current C-130H mission performs the tactical portion of various airlift missions and has a strong history of outstanding performance, including the highest C-130H mission capability rate in the Air National Guard from 2009-2017. The 182nd has also achieved the most fully mission capable C-130 hours since June 2013 while flying the most hours since October 2012 for the deployed location.
 - **Investing in Additive Manufacturing at Rock Island Arsenal:** A Duckworth-authored provision securing a \$15 million investment in the Army's development of additive manufacturing capabilities in austere operating environments.
 - **Developing Promising Unmanned Technology for Sustainment Delivery:** A Duckworth-authored provision securing a \$1.5 million investment above the President's Budget request and report language noting the importance of maintaining a domestic unmanned aircraft systems supplier base.
 - **Aligning DoD Procurement with Additive Manufacturing Capabilities:** A Duckworth-authored provision supporting additive manufacturing (AM) as a complement to traditional manufacturing technologies in defense supply chains that requires a briefing on issues related to licensing and intellectual property (IP) use that may limit DoD's ability to effectively use AM.
 - **Taking Advantage of Government-wide Logistics Supply Capabilities:** A Duckworth-authored provision expressing support for DoD using other agencies' capabilities when it comes to innovative acquisition practices for logistics and supply, like the General Services Administrations (GSA) Retail Operations, including their fourth party logistics capabilities.

- **Incorporating Innovative Advanced Manufacturing Technology Into Top Army Priorities:** A Duckworth-authored provision encouraging the Army to continue its research on jointless hull and additive manufacturing technology for the Next Generation Combat Vehicle program.
- **Mitigating Risk and Cost-overruns Surrounding Pre-positioned Stock:** A Duckworth-authored provision supporting the Army's ability to rapidly project power in the Indo-Pacific Region by recognizing the need to address required Army Pre-Positioned Stock -3 (Afloat) fleet maintenance and encouraging the Department to seek solutions to mitigate this risk.
- Tackle Climate Change and Protect the Environment by:
 - **Continuing the Effort to Remove Toxic PFAS from Servicemembers' and Military Families' Drinking Water:** A Duckworth-authored provision extending authority to transfer funds to studies of the health implications of PFAS. The bill also authorizes \$15 million for the CDC to assess human health related to PFAS.
 - **Improving Opportunity for DoD Facilities to Use Energy Efficient HVAC Systems:** A Duckworth-authored provision requiring DoD's Undersecretary for Acquisition and Sustainment to provide a justification for policy that inhibits installation of more energy efficient HVAC systems and report language stating SASC's support for efforts to reduce DoD's infrastructure energy usage through the installation of energy efficient HVAC systems.
 - **Accelerating Adoption of Electrical Vehicle Technology by the DoD:** A Duckworth-authored provision clarifying the existing authorities that DoD may use to purchase alternatively fueled vehicles (AFV), urging the DoD to start preparations for wider adoption of AFV now and requiring a briefing from the DoD.
- Restore American Competitiveness by:
 - **Building a Highly Skilled Industrial Base:** A Duckworth-authored provision securing a \$3 million investment in a program of certification-based training courses for the Defense Industrial Base in the 10 most critical future of work digital manufacturing roles, including cybersecurity for manufacturing.
 - **Investing in Efficient and Effective Prototyping:** A Duckworth-authored provision securing a \$5 million investment in high performance computing to help the DoD perform virtual prototype design and evaluation, which helps efficiently verify actual weapon performance and safety far faster and at reduced costs.