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Chairman Menendez Applauds Senate Passage of National Defense Legislation Including Foreign Relations Committee Priorities



WASHINGTON – Today, **U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**, released a statement following the U.S. Senate’s passage of the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024*. This year’s defense package included numerous priorities Chairman Menendez spearheaded to further modernize the Department of State for 21st century challenges; advance a security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; provide resources for families advocating for the release of loved ones wrongfully or unlawfully detained abroad; and support children with disabilities around the world.

“This week, as the Department of State marks 234 years of promoting