

Congressman Hudson Secures Key Provisions in National Defense Bill

By Administrator

Friday, 03 September 2021 16:06 - Last Updated Friday, 03 September 2021 16:07

U.S. Representative Richard Hudson (NC-08), Fort Bragg's Congressman and a voice for veterans, has helped secure several key provisions for active-duty servicemembers, military families and veterans in the FY 22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The annual defense bill was approved by the House Armed Services Committee yesterday and will now move to consideration by the full House of Representatives. Thanks to a Republican-led effort, an additional \$23.9 billion for the Department of Defense (DoD) was also authorized. "As Fort Bragg's Congressman, it's an honor to represent so many active-duty soldiers, their families and our veterans. That's why in this year's Defense Bill, I am proud to help secure critical bipartisan provisions including funding for Fort Bragg and expanded ways to improve the lives of our military families," said Rep. Hudson. "As the recent mission in Afghanistan demonstrated, nothing is more important than supporting the readiness of our troops and military families like those at Fort Bragg. While this bill is a good start, I will continue to work with my colleagues to support the military and veterans in North Carolina and throughout our country."

Rep. Hudson has sponsored legislation and advocated for many priorities included in this year's defense bill. A breakdown is found below.

Representative Hudson's Priorities Secured in the NDAA

Military Family Readiness/ Education/ Healthcare

- Includes the Counting Overlooked Base Impact Aid (COBIA) Act, introduced by Rep. Hudson and Rep. Rob Wittman in July.
- Ensures schools educating service-connected children receive the full sum of federal Impact Aid to which they are currently entitled.
- Authorizes an increase in funding of \$70 million for Impact Aid — \$50 million for supplemental Impact Aid and \$20 million for Impact Aid for military children with severe disabilities.
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Builds on expansion to Impact Aid funding, critical for communities surrounding Fort Bragg, secured by Rep. Hudson last year.

- Requires a report on the Preservation of the Force and Family Program (POTFF) for Special Operations Forces (SOF).
- The report will provide progress of implementation for SOF.
- The report will include plans for improvement to POTFF to better address needs of the SOF community.
- Builds on improvements to POTFF secured by Rep. Hudson in last year's NDAA.
- Requires a report to modernize the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) calculation for military families.
- Mandates a review of the Military Health System's blast injury policy to include Traumatic Brain Injury
- Directs the DoD to standardize definitions and tracking of suicide attempts and suicidal behavior across all military services.

Military Construction

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- Reduces the threshold amount for Base Commander's Military Construction (MILCON) project funding approval. Current law requires Secretary-level approval.

- By allowing projects below \$2 million to be approved at a lower level, this will allow bases – such as Fort Bragg – to do routine maintenance, upgrade projects, and smaller MILCON projects much easier and faster.

FY2022 Military Construction for Fort Bragg

- Total funding: \$27.2 million

- Emergency Water System - \$7.7 million

- MW Microgrid Utilizing Existing and New Generators - \$19.5 million

- Meets several priorities identified by Rep. Hudson in testimony to the Appropriations Committee in May.

PFAS

- Builds on amendments Rep. Hudson has secured to address PFAS contamination in the Cape Fear River region.

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- Requires the DoD to publish results of drinking and groundwater PFAS testing conducted on or near military installations or former defense sites.

- Requires the DoD to review current practices to prevent or mitigate Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) spills and develop best practices for spill prevention and mitigation.

- Increases transparency and facilitates information-sharing with defense communities impacted by PFAS contamination.

- Requires DoD to offer PFAS exposure evaluation and testing for servicemembers who wants it as part of their annual exam.

End Strength/ Pay and Compensation

- Authorizes active duty end strength levels (U.S. Army: 485,000)

- Provides a basic needs allowance for low-income servicemembers

Military Justice and Sexual Assault

- Builds on legislation sponsored by Rep. Hudson to combat sexual assault in the military.

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- Ensures that survivors of sexual assault are notified of the outcomes of any administrative action taken against their perpetrator.

- Requires that the Secretary of Defense provide to victims a list of approved civilian victim service organizations from which a victim may seek additional legal assistance, legal representation, or other related services.