

Congress signs off on defense bill with money for Ohio projects

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WASHINGTON, D. C. - Congress on Thursday signed off on a bipartisan defense bill that authorizes millions of dollars for Ohio defense facilities.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Camp Perry Joint Training Center, Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base in Columbus, and Lima's Joint Systems Manufacturing Center all are among those that will see funding from the bill.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, a Cleveland Democrat, backed the bill in a Wednesday Senate vote, while U.S. Sen. JD Vance, a Cincinnati Republican, was among just 13 U.S. Senators who voted against it. On Thursday, it won support from all Ohio Congress members except Republicans Jim Jordan of Champaign County and Warren Davidson of Miami County. Davidson said he was upset it did not reform the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and instead preserved the status quo.

[Cleveland.com](#) has reached out to Vance's office for a statement on his reasons for opposing the bill. After voting against a previous draft, Vance said he disliked that it contained "deeply problematic foreign policy proposals," that included additional military aid for the war in Ukraine.

A statement from Brown said the bipartisan bill would invest in U.S. servicemembers, as well as the Ohio workers and industries crucial to keeping the nation safe.

"By supporting our military installations, we help the Ohioans who work there do what they do best: protect our country," said a statement from Brown.

Brown's office said the legislation includes a provision he co-sponsored that would help ensure that American-owned companies can enrich uranium in the United States.

It also contains language to encourage the Defense Department to lessen its dependence on adversarial nations for procurement of critical materials such as

rubber, and to take steps to engage in research and development that would increase domestic rubber supplies. Brown's office noted that Akron is a longtime rubber industry hub.

A statement from U.S. Rep. Mike Turner, a Dayton Republican who chairs the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said that the legislation includes the largest pay increase for U.S. troops in over two decades, easing the burden on military families.

"Additionally, with new threats emerging from the Middle East as well as increased aggression from Russia, China, and Iran, this bill ensures that our armed services capabilities outpace adversary threats to maintain deterrence and international order," said Turner.

U.S. Rep. Max Miller, a Rocky River Republican, said the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) contains an amendment he authored that would block the Air Force from decommissioning KC-135 Stratotankers in FY24, which will protect the National Guard's footprint in Ohio

"The NDAA is one of the most important bills that Congress passes every year, and this year's legislation sends a strong message to our allies and our adversaries that the United States will continue to be the dominant power on the global stage," said a statement from Miller.

U.S. Rep. Bob Latta, a Bowling Green Republican, said the bill includes legislation he authored called the [Nuclear Fuel Security Act](#), which will establish new programs and expand existing programs to increase domestic supplies of certain types of low-enriched uranium.

"With the inclusion of my Nuclear Fuel Security Act in this year's NDAA – now headed to the President's desk to be signed into law – our nation is one step closer to expanding safe, clean, and renewable nuclear power, which will help secure U.S. energy independence and reinforce our national security," said a statement from Latta.

According to Brown's office, the package's funding includes:

- \$19.5 million for the planning and design of Phase V of the Wright Patterson Air Force Base Acquisition Management complex that will let several organizations that do military acquisitions at the base to streamline their operations and improve efficiency.

- \$5 million to complete the Wright Patterson Army Reserve Center. The U.S. Army Reserve is moving Dayton-area operations to the newly constructed facilities on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The units moving to the base have about 280 reservists and full-time personnel serving.

- \$19.2 million to support construction of a National Guard Readiness Center at Camp Perry to replace older facilities in Norwalk, Sandusky, and Tiffin. Camp Perry is a National Guard training facility and home to the 213th Ordnance Company, the 372d Missile Maintenance Company, the 200th RED HORSE Squadron, U.S. Coast Guard Port Security Unit 309 and the Ohio Naval Militia.

- \$2.5 million to plan and design a new fire station at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station. The reserve station's firefighters not only are responsible for fire safety on the base, but they also respond to emergencies in neighboring Mahoning Valley communities.

- \$4 million to complete construction of the new National Guard Readiness Center at the Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base in Columbus, which houses the 121st Air Refueling Wing.

- \$1.2 billion for upgrades to Abrams Tanks produced at Lima's Joint Systems Manufacturing Center (JSMC), and \$749 million for upgrades to Stryker vehicles produced at the Lima facility.