SASA FY27 NDAA Key Points

Current House Armed Services Committee Chairman's Mark FY27 Language:

The below language ensures that the federal government leverages infrastructure that is already in place in an attempt to coordinate between different crucial components of the defense pipeline. Further support for this language within both chambers will ensure that the federal government continues to create STEM jobs that support both our economy and our defense industry, helping to keep the United States ahead of the curve in an ever-developing global economy and in the age of artificial intelligence.

Full provision language:

Leveraging Regional STEM Ecosystems

The committee recognizes that U.S. national security depends on a robust, clearable STEM workforce. Yet attracting and retaining qualified talent remains a challenge for both the Department of Defense and the defense industrial base.

The committee is aware that regional STEM ecosystems exist across the United States and bring together education, industry, government, and community partners to develop talent pipelines aligned with regional workforce needs. The committee believes these ecosystems may provide a scalable model to support coordinated workforce development efforts aligned with defense industrial base requirements.

Accordingly, the committee directs the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than December 31, 2027, on a strategic approach to leveraging regional STEM ecosystems to support defense workforce needs. The briefing shall include:

(1) an identification of regional STEM ecosystems that could be leveraged to support the Department of Defense and defense industrial base workforce requirements;

(2) an assessment of how such regional STEM ecosystems could be leveraged to support the Department of Defense and defense industrial base workforce requirements; and

(3) recommendations for a pilot effort to leverage and scale regional STEM ecosystems, including potential implementation approaches and resource considerations.

SASA Supports including/keeping the "Leveraging Regional STEM Ecosystems" language in the NDAA.

Amendment to the NDAA

While the actions taken within the House chairman's mark are progress in the right direction, taking further steps to secure an increase of funds into STEM education is critical. While STEM ecosystems as a whole are critical, it is important that federal defense contractors do their share

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to continue the education of their future employees. The below amendment would allow for the federal government to invest in STEM education and our defense pipeline, without increasing the budget deficit.

Potential Amendment Language:

(a) **Requirement.**—The Secretary of Defense shall require, as a condition of any contract awarded by the Department of Defense with a total value in excess of $10,000,000, that the contractor expend an amount equal to not less than 0.25 percent of the total value of such contract on activities that support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and workforce development within the United States.

(b) **Allowable Activities.** Funds expended pursuant to (a) may be used for the following purposes:

(1) Supporting primary, secondary, or postsecondary STEM education programs.

(2) Partnering with PreK-12 schools, community colleges, universities, or nonprofit organizations to expand access to STEM education.

(3) Supporting internships, apprenticeships, or other workforce development programs that advance STEM-related skills directly applicable to Department of Defense priorities.

Other Sections may include: (c) Regional Engagement, (d) Reporting Requirements, (e) Guidance and Oversight, and (f) Waiver Authority

Benefits:

1. **High ROI with No New Spending:** This proposal does not add funding; it redirects only 0.25% of existing funding. The cost to contractors is negligible relative to total contract value, but the impact is substantial. For every $1 million contract, just $2,500 would go toward building long-term human capital. This low-cost, high-impact model offers an exceptional return on investment for both industry and government.
2. **Aligning with National Security Goals:** In alignment with DoD's stated goals for the military to match threats to capabilities, this proposal would invest in critical workforce readiness as national security. Embedding STEM development into the defense contracting framework reinforces the government's commitment to a technologically superior and resilient defense infrastructure.
3. **Enhancing Innovation:** Defense technologies are increasingly reliant on advanced AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, hypersonics, and space systems. Supporting STEM development ensures that future employees are prepared to contribute to these high-tech domains, accelerating innovation across the sector.

SASA Supports and encourages this amendment to the NDAA.

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