

Democrats join Republicans to grant Trump \$1 trillion in military spending for 2026

Andre Damon
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The U.S. House of Representatives voted Wednesday to pass the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), authorizing \$901 billion in military spending—the largest Pentagon spending bill in US history.

The legislation, which is expected to pass the Senate next week, received overwhelming bipartisan support, with Democratic Party leaders voting in favor, as President Donald Trump threatens to launch a major new war in Latin America.

The vote was 312-112, with 115 Democrats joining 197 Republicans to pass the act. Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Minority Whip Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar of California all cast “Yea” votes.

Combined with the \$156 billion in supplemental military funding included in the reconciliation bill signed in July, the NDAA pushes total military spending for fiscal year 2026 to over \$1 trillion—a new record in absolute terms and a level relative to GDP unseen since World War II.

To put this figure in perspective: The 2015 NDAA authorized approximately \$600 billion in military spending. The \$901 billion authorized Wednesday is \$8 billion more than Trump himself requested in May.

The massive military spending bill comes as the Trump administration has deployed more than 15,000 troops, a dozen warships and scores of aircraft to the Caribbean and Pacific in preparation for military action against Venezuela. This week, the Vermont Air National Guard confirmed that F-35 stealth fighters are being deployed to the Caribbean for “Operation Southern Spear.” EA-18G Growler electronic warfare jets, typically used to suppress enemy air defenses before airstrikes, have also arrived at Roosevelt Roads

in Puerto Rico. The deployment is the largest US military mobilization in the Caribbean since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

In an interview Tuesday, Trump declared that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s “days are numbered” and refused to rule out sending ground troops. US forces have already killed at least 87 people in drone and missile strikes against boats in the region.

Yet the Democratic Party voted to hand Trump the resources for what threatens to become a major war of aggression—with no serious opposition.

The bill massively expands US nuclear weapons programs, shipbuilding and aircraft procurement in preparation for what the Pentagon openly describes as great-power conflict with China. According to the House Armed Services Committee summary, the United States is now “operating in the most dangerous threat environment since World War II” and faces “an axis of aggressors comprised of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.”

The NDAA allocates \$34 billion for nuclear weapons programs, continuing a sweeping nuclear buildup that began under the Obama administration and has accelerated under every subsequent president. In 2016, Obama announced a plan to spend \$1 trillion over 30 years to replace all three legs of the nuclear triad—land-based missiles, submarine-launched missiles and strategic bombers. That figure has since ballooned to an estimated \$1.5 trillion.

The first Trump administration withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019, freeing the US to develop a new generation of nuclear-capable missiles. The Biden administration continued this trajectory, and the current Trump administration is now accelerating it further.

This year’s NDAA funds development of the

Sentinel ICBM to replace Minuteman III, a new nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile and a third Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine. The legislation also prohibits the Pentagon from reducing the nation's ICBM fleet below 400 missiles—mandating that the US maintain launch-ready nuclear weapons capable of destroying human civilization multiple times over.

Another \$13 billion goes to the “Golden Dome” missile defense system, with \$2.6 billion more for hypersonic weapons capable of striking targets at over five times the speed of sound.

The bill authorizes \$26 billion for shipbuilding, focused on expanding the nuclear submarine fleet. A single Columbia-class submarine costs approximately \$9 billion; Virginia-class attack submarines cost over \$3 billion each. The NDAA also funds expansion of private nuclear shipyard capacity, signaling a long-term commitment to naval buildup.

Aircraft procurement receives over \$38 billion. The bill funds 69 F-35 stealth fighters at a cost of roughly \$123 million per plane, totaling \$8.5 billion. Billions more go toward next-generation sixth-generation fighters, the B-21 Raider strategic bomber and aerial refueling tankers to project US power globally.

A *New York Times* editorial published this week declared that the US must not be “overmatched” by adversaries and supported a major expansion of military capabilities. Citing a classified Pentagon assessment called the “Overmatch brief,” the *Times* reported that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said last November that in war games against China, “we lose every time.”

“The picture it paints is consistent and disturbing,” the *Times* wrote. It added that “in the short term, the transformation of the American military may require additional spending, primarily to rebuild our industrial base.”

In other words, the “newspaper of record” aligned with the Democratic Party is openly advocating for even greater military spending than the record \$1 trillion now authorized, framing it as necessary to prepare for war with China.

The trillion-dollar military expenditure comes amid deepening economic strain on American households. According to a *Politico* poll conducted last month, nearly half of Americans find groceries, utility bills, healthcare, housing and transportation difficult to

afford. More than a quarter—27 percent—said they have skipped a medical check-up because of costs within the last two years, and 23 percent said they have skipped a prescription dose for the same reason. While working people are forced to choose between food and medicine, Congress has voted to hand over \$1 trillion for global wars and the defense contractors who profit on them.



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