

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

June 30th, 2026

Dear Representative:

This week you will be considering H.R. 8800, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027. On behalf of the AFL-CIO, representing 15 million working people across 65 affiliate unions, I strongly urge you to oppose the Ounder Amendment (Amendment No. 41, listed as No. 27 in the Rule Appendix), which would strike section 1115 from this bill. Section 1115, added in committee with a strong bipartisan vote, restores the collective bargaining rights of Department of Defense employees. By deleting this language, the Ounder amendment would leave Department of Defense employees without the fundamental protections that they deserve.

On March 27th 2025, Executive Order 14251, entitled "Exclusion from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs," stripped two-thirds of the federal workforce of their collective bargaining rights, including many workers at the Department of Defense. This order constitutes the single biggest act of unionbusting in American history. H.R. 8800's Section 1115 would correct this mass violation of workers' rights, at least with respect to Department of Defense workers.

Veterans make up a disproportionate number of federal employees. That is especially the case at the Department of Defense, where 48.5% of all civilian employees are veterans. These workers have served their country twice in defense of and in service to all the rights and freedoms we enjoy today. Not only did the March 27th, 2025 Executive Order eliminate their collective bargaining rights and break contractual promises, it did so precisely because they and their unions were exercising constitutional rights to speak out and take legal action for their members. Our civil servants and veterans deserve far better than having their constitutional rights deleted or their contracts ripped up with the stroke of a pen. This episode underscores precisely why federal employees need the right to collective bargaining and why they choose union representation – to have a secure voice in ensuring fair treatment and the safe, effective, and efficient delivery of services.

We urge you to vote NO on the Ounder Amendment and restore the fundamental collective bargaining rights of Department of Defense employees.

Thank you very much for your attention and service.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine  
Director, Government Affairs