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House Passes Defense Authorization Bill on Largely Party-Line Vote

By **Legis1 Editorial** · Edited by Matthew Dougherty, Joanne Levine
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Why It Matters

The House passed H.R. 8800, the [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027](#), largely along party lines. The bill authorizes defense programs and policies for the coming fiscal year and advances one of Congress' annual must-pass national security measures. Republicans overwhelmingly backed the legislation, while most Democrats opposed it.

The Path to Passage

The House approved H.R. 8800 on Roll Call 278 by a [vote](#) of 216-212. Republicans voted 209-7 in favor, while Democrats voted 6-205 in favor and opposition, respectively. One independent also voted yes.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), chair of the House Armed Services Committee and the bill's sponsor, described the legislation as essential to addressing national security challenges and argued it fully funds the president's requested defense budget.

Most Democrats opposed the measure, with only six voting in favor. Democratic lawmakers objected to several policy provisions adopted during committee consideration and floor debate, although the legislation retained bipartisan support from a small number of members.

The six Democrats who voted for the bill were Reps. Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Don Davis (D-NC), Jared Golden (D-ME), Adam Gray (D-CA), Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX) and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA). Seven Republicans also opposed the legislation, including Reps. Josh Brecheen (R-OK), Tim Burchett (R-TN), Elijah Crane (R-AZ), Harriet Hageman (R-WY), Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL), Chip Roy (R-TX), and Massie.

The Trump administration had not released a formal Statement of Administration Policy on H.R. 8800 before House passage. While the bill generally aligns with the administration's defense priorities, the absence of a formal SAP means the White House had not taken an official position on the House-passed measure.

Partisan Perspectives

The vote reflected an unusually sharp partisan divide for the annual defense authorization bill, which has historically attracted broader bipartisan support. The controversy stemmed from opposition to a provision in the bill that calls for expanding defense technology cooperation and integration between the U.S. and Israeli militaries.

Massie and Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) introduced a bipartisan amendment that would have struck Section 219 from H.R. 8800, removing the provision expanding U.S.-Israel defense technology cooperation and integration. However, the House Rules Committee prevented the House from debating or voting on the proposal. After the amendment was blocked, Massie and Khanna announced they would oppose final passage of the NDAA, citing the inclusion of Section 219 and the House's refusal to allow a vote on its removal.

Political Stakes

House passage sends the legislation to the Senate, where lawmakers will consider their own version of the NDAA before negotiating a final conference agreement.

Several senators have raised concerns about the Senate NDAA that overlap with the debate surrounding Section 219, though for different reasons. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) has been the most outspoken critic of the provision, arguing it would further institutionalize U.S.-Israel military integration and calling for it to be removed from the bill.

Sens. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) have both voted against advancing the Senate NDAA, citing concerns about the bill's expanded defense spending, the Trump administration's military actions in Iran, and Congress' failure to assert its constitutional war powers. While neither senator has publicly singled out Section 219 in official statements, their opposition reflects broader concerns that the legislation would deepen U.S. military commitments in the Middle East without sufficient congressional oversight.

Worth Noting

H.R. 8800 generated significant lobbying activity from defense contractors, trade associations and advocacy organizations because of the broad range of defense policies addressed by the annual authorization bill.

The measure was introduced on May 13 by Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL) with Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, as its sole original Democratic cosponsor.

The Bottom Line

The House's approval of H.R. 8800 illustrates the increasingly partisan politics surrounding the annual defense authorization bill. Although six Democrats joined nearly all Republicans in supporting the legislation, and seven Republicans voted against it, the measure advanced with overwhelmingly Republican support and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Correction: An earlier version of this article, published July 22, included an incorrect Roll Call number and vote count. The article has been updated to reflect the correct Roll Call number and vote tally.

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