



The Honorable William “Mac” Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 205105

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Friday, September 29, 2017

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith,

On behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), the Information Technology Alliance for Public Sector (ITAPS), the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), and the Professional Services Council (PSC), we write to you today regarding Section 938 of the Senate’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018, as written in S. 1519.

We appreciate the Committee’s thoughtful work that seeks to address the unacceptable backlog and lengthy wait times for individuals obtaining or retaining a security clearance. The security clearance backlog continues to grow and currently amounts to more than 700,000 cases. The harmful consequences of the backlog affect not only the contractor community—which needs cleared individuals to perform the work that they have committed to and received contracts for—but also the operations of government civilians and military personnel.

However, we oppose Section 938 because it will create a parallel process and duplicative regime in the Department that will drain resources, cause further delays, hinder process improvements, and undermine efforts to move the government toward true reciprocity across all departments and agencies. We are further concerned that this provision is, at best, premature. Section 951 of the Fiscal Year 2017 NDAA included two important directives, requiring:

- The Secretary of Defense to develop an implementation plan for the DSS to conduct background investigations for personnel of the Department of Defense whose investigations are adjudicated by the Consolidated Adjudication Facility of the Department; and
- The Secretary and the Director of the OPM to develop a plan to transfer government investigative personnel and contracted resources to the Department in proportion to the background and security investigative workload that would be assumed by the Department if the above plan were implemented.

With the Section 951 report only recently being delivered, Section 938 was created before the report was received by the Congressional committees of jurisdiction. As such, we recommend that the Senate strike Section 938 and we urge the Committee to review the forthcoming plans and the ongoing actions of the NBIB prior to determining whether to proceed with shifting this responsibility.

Finally, we hope to work with you, in light of our recommendation, to address the security clearance problem in a holistic, government-wide fashion. If the government seeks to deliver a more efficient,

thorough, and secure process, it must include continuous evaluation, leverage private sector partners, and utilize end-to-end digitization and shared services.

We continue to stand at the ready to work with you. Please contact Jonathan Clifford, ITAPS Director of National Security (jclifford@itic.org), with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association
Associated General Contractors of America
Information Technology Alliance for Public Sector
National Defense Industrial Association
Professional Services Council

Cc:

The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
The Honorable Elijah Cummins, Ranking Member, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
The Honorable Devin Nunes, Chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
The Honorable Adam Schiff, Ranking Member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence