

# Trump signs \$700 billion military budget into law

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WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed into law a sweeping defense policy bill that authorizes a \$700 billion budget for the military, including additional spending on missile defense programs to counter North Korea's growing nuclear weapons threat.

But there's a catch. The \$700 billion budget won't become reality until lawmakers agree to roll back a 2011 law that set strict limits on federal spending, including by the Defense Department — and they haven't yet.

The law caps 2018 defense spending at \$549 billion.

Before he signed the bill at the White House, Trump called on Congress to "finish the job" and eliminate the cap on defense spending.



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

**President Donald Trump holds onto a box containing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 bill, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Tuesday in Washington.**

"I think it's going to happen," said the president, joined by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford and other senior military leaders. "We need our military. It's got to be perfect."

He urged Democrats in Congress to quit threatening to shut down the government and "send clean funding and a clean funding bill to my desk that fully funds our great military. Protecting our country should always be a bipartisan issue, just like

today's legislation."

Temporary government funding is set to run out on Dec. 22, the deadline for lawmakers to send the White House a broader government funding bill or risk a partial government shutdown.

Many Republicans favor easing the caps for defense spending only. Democrats also want increases in other government spending.

Trump released a lengthy statement after signing the bill in which he complained that multiple provisions amounted to congressional overreach that he argued infringed upon his executive authority.

Trump used the signing ceremony to address a separate threat, repeating his call to overhaul U.S. immigration law following Monday's blast in a New York City subway passageway. It was the second incident authorities have described as

terrorism in New York City since late October.

The president noted that the individual involved in October's deadly incident came to the U.S. through the visa lottery program, and that the individual in this week's attack arrived based on a family connection to an American citizen.

Trump vowed to end both immigration programs quickly. "The lottery system and chain migration, we're going to end them fast," he said, calling on Congress to "get involved immediately."

The 2018 defense bill allots about \$634 billion for core Pentagon operations and nearly \$66 billion for wartime missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere. The funding boost pays for more troops, jet fighters, ships and other weapons needed to halt an erosion of the military's combat readiness, according

to the bill's backers. It also grants troops a 2.4 percent pay raise, slightly higher than what the Pentagon sought.

Trump's 2018 request sought \$603 billion for basic functions and \$65 billion for overseas missions.

The defense legislation includes \$12.3 billion for the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency and orders a more rapid buildup of the nation's missile defense capabilities "as we continue our campaign to create maximum pressure on the vile dictatorship in North Korea," Trump said.

"We're working very diligently on that, building up forces," Trump said.

Trump thanked the bill's chief sponsors, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry of Texas, who joined Trump at the White House, and Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain of Arizona, who did not.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Christopher Duffley performs during the Community Counseling Solutions Christmas party on Tuesday in Heppner. In addition to performing music, Duffley also hosts his own post cast called Mission Possible.**

## DUFFLEY: Will also perform in Condon

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than 2.4 million views on YouTube. Since then, he has sung the national anthem at Fenway Park and NASCAR races and has recorded three CDs. He is now 16.

Lindsay couldn't get the song and the boy out of her mind for weeks.

"I could not stop thinking about Christopher and that song," Lindsay said. "One day driving to Portland, it came to me — I needed to ask Christopher to come to Heppner."

She was astonished when Christopher and his mom/manager Christine accepted her invitation. Last weekend, Christopher, Christine, Steve and friend David St. Germaine flew from their hometown of Manchester, New Hampshire, and drove several hours to Heppner. The others described the Columbia River, the rolling wheat fields and other terrain to Christopher as the miles slid by. In Eastern Oregon, Christopher was scheduled to perform twice in Heppner and once in Condon and also visit local schools.

On Tuesday morning, he was in full preparation mode at St. Patrick's Catholic Church where he would perform at a Christmas party for about 150 employees of Community Counseling Solutions, where Lindsay is executive director. In the ready room, Christopher kept up a banter as Steve put a festive Christmas bow tie around his son's neck and helped him don a jacket. He polished one of Christopher's prosthetic eyeballs after Chris complained of irritation.

Christine gave her son an adoring look and described Christopher as someone who rises above life's hurdles with pure, unfiltered joy and tenacity. His musical talent emerged early on, she said. "He showed signs of loving music from the time I picked him up," she said. "Pat-a-Cake was his first song."

After an introduction by Lindsay, Christopher took the stage, settling himself



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Guests at Community Counseling Solutions Christmas party received a braille wristband that reads "love" after a performance by Christopher Duffley on Tuesday in Heppner. Duffley is both blind and autistic.**

behind a keyboard and microphone. He described his shaky start to life.

"Instead of 40 weeks, I came out at 26 weeks," he said. "I was also born with cocaine in my system to parents who loved me but could not take care of me. I was given oxygen for 100 days. My eyes didn't develop properly and my retinas detached."

He called attention to his "fake blue eyes."

"They make me look normal and handsome," he quipped.

Before singing his signature song, "Open the Eyes of My Heart," he described the way he sees the world.

"My blindness does not limit me, I just do things differently," he said. "It enables me to see people as they really are. I see no color, tattoos or crazy hairdos. It bothers me that

people prejudice each other. How different would it be if everyone chose to see with their hearts?"

