



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

September 3, 2024

Hon. Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Roger F. Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Mazie Hirono
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Readiness and
Management Support
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Daniel Sullivan
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Readiness and
Management Support
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Tim Kaine
Chairman
Subcommittee on Seapower
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Kevin Cramer
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Seapower
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairwoman Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan, Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Cramer:

On behalf of the 60 affiliates of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), representing 12.5 million working people across our economy, I write urging you to oppose Senate Amendment 2103, offered by Senator Romney, to the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25 NDAA). This amendment proposes an expansive new authority to allow the Navy to offshore significant ship maintenance and repair activity to foreign shipyards for up to 90 consecutive days.

Amendment 2103 will not strengthen domestic capabilities, but rather doubles down on the dangerous and failed approach of offshoring critical U.S. industrial needs. By shifting naval repair work to overseas yards, it actively undermines existing U.S. shipyards and American workers. This proposal would lead to the loss of specialized work at our shipyards, adversely impacting a vital workforce, including many veterans. Further, it would lead to the unnecessary loss of critical skills and experience in our U.S. shipyard workforce. This would work at cross purposes to long term, durable solutions to grow much-needed domestic capacity.

We understand the need for the Navy to perform unplanned repair work in foreign shipyards in limited circumstances. But the Navy already possesses the authority to conduct repair work overseas for homeported ships if necessary to address damage caused by hostile actions, or if it is a voyage-related repair. Further, the Senate NDAA bill currently has language that would create a pilot program related to maintenance for forward deployed ships. Amendment 2103 is unnecessary, counterproductive and potentially damaging to future readiness.

As the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and other geopolitical crises of recent years have laid bare -- unreliable supply chains and gaps in our industrial base put our national and economic security at risk. The notion we can boost the resilience of our naval repair base and deter or respond to aggression by China's military by conducting significant repair work in China's backyard defies reason. Instead, we must work towards lasting solutions that center around growing our domestic workforce and capacity to repair and build vessels in a defensible environment right here at home.

Despite the shortsighted closure of four naval shipyards in the 1990s and flawed economic policies that promoted offshoring, tens of thousands of skilled U.S. workers continue to build high quality vessels and conduct repairs at public and private shipyards across the nation. To bolster our national and economic security, we must invest in domestic capacity and American workers. Our affiliates, and their thousands of members in Naval ship repair and related supply chains, stand ready to support efforts to grow our shipbuilding and ship repair base. We must ensure it has the resilience and capacity to support our servicemen and women. But we cannot support efforts that undermine the very resilience and reliability we are trying to safeguard.

Amendment 2103 would erode critical capacity and human capital, risks undermining our national security and needlessly puts our members' jobs at risk. We urge you to oppose this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calamine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jody" being more prominent and the last name "Calamine" following in a similar style.

Jody Calamine

Director, Government Affairs