



Senate Passes Defense Bill with Peters Provisions to Boost Michigan Defense Industry, Military Installations

Bill Now Heads to President's Desk to be Signed Into Law

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Gary Peters (MI), a former Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve and a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, today helped pass major defense legislation with over a dozen provisions he authored supporting Michigan's growing defense industry and boosting America's military preparedness. The final *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* conference report, which sets Department of Defense (DoD) policy was passed by the House of Representatives and Senate this week with bipartisan support and now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law.

“Michigan is home to thousands of servicemen and women and a growing defense manufacturing sector that are critical to maintaining America's military readiness for decades to come,” **said Senator Peters**. “Whether it's protecting Selfridge's fighter mission or supporting our RPA pilots in Battle Creek, this bipartisan bill will bolster Michigan's military personnel and installations, while leveraging our state's advanced manufacturing talent to maintain America's military edge.”

Highlights of Senator Peters' provisions in the NDAA include:

Supporting Michigan's Military Installations & Small Businesses

- **Providing Air Force Clarification on A-10:** Selfridge Air National Guard Base, which currently hosts A-10 aircrafts in Harrison Township, is currently in contention to host an F-35 mission. Included in the NDAA is language clarifying that the U.S. Air Force has the authority to convert Selfridge's A-10 mission to the F-35 mission and move the existing A-10 aircraft at Selfridge to other bases hosting A-10 missions to bolster their

squadron size to 24 aircraft. Currently, A-10s cannot be retired, and this language is intended to bring Selfridge to parity with other bases seeking the F-35 mission.

- **Protecting Michigan Small Businesses from Fraud:** The NDAA includes a provision authored by Peters and based on bipartisan legislation Peters introduced earlier this year to help protect small businesses from falling victim to fraud when they register to procure federal contracts. The provision would require small businesses to be notified that free assistance is available for help in procuring government contracts through federal programs, including Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs). Many business owners are unaware these resources exist and fall victim to scams that mislead them into paying high sums of money for contract procurement assistance that is already available at no-cost. Michigan is home to ten PTACs and over 850,000 small businesses that account for half of the state's private workforce.
- **Accelerating Process for New Missile Defense Site:** The legislation includes a provision based on the *Advancing America's Missile Defense Act*, legislation Peters cosponsored to improve America's missile defense capabilities and counter threats posed by Iran and North Korea. The provision requires DoD to identify potential sites to host the deployment of up to 104 additional ground-based interceptors. Fort Custer in Augusta, Michigan is under consideration to host a potential ground-based midcourse missile defense site.
- **Supporting Research Conducted at TARDEC in Warren:** Peters worked to include an additional \$50 million in funding for fuel cell prototyping at the Army's Tank and Automotive Research Development Center (TARDEC), building on TARDEC's successful collaboration with General Motors on the ZH2. The bill recognizes TARDEC's capability for prototyping and experimentation and collaboration with technology developers, users, testers, and the private sector. The bill also includes a requirement for the Army to plan to build a prototype for a new ground combat vehicle.

Bolstering our Military & Supporting our Servicemembers

- **Funding Stryker Vehicles Modifications:** Peters supported provisions providing additional support to the U.S. Army Stryker vehicle program with upgraded weapons systems, survivability improvements to the vehicle hull, and other mobility and communication improvements. The Stryker is the U.S. Army's most versatile and deployable combat vehicle, and earlier this year, Peters helped lead a bipartisan letter with Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), calling for funding to complete much-needed upgrades. Peters and Portman previously included an amendment in the FY 2016 NDAA that authorized \$371 million in funding to install medium caliber cannons on 81 Stryker vehicles forward deployed in Europe, to support U.S. interests in Eastern Europe and our NATO allies. General Dynamics Land Systems of Sterling Heights is the prime contractor for the Stryker armored vehicle and many Michigan companies serve as suppliers.

- **Supporting Servicemember Mental Health Research:** The NDAA includes report language requiring the U.S. Air Force to provide a report on steps taken to address the mental health of pilots that operate Remote Piloted Aircrafts (RPAs) and Airmen supporting RPA operations, particularly those stationed in the U.S. and flying missions with aircraft abroad. The 110th Attack Wing in Battle Creek, Michigan hosts an RPA mission and Airmen there fly RPAs that are located all over the world. This provision builds on Senator Peters' Fairness for Veterans amendment, signed into law last year as part of the NDAA FY 2017, which helps veterans with a bad paper discharge resulting from behavior caused by PTSD to petition for an upgrade in discharge status to access mental health treatment and other VA services.
- **Mitigating Risk of Humvee Rollover Accidents:** Earlier this year, the National Guard issued a safety alert related to rollover mishaps and loss-of-control. The NDAA includes a provision encouraging the U.S. Army to mitigate the risk of Humvee rollover accidents and requesting a briefing on plans to mitigate rollovers. Peters has previously written to the Acting Secretary of the Army about his concerns related to Humvee safety. Additionally, the Michigan National Guard has undertaken a pilot program for commercial off-the-shelf technology aimed at mitigating Humvee rollovers using technology manufactured in Michigan.
- **Training for Operations in Major Urban Areas:** The NDAA includes a provision to require a plan for military training to operate in densely populated environments. Peters has asked military leaders about the impact on potential future military operations, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in "megacities", or cities with a population above 10 million. Camp Grayling in Crawford County already hosts military training for urban operations and could play an important role as the military better prepares for these operations.
- **Incorporating New Technologies:** The NDAA includes provisions requiring DoD to provide briefings to the Senate Armed Services Committee related to robotics, autonomy, and artificial intelligence, and also requires DoD to include autonomous systems on the list of eligible technologies for simplified contracting opportunities between DoD and universities.

Strengthening America's Presence Abroad

- **Boosting American Support in Eastern Europe:** Peters included language directing DoD to provide personnel to the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence (StratCom) in Riga, Latvia. StratCom is a multi-national and NATO-accredited international military organization that works to enhance strategic communication capabilities and help counter Russian propaganda efforts in Eastern Europe. Currently, the United States is not a participating nation. Earlier this year, Peters visited StratCom as part of his visit to Latvia to learn more about NATO activity in the Baltic region and Russian practices aimed at undermining and destabilizing democracies like Latvia. This amendment came about as a result of Peters' visit. For over 20 years, Michigan's

National Guard has worked jointly with Latvia's military through the State Partnership Program, participating in joint training and exercises in both Europe and Michigan.

Senator Peters also supported several provisions in the final NDAA, including:

- A provision to require the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to conduct a **study on the health implications of PFAS in drinking water**;
- An amendment authorizing funding to **support the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program**, encourage partnership between MEP affiliates and the Manufacturing USA Institutes established by DoD, and improve manufacturing engineering education. MEP is a public-private partnership dedicated to providing technical support and services to small and medium-sized manufacturers.
- An amendment **authorizing the constructions of three additional Littoral Combat Ships (LCS)**. Marinette Marine, located along the Menominee River, produces the LCS and employs hundreds of Michiganders. The USS Detroit, an LCS that was commissioned last year, was built at Marinette Marine. Peters previously cosponsored an amendment authorizing the construction of two LCS in the Senate NDAA.
- A provision to **extend protections for servicemembers from home foreclosure** for two years following the end of their military service. Current law providing a year of protection is set to expire at the end of this year, and this provision extends the full year of protection through 2020.

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