Christopher delivers this message often as he travels around, speaking and singing. He also produces his own podcast, "Mission Possible."

Christopher launched into "Open the Eyes of My Heart," playing the keyboard and singing in clear, strong tones. In past months, he has performed the song in five different languages: English, Spanish, French, Korean and Portuguese.

During the Christmas party, the teen sang three additional songs, one of them an original.

Two nights earlier, he performed for the community at Heppner High School. During the evening, Lindsay told the story of Ken Griswold, a 47-year-old

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— Christopher Duffley

veteran from San Antonio, Texas, who has struggled with effects of combat, divorce and other trials. He Facebooked Christopher to say he had found immense comfort in Christopher's singing, adding, "Someday I would love to meet you to say thank you and give you one of the biggest hugs of your life."

Lindsay then introduced Griswold, who had traveled to Heppner at her invitation. The veteran walked to Christopher and gave him the long-awaited bearhug.

During both of the performances, Lindsay faded back into the audience when she could and just watched and listened. When Christopher finished on Tuesday, he found Lindsay and give her an extended hug that rivaled that of Griswold.

Lindsay later marveled at Christopher's impact on the people who heard him. She got a rush of comments about how he inspired them to see disabilities differently and keep moving forward with joy despite tough circumstances.

"For me, it's about the potential of every human being, about not giving up on those who are the most vulnerable, of respecting differences and even being thankful for them," Lindsay said. "God is good."

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## TOURISM: City investing in things like a festival street

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hopes to use that war chest to start marketing the facility in earnest for conventions, trade shows and other events that will draw people from out of town.

The facility recently hosted the Hermiston Farm Fair, an agricultural trade show which Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce director Debbie Pedro said is usually the event which draws the most people to Hermiston each year — about 1,500 visitors.

The city is also investing in things like a downtown festival street — with construction planned for spring — to provide a venue for smaller events to entertain travelers during their stay. And it offered financial incentives to the Holiday Inn Express that opened within easy walking distance of downtown businesses.

When tourists come to Pendleton, they often come purely for vacation, and find plenty of events, tours, museums, outdoor recreation, shopping and dining experiences to keep them busy during their stay. Those experiences are promoted by Travel Pendleton via a comprehensive tourism website and other marketing tools, which is why Pendleton hoteliers were opposed to a tax they felt would duplicate those efforts.

Hermiston's hotels, on the other hand, tend to be more full during the week than on weekends. Holiday Inn Express manager Steven Arrasmith said during a meeting last week that the hotel has "a lot of corporate travel, and not as much for leisure."

If hotels, restaurants and gas stations are seeing an uptick during the weekend, it's usually for sports tournaments held at Kennison

Field and other Hermiston School District venues that the community has invested in.

AAU basketball tournaments and trade shows at EOPEC might not be as glamorous as the Pendleton Round-Up, Morgan said, but they can still direct out-of-town dollars into local businesses. They just require a different strategy.

"The engineer that has to come here for work, what are the things that would get dollars out of his pocket?" Morgan asked.

Umatilla County's proposed tourism lodging tax seemed to lean more toward the Pendleton style of tourism, which relies on a distinctive Pendleton brand of a good time in the "real west." The proposal put together by the county spoke of "marketing Umatilla County as a destination" via brand development, membership in statewide tourism associations, social media campaigns, grants and paid media campaigns with analytics gathered from "our outside-of-area target audience."

Morgan said one measuring stick used in the tourism industry is that people expect about four hours of fun for every hour they traveled. Right now, he said, Hermiston has about enough entertainment for the "just for the heck of it" visitor to warrant a day trip from the Tri-Cities. So until Hermiston builds up some more tourism events and assets, he said it didn't make sense to try and market it as a vacation destination.

"We're not at the stage where I could justifiably, with a straight face, tell people that we're using their money wisely," he said, explaining why the city declined a proposal from the chamber to start something equivalent to a Travel Hermiston.

## CHAMBER: Currently exploring all permanent location options

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smaller community events and recreation classes to the conference center and larger events meant to bring in tourism to EOPEC. Moving the parks and recreation offices to the conference center will also help alleviate crowding at city hall.

In April the council also voted to offer the chamber space for free in the basement of the former Carnegie Library, which the city planned to spend \$125,000 remodeling. But attendees at that city council meeting called the offer of a basement an insult to the chamber after its years of being a valued community partner, and questioned whether the city would run the center with the community truly in mind. The chamber formally turned down the offer of the Carnegie Library in June.

Since then, the chamber has been searching for a building to call home

before the end of the year.

A news release from the chamber on Tuesday called the move to the Cornerstone Plaza "temporary" and said chamber staff, board members and volunteers "are currently exploring all permanent location options."

The news release stated that the chamber has enjoyed working with various groups over 22 years in the conference center and thanked everyone who had been "so supportive of the Chamber and its long time success in managing the Hermiston Community Center."

"We are really looking forward to 2018 and the important work the chamber does to support, promote and strengthen our nearly 450 chamber members as well as its work in economic development, advocacy, leadership, community events, and the Hermiston visitor and welcome center," the news release stated.