

Van Hollen's statement on passage of Annual Defense Bill

Posted by [MJ](#) On 06/28/2019

WASHINGTON – Thursday, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) released the following statement on the Senate passage of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which includes Senator Van Hollen's Otto Warmbier Banking Restrictions Involving North Korea (BRINK) Act and funding for many other Maryland priorities.

"I'm pleased that the Senate was able to come together on a bipartisan basis to pass this legislation to support our service-members, strengthen our national security, and invest in critical projects throughout Maryland," said Senator Van Hollen. "On the home front, this legislation provides funding to the many federal agencies in Maryland that protect our national defense. It also includes a pay increase for our men and women in uniform and addresses serious concerns we've raised on private military housing. In addition to supporting the members of our Armed Forces and our civilian workforce, this bill included provisions I authored that will protect our national security interests – specifically from the threat of North Korea and the serious risk to our country and our allies if Turkey was to obtain both the F-35 aircraft and the S-400 Russian missile defense system."

Priorities of Senator Van Hollen's included in the NDAA are:

- The bipartisan Otto Warmbier Banking Restrictions Involving North Korea (BRINK) Act. This legislation, originally introduced by Senators Van Hollen and Toomey (R-Penn.) is designed to offer foreign banks and firms a stark choice: continue business with North Korea or maintain access to the U.S. financial system. It imposes mandatory sanctions on the foreign banks and companies that facilitate illicit financial transactions for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- Bipartisan legislation that would prohibit the transfer of F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to Turkey. This provision also applies to equipment, intellectual property, technical data necessary for the maintenance or support of the F-35, and for the construction of facilities to store the F-35 in Turkey. The U.S. F-35 fighter jet could be compromised should Turkey obtain both it and the Russian S-400, as Turkish President Erdogan has said he intends to do.
- Provisions to improve privatized military housing. Senator Van Hollen has been engaged with leaders at Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground as they have addressed woefully inadequate maintenance by private contractors at those installations. The NDAA includes key provisions of the Ensuring Safe Housing for Our Military Act, of which Senator Van Hollen is a cosponsor. Improvements include withholding payment of the Basic Allowance for Housing under certain circumstances; a Tenant Bill of Rights; the creation of the position of Chief Housing Officer; addition of the oversight of military privatized housing in performance evaluations of installation commanders; consideration of a landlord's history in the contract renewal process; a uniform code of basic standards for privatized military housing; and access for tenants to an online work order system.
- The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY18-20. This legislation authorizes the activities of the National Security Agency, a major employer in Maryland. Critically, this reauthorization includes 12 weeks of paid parental leave for members of the intelligence community.
- Funding for military construction in Maryland:
 - \$426 million for the National Security Agency at Fort Meade
 - \$96.9 million for Bethesda Naval Hospital
 - \$86 million for Joint Base Andrews
 - \$27.8 million for Fort Detrick
 - \$18.5 million for Naval Support Activity South Potomac
 - \$13.8 million for Naval Support Activity Bethesda
 - \$12 million for the Army National Guard combined support maintenance shop in Havre de Grace