

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

November 19, 2025

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Rogers and Wicker, and Ranking Members Smith and Reed:

I write to express strong support for the inclusion of the following three priorities in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA): requiring a report on the number of deceased servicemembers who were misclassified before their tragic death; preventing a reduction in the number of civilians employed at Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD); and bipartisan legislation that would increase access to capital for small and medium-size businesses who support our defense apparatus.

1. The inclusion of Section 528 of H.R. 3838, the *Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026* in the final version of the FY26 NDAA.

Section 528, which I initially proposed as an amendment, subsequently adopted by voice vote, would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress detailing the number of servicemembers which have been found deceased over the last 10 years who were first designated as “Absent Without Leave (AWOL)” or “Unauthorized Absence (UA)” as opposed to “Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN).¹

This amendment comes as a direct response to concerning reports about the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD’s) response to sexual violence and servicemember absences as well as the tragic deaths of Army Specialist Vanessa Guillén in 2020 and my constituent, Seaman Angelina Resendiz, earlier this year. Despite many early warnings from her colleagues, friends, and family, the U.S. Navy initially classified Seaman Resendiz as UA rather than DUSTWUN. This report is

¹ Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (2025, August 28). *Amendment to Rules Committee Print 119-8 Offered by Mr. Vicente Gonzalez of Texas*. House Committee on Rules.
https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/GONZTX_023_xml250829150922158.pdf

the first step towards ensuring that any servicemember who goes missing receives the proper classification and investigatory response, which can be the difference between life or death.

2. The inclusion of Section 342 of H.R. 3838, the *Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026* in the final version of the FY26 NDAA.

Section 342, which was the result of a bipartisan amendment, would prohibit the DoD from using any FY26 funds to reduce the number of civilians employed at CCAD.² This amendment built on the base text of H.R. 3838 which prohibited DoD from reducing the number of civilians at Pine Bluff Arsenal and, Red River Army Depot.

CCAD is the world's largest rotary-wing repair facility, is considered a DoD Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence, and currently employs more than 2,500 highly skilled civilian workers. In September, 200 civilian contractors at CCAD had their positions eliminated and an additional 600 federal workers could be at risk. CCAD is an essential part of our nation's defense apparatus and ensuring that it remains a world class facility with the ability to meet the U.S. Army's current and future needs is essential to national security.

3. The inclusion of H.R. 5291, the *Merchant Banking Modernization Act*, in the final version of the FY26 NDAA.³

This bipartisan and commonsense piece of legislation will strengthen our economic and national security by enabling merchant banking entities to make more flexible investments that provide small and medium-size businesses more access to capital. This would encourage investment in sectors that are critical to national security such as housing, medical innovation, and cybersecurity while also supporting the men and women who serve our nation, the communities that sustain them, and the industries that underpin our shared national security and economic prosperity.

The benefits of this legislation would be immediate and tangible nationwide. Merchant banking investments already support the construction of critical workforce housing near military installations and defense manufacturing hubs which are vital for sustaining the families of servicemembers, defense contractors, and skilled workers across the country. Expanding this capacity will help address the nationwide housing shortage while bolstering military readiness by ensuring that servicemembers and their families have access to affordable, stable housing close to where they work and serve. On September 16, 2025, The *Merchant Banking Modernization Act* was successfully voted out of the House Financial Services Committee on a bipartisan basis. I was proud to send a separate letter to you all in support of this bill, and glad to be joined by my colleagues on the Committee in advocating for its inclusion.

² Congressman Michael Cloud (2025, September 4). *Amendment to Rules Committee Print 119-8 Offered by Mr. Cloud of Texas*. House Committee on Rules.

https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/CLOUTX_061_xml250904141639236.pdf

³ *Merchant Banking Modernization Act*, H.R. 5291, 119th Cong. (2025). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5291>

Improving the DoD's response to missing servicemembers, strengthening our defense industrial base, and enhancing access capital would have broad national benefits. For this reason, I respectfully urge you to include all three of these important priorities in the FY 2026 NDAA. I stand ready to work with you to advance the three important priorities outlined above and ensure that our defense policies promote the wellbeing of our servicemembers while also reflecting the economic realities that underpin our national strength.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VGMA', written in a cursive style.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress