

President Trump vetoes National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021

Trump warned he would veto the NDAA if it lacked a Section 230 repeal.

President Trump vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 Wednesday, calling it a “gift” to U.S. adversaries China and Russia and making good on a promise to veto if it did not repeal a law that shields certain Big Tech companies from liabilities.

“My Administration recognizes the importance of the Act to our national security,” the president wrote to House members after vetoing the bill. “Unfortunately, the Act fails to include critical national security measures, includes provisions that fail to respect our veterans and our military’s history, and contradicts efforts by my Administration to put America first in our national security and foreign policy actions.”

TRUMP SAYS HE’LL VETO DEFENSE BILL UNLESS SECTION 230 IS TERMINATED

In his letter, he singled out Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act as a reason for the veto, arguing that failing to terminate it “will make our intelligence virtually impossible to conduct.”



In this Nov. 5 photo, President Trump speaks at the White House in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

Section 230 grants Internet companies liability shielding not available to other forms of media. It says they cannot be considered publishers or speakers of information posted to their platforms by third-parties.

It protects platforms, including Facebook and Parler, from lawsuits if they allow controversial or critical speech to be shared by their users, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. It does not protect users from being accountable for their own posts.

Trump warned on Dec. 1 that he would veto the bill if it did not include a repeal of Section 230.

He also took issue with language in the NDAA that would require “the renaming of certain military installations.” Those provisions would phase out facilities named after Confederate military figures.

Additionally, he argued that the NDAA directly opposes one of his major foreign policy goals – bringing more U.S. troops home, calling it “unconstitutional” to supersede his authority as commander-in-chief.

TULSI GABBARD URGES TRUMP NOT TO ‘BACK DOWN’ AGAINST BIG TECH

"I oppose endless wars, as does the American public. Over bipartisan objections, however, this Act purports to restrict the President's ability to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, Germany, and South Korea," the president continued.

High-ranking Democrats blasted the veto.

"Donald Trump just vetoed a pay raise for our troops so he can defend dead Confederate traitors," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. tweeted. "Democrats will vote to override it."

Chuck Schumer@SenSchumer

Donald Trump just vetoed a pay raise for our troops so he can defend dead Confederate traitors. Democrats will vote to override it.

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a statement moments after the veto that he expected Congress to override the president's veto. The bipartisan plan previously passed with veto-proof majorities in both the House and Senate.

"It's unconscionable that the President would choose to throw a wrench into the passage of a bill as critical as our nation's annual defense bill," Warner said. "The President's decision to veto this bipartisan legislation on his way out the door poses a serious threat to U.S. national security."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the override could come as early as next Monday.

"In a time when our country was just targeted with a massive cyberattack, it is particularly hard to understand the reasoning behind the President's irresponsibility," she said in a statement.

Although Trump called it a "gift" to China and Russia, nearly \$7 billion in the bill is for a new "Pacific Deterrence Initiative" to address a rising China, which the Pentagon has stated now has the "largest navy in the world."

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Among the additional weapons funded in the bill are plans for a second Virginia-class submarine, which made its combat debut off the coast of Syria in 2018. The USS John Warner became the first Virginia-class boat to launch Tomahawk

cruise missiles against an adversary.

There is also money for two Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines, the replacement for the aging Ohio-class boomers which carry 24 Trident D5 intercontinental ballistic missiles each with multiple independent nuclear warheads – giving each submarine the ability to destroy over 200 cities at a range of over 7,000 miles.

The U.S. Navy keeps at least one ballistic missile submarine in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at all times. The target packages on these boats includes cities and bases in Russia as well as China.

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