

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member, Defense Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations

Rules Committee—FY 2014 Defense Appropriations bill
July 18, 2013

I request that the Rules Committee report an open rule for the Fiscal Year 2014 Defense Appropriations bill

I strongly support the underlying bill. Once again the Defense Subcommittee under Chairman Young's leadership and the Appropriations Committee have produced a bipartisan bill that provides for the needs of US troops at home and abroad. The funding and priorities set in this bill are of vital importance to the quality of life, readiness and investments for our Armed Forces.

The bill supports our troops:

- It provides requested increase for military pay and an increase of \$580 million above the request for a military pay raise of 1.8% versus 1% as proposed by the Administration.
- The Committee included language to expedite the execution of an integrated electronic health record program between the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration.
- The bill includes \$25 million above the request to implement a Sexual Assault Special Victims Program as well as \$156.5 million for the base programs.
- The bill includes \$20 million above the request for suicide prevention and outreach consistent with the funding level of the past two years.

The bill supports the Guard and Reserve:

- The Committee includes \$1.5 billion above the request for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account to fund equipment requirements of the National Guard and Reserve components.

There are major funding reductions proposed in the bill as well:

- The bill cuts \$617.8 million from the Joint Strike Fighter program. The reduction addresses unjustified cost growth and unjustified concurrency estimates for the program.
- Civilian personnel pay for fiscal year 2014 was reduced by \$437 million given the absence of any pay raise for civilian employees at the Department.
- The bill cuts \$112 million due to an overstatement of Army travel requirements.

The bill provides \$85.5 billion for operations in Afghanistan and includes language setting important limitations for DoD as enacted in previous Defense Appropriations measures:

- The bill prohibits the use of funds for the direct personal benefit of the President of Afghanistan.
- The bill prohibits obligation of funds unless the Secretary of Defense certifies that Rosoboronexport complies with Defense Contract Audit Agency guidance, has not delivered advanced surface-to-air missiles (SAMS) to Syria and has signed no new contracts with the Assad regime. The Secretary of Defense may waive this provision for national security purposes but must provide a report justifying the waiver if elected.
- The bill prohibits permanent U.S. bases in Iraq and Afghanistan and controlling oil resources of Iraq.
- The bill prohibits torture, degrading or inhumane treatment of detainees.

This bill provides the resources needed for our troops and their families at home and our personnel deployed abroad. While I would prefer an open rule, I believe this is a good, bipartisan bill that I will support.