

March 19, 2016

Contact: Emily Holubowich
Voice: 202.484.1100
E-mail: eholubowich@dc-crd.com

p: 202.484.1100
f: 202.4841244

NDD United Opposes House OCO Gimmick

NDD United, an alliance of over 2,100 organizations working together to restore funding to nondefense discretionary programs, strongly opposes the plan put forward in the House in both the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017 and the Defense Appropriations Act of 2017 to shift as much as \$18 billion in overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding to supplement the Pentagon's base budget. This budget gimmick would leave the funding available for war operations far short of the level necessary to sustain operations beyond April, 2017, requiring enactment of supplemental appropriations early next year and making our armed forces wait for the funding they need for ongoing operations while Congress debates that legislation.

In essence, this strategy is an attempt to increase defense funding above the level provided for in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, without addressing the needs of the nondefense discretionary budget, thus violating the "parity principle" followed in last year's bipartisan agreement as well as in prior measures to reduce sequestration cuts.

No amount of gimmicks can fix the problems caused by austere budget caps and sequestration. The effects of cuts to both defense and nondefense discretionary funding can be seen in the efforts to work around the caps, as current levels do not allow for appropriators to invest appropriately in the programs that keep Americans healthy, safe, and secure. Rather, they create a scenario where even the most successful government programs face flat funding or cuts year after year and new programs with promise cannot be launched. In addition, they have promoted the use of tactics such as the House's OCO plan, creating uncertainties around funding that are irresponsible and unnecessarily risky.

Rather than continue to look to treat the symptoms of sequestration and austerity, Congress should work together to reach an agreement that replaces sequestration and ends this era of austerity once and for all. Further, any plan to replace sequestration should abide by the "parity principle" requiring that any relief from sequestration for the defense budget be met with equal relief for the nondefense budget.

#####