



June 11, 2024

The Honorable Michael Burgess
Chair
House Rules Committee
2000 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McGovern
Ranking Member
House Rules Committee
H-152, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Burgess, Ranking Member McGovern, and Members of the House Rules Committee:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union (NTU), the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write asking you to make in order several pro-taxpayer amendments to H.R. 8070, the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The majority of the recommended amendments are bipartisan and all would help reduce the deficit and control spending of taxpayer funds.

- **Amendment #39, from Rep. Garamendi (D-CA) and Amendment #755 by Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI)**

Amendment #39 and #755 would remove the minimum threshold of 400 intercontinental ballistic missiles from being required for deployment within the United States. Such mandated limits can be costly and inefficient over time, especially given recent [cost overruns](#) in ICBMs that portend massive liabilities for taxpayers.

- **Amendment #192, from Rep. Lee (D-CA), Rep. Pocan (D-WI), Rep. Espaillat (D-NY), Rep. Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Bush (D-MO), Rep. Nadler (D-NY), Rep. Tlaib (D-MI), Rep. Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Ramirez (D-IL), Rep. Hoyle (D-OR), Rep. Garcia (D-IL), Del. Norton (D-DC), Rep. Omar (D-MN)**

This amendment would greatly contribute to bringing authorized military spending under control by cutting \$100 billion from the topline while retaining pay for personnel. In this dire fiscal climate, where net interest payments on the federal debt are projected to soon outpace non-defense or defense discretionary spending, our national security is being threatened. Taxpayers deserve serious spending restraint across all of government.

- **Amendment #200, from Rep. Hageman (R-WY) and Rep. Lee (D-CA)**

Similarly concerning for taxpayers is the approaching \$1 trillion milestone for the military's spending budget. Ideally, every federal entity's budget should begin from clearly defined needs rather than a minimum amount. Nonetheless, this amendment would precipitate a useful exercise, by requiring the Pentagon to submit a plan on measures the Defense Department will take to prevent the budget from reaching this monumentally expensive inflection point. Already, the United States [spends nearly half](#) of the world's annual military budget. Allowing the budget to surge to \$1 trillion would also cost more in inflation-adjusted dollars than the [United States spent per year during World War II](#).

- **Amendment #361, from Rep. Porter (D-CA) and Rep. Brecheen (R-OK)**

This good government amendment would help restore taxpayer confidence in Pentagon leadership by preventing senior officials from owning or trading stocks of companies that received over \$1 billion in revenue from the Department of Defense during the previous year. The appearance of personal gain from a position of public trust or based on non-public information damages faith in the government.

- **Amendment #426, from Rep. Biggs (R-AZ), Rep. Crane (R-AZ), Rep. Lee (D-CA), and Rep. Pocan (D-WI)**

This amendment, which NTU has long supported, would require the Pentagon to perform an audit. If the Defense Department fails, the discretionary budget for the agency or department will be reduced by .5 percent. Taxpayers deserve to know that their resources are being spent and stewarded with the utmost care. An audit is a nearly universally-accepted method of ensuring the financial integrity of an organization and its internal controls. The [continuing inability](#) of the Pentagon to successfully complete an audit should prompt Congressional action and budgetary penalties.

- **Amendment #524, from Rep. Jayapal (D-WA), Rep. McClintock (R-CA), Rep. Garamendi (D-CA), Rep Davidson (R-OH), and Rep. Moulton (D-MA)**

NTU signed on [to a coalition letter](#) to Rules last week advocating for this amendment. For background, Unfunded Priorities Lists or UPLs were once an informal practice wherein service heads would submit to Congress a wish list of programs. However, they have become an annual requirement that contributes to a bloated budget. By removing incentives to prioritize their funding requests due to a statutory mandate, UPLs add further hazard for both appropriators and military leaders by creating a spending echo chamber that serves special interests rather than taxpayer interests. As [research](#) has [suggested](#), these UPLs result in billions in extra taxpayer dollars being funneled to programs that are not even top priorities of the services themselves. Even Pentagon leadership has grown to support an end to the UPL requirement.

Although other potential amendments may be offered that will concern taxpayers for better or worse, NTU urges the Rules Committee to rule the preceding amendments in order since these are strong taxpayer-friendly measures with primarily bipartisan support that can help rein in excessive spending.

Thank you,

Nicholas Johns

Senior Policy & Government Affairs Manager

National Taxpayers Union