

I voted Yes for H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013 Conference Report.

The NDAA is an essential annual piece of legislation which allows Congress to perform some of its most basic and essential responsibilities – such as funding our Armed Forces and national defenses and paying the salaries of our servicemen and women. This bill will prohibit a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round of military base reviews from being carried out in 2013, and it provides our war fighters, veterans and their families with the care and support they need, deserve and have earned.

The prohibition on BRAC is important for Mohawk Valley residents because it will safeguard Rome Lab and other defense assets in our community for another year. The bill also includes an amendment that I inserted which will require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress that will bring further clarity and accountability to the Air Force's specific immediate and long-term plans for cyber tools, information technology research investments, and Rome Lab. The amendment requires the Secretary of Defense to produce and submit a report that will seek clear commitments for our cyber and information defense workforce, including Rome Lab, and will address specific topics addressing a breadth of important areas.

This bill protects our veterans and does not increase TRICARE fees or take away veteran benefits, as the President proposed, and authorizes a 1.7 percent pay increase for our men and women in uniform who are fighting on the front lines so that we may enjoy the liberties that make America so strong.

The bill also ensures that all Americans have access to the Writ of Habeas Corpus and that all citizens are guaranteed the basic civil liberties and Constitutional rights that are demanded within our nation's framework. While I believe our homeland security should be protected, I cannot support any policies that would jeopardize the Constitutional rights of Americans in the process.

Further, this bill recognizes the critical role that Mobility Air Forces play in our nation's defense and expresses appreciation for the leadership of Air Mobility Command and the more than 134,000 active-duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Department of Defense civilians that make up the command by protecting the assets that allow them to continue serving

their important functions. The National Guard and Reserve units of our service branches are an essential component of our armed forces that allow our rapid response capabilities to continue with units standing trained and ready to defend the United States, its interests, and its values.

I believe that service to our nation should never go unnoticed, and this legislation supports those who serve by fulfilling Congress' primary constitutional responsibility to "provide for the common defense." I remain committed to working to protect our nation's service members and veterans while defending our vital assets here in upstate New York and beyond.

The bill was approved by a vote of 315 – 107.