

# THE WICKER REPORT

SENATOR WICKER'S WEEKLY REPORT from CONGRESS

## Wicker Reveals National Defense Legislation

### Mississippi Leads in National Defense

In recognition of growing dangers facing the United States, my colleagues and I on the Senate Armed Services Committee recently advanced a national defense bill that significantly raises our investment in American security. It will now proceed to a full vote in the U.S. Senate. We specifically wrote the bill to address

modern threats. With this legislation, we are equipping our armed forces to defend America from 21st century dictatorships who wield 21st century weapons.

For the past year, I have listened to the testimony of uniformed officers, met with President Trump and Secretary Hegseth, and visited with service members stationed half a world away. As chairman of the Sen-

ate Armed Services Committee, I was able to channel those interactions into the only bill that Congress passes each year without fail. This annual legislation, called the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), sets the course for the U.S. military. It impacts weapons development, military family care, nuclear stockpiles, advanced research, our relationships with allies, and so much more.

### An NDAA for Today's Threats

President Trump and I agree that the U.S. military needs a major investment in order to defend the homeland in an increasingly unstable world. In December, the president announced his intention to raise defense investment by 50 percent. Our NDAA begins putting that call into action.

The president asked for the largest shipbuilding budget in history, and the committee matched that

ambition by authorizing more ships and by streamlining ship purchasing. My colleagues and I approved new aircraft, upgraded our nuclear deterrent, and created a new position dedicated to the nation's cyber defense operations. We embraced the future of war by increasing the production of low-cost drones and munitions so our stockpiles never run low.

Even as we invested more in our defense, we passed reforms to rein in Pentagon bureaucracy and make those dollars go further. The bill will allow the military to sign multi-year contracts, bringing down costs for 22 new weapons. It also requires large defense companies to reinvest what they earn from taxpayer dollars back into their companies — expanding capacity and manufacturing jobs rather than funneling it back to their shareholders.

American service mem-

bers have always been the strength of the armed forces. This NDAA raises recruitment caps, allowing the military to hire more than 40,000 additional service members. It boosts pay for every member by 3.6 percent and will improve housing, barracks, and childcare capacity.

Service members and their families will receive expanded health care benefits. We strengthened mental health care and suicide prevention efforts. The bill increases accountability within the military health system and helps prepare it for service during potential future conflicts. Throughout the NDAA, we reinforced the merit-based personnel policies that made excellence, not identity, the pathway to promotion.

### Mississippi Leads the Way

Mississippi has always played an outsized role in America's national security. This bill recognizes

that. It devotes resources to our drone producers, solid rocket motor manufacturers, and shipbuilders. Mississippians are building sea-based rocket launch platforms that can help our military run missile interception drills, and this NDAA supports their work. The bill will keep our state on the cutting edge of defense technology — bringing investments to our research universities innovative startups, and advanced manufacturing companies.

I will continue advocating for Mississippi's defense priorities as this bill moves from the committee to the full U.S. Senate. The legislation is historic, bearing the highest dollar figure of any defense bill in our history. But deterrence is worth every penny. By investing in defense today, I hope to prevent tomorrow's wars and secure peace and prosperity for coming generations.



If you want deer on your trail cameras this time of year, then make sure you have a salt or trace mineral block out if your game laws allow. Because sodium is often lacking in spring and summer vegetation, the deer will seek these spots to fill that lack. And if you notice, most of the time they are more interested in the ground around the block than the block itself. As the sodium melts into the soil, the soil becomes a bowl of mineral cereal that deer love. Bucks need it to help build antler growth and does need it to help provide minerals to their recently birthed fawn. But just as salt creates thirst for us, it also does that for the deer. So, water is crucial this time of year as well. It's all about balance. Food, supplements, and water. And just enough of each.

I'm reminded of a man who bought a parrot from a pet store. After several days, the bird still hadn't said a word. Concerned, the man returned to the store. "Maybe he's lonely," the owner suggested. "Buy him a mirror." The man did, but the parrot remained silent.

A few days later, he returned. "Maybe he needs something to do," said the owner. "Try a ladder and a swing." The man bought both. Still no words. Finally, the pet store owner suggested a larger cage. The man purchased it and went home. Several weeks later,

the owner ran into the man at the grocery store. "How's that parrot doing?" he asked.

The man lowered his head. "Unfortunately, he died." "He died? Did he ever say anything?"

"Yes," the man replied. "Right before he died, he said, 'Didn't that pet store sell any food?'" If I could teach Christians one thing about living around unbelievers, it would be the lesson of balance. It would be that influence is more important than instruction, and experience is more impactful than theology. Jesus said we are to be salt and light. Salt adds flavor. But too much salt is bitter. Light adds clarity and illumination. But too much light blinds. The impact of Jesus on our lives came as someone brought the right amount of flavor and clarity on the person of Jesus. And this balance is still the way. Any other approach is like providing a restaurant, when the real need is just a sandwich.

*gary@outdoortruths.org*  
**Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 23 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. Stay updated on Outdoor Truths each week by subscribing at Outdoortruths.org**

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

FreeDailyCrosswords.com

### ACROSS

- 1) Make something close?
- 5) Judges' wear
- 10) Bouquet vessel
- 14) Conservative in Britain
- 15) NBA setting
- 16) Clickable item on a monitor
- 17) "Purple Haze" or "Satisfaction"
- 20) New Testament book
- 21) Bettor's marker
- 22) One attending Yale
- 23) Tire pressure fig.
- 24) Politically correct suffix
- 27) Space-age drink?
- 29) Water nymph of myth
- 32) Bit of body art, slangily
- 33) Alcohol chaser?
- 36) Single great stone, such as an obelisk
- 38) Simple kid's meal
- 41) Hall-of-Fame pitcher Pedro
- 42) Cape in Massachusetts
- 43) Street address abbr.
- 44) Internal Revenue Service, e.g.
- 46) Divisions of history
- 50) Expensive pleasure crafts
- 52) Put into practice
- 55) One of the Gabors
- 56) Ballerina's prop
- 57) Denies or renounces
- 60) Some daring circus performers
- 63) Cornstalk units
- 64) Stand near a painter?
- 65) "What \_\_\_ can I do?"
- 66) Emerald Isle language
- 67) Dermatologists' subjects, sometimes
- 68) One way to enjoy the snow

### DOWN

- 1) It's curbed
- 2) Fanfare, informally
- 3) Mischievous waif
- 4) Little nipper
- 5) Indian queens
- 6) Appoint
- 7) Swiss canton
- 8) Adam's grandson
- 9) "Do the Right Thing" role
- 10) Baseball-cap feature
- 11) Kind of guitar
- 12) "Favorite" relative
- 13) Chang's twin
- 18) It has a nasty bite to it
- 19) Canine command
- 24) Bamboo eater
- 25) Witness stand pledge
- 26) To the \_\_\_ degree (extremely)
- 28) With an expensive coat?
- 30) Astonish
- 31) Physicists get a charge out of it
- 34) Squinted one's eyes
- 35) Mimicking birds
- 37) Prompter's whisper
- 38) Coffee, informally
- 39) Skyscraper construction crew, essentially
- 40) Item on a driver's license
- 41) When mom gets her due
- 45) Small stream
- 47) Spin the same yarn?
- 48) Strongly opposed (with "to")
- 49) Answered with attitude
- 51) It has two pairs of shoes?
- 53) Flies off the shelf
- 54) Humility obstacle
- 57) Off the premises
- 58) "Largemouth" creature
- 59) Renders speechless
- 60) Rise to a raise
- 61) General purpose?
- 62) "Just a \_\_\_"

### FISH HEADS

By Timothy E. Parker

