Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2026

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

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

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

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

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

As you finalize the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we respectfully urge you to ensure that H.R. 8732, the Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act, which was included as Amendment #46 in the House-passed NDAA, remains in the final bill text.

Federal law recognizes the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Officer Corps as uniformed services. Their officers serve careers in uniform, deploy in support of national and public health emergencies, and earn military retirement and health benefits through dedicated service to the nation. Yet despite their status as members of the uniformed services, they remain the only uniformed service retirees whose earned retired pay can be interrupted during a lapse in appropriations.

Currently, USPHS Commissioned Officer Corps and NOAA Corps retirees are paid out of funds held in the Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Center. This becomes inaccessible during government shutdowns because it is run through discretionary appropriations. As a result, retirees did not receive their pension payments for more than 43 days during the shutdown in 2025. These retirees are the only uniformed services retirees who did not receive their pensions during the shutdown, due to this anomaly. The retirement accounts for every other uniformed servicemember are held in the Military Retirement Fund.

This bill would simply move these pension funds to the Military Retirement Fund, which remains active during government shutdowns. This would bring these two uniformed services in line with

every other branch of the uniformed services, whose pension funds are already in the Military Retirement Fund.

Importantly, this legislation does not increase federal spending. This bill will move the pension funds without triggering any new spending or programming because this bill only changes where these pension funds are held, which are funded through yearly discretionary appropriations for HHS and Commerce as well as employee contributions. There would not be any additional administrative costs to the Military Retirement Fund, since this fund's operating costs are paid for by the interest of the pension funds (as is the case for every other fund the MRF holds). The benefit payments to retirees—which are and would remain direct spending—would be unchanged. Moving the remaining uniformed services' retirement systems into the Military Retirement Fund would not have any net effect on direct spending. Neither would the conforming amendments affect the operation of the retirement system or survivor plan or lead to any expanded benefits.

Congress has already established a successful precedent. In the FY 2021 NDAA, Congress moved Coast Guard retirement obligations into the MRF to protect Coast Guard retirees from the same vulnerability during government shutdowns. The Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act simply extends that proven solution to the remaining uniformed service retirees who continue to face this risk.

No retired member of the uniformed services should have to wonder whether a government funding lapse will delay the retirement pay they earned through decades of service. The FY 2027 NDAA provides an ideal opportunity to close this gap and ensure parity across all the uniformed services. As proud cosponsors and supporters of Amendment #46 to the House-passed NDAA, we respectfully urge you to ensure this legislation remains in the final negotiated FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress.

August Pfluger
Member of Congress