



June 6, 2016

OPPOSE MCCAIN SPENDING AMENDMENT TO THE NDAA

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we strongly urge you to oppose Senator McCain's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which would increase defense spending by \$18 billion through the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). The McCain amendment would bust through the spending caps set out in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA) and violate the principle of parity that any increase in defense spending must be made in tandem with an equal increase in non-defense discretionary spending. If Congress chooses to break with the BBA by increasing defense spending, as the McCain amendment proposes to do, it should only do so if the increase in defense spending is accompanied by an increase in non-defense discretionary spending.

Last year, The Leadership Conference applauded the hard work that went into crafting the bipartisan, two-year bill that raised the caps on spending for both defense and non-defense discretionary spending and provided much needed relief for underfunded programs that serve our communities. The BBA arrived at a much-needed compromise that protected both the defense and non-defense side, and prevented yet another government shutdown

We are therefore dismayed to see Senator McCain's proposed amendment to the NDAA, which would increase defense spending by \$18 billion beyond the spending caps. OCO should not be used by proponents of increased military spending who oppose increasing the caps on non-defense discretionary spending as a cynical workaround to the caps on defense spending. Simply put, if the caps on non-defense discretionary funding are kept in place, then so must the caps on defense spending. To do otherwise would be a violation of the principle of parity between defense and non-defense discretionary spending that was a primary tenet of both the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the BBA.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose the McCain amendment to the NDAA at this time. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact either of us or Emily Chatterjee, Senior Counsel, at (202) 466-3648.

Sincerely,

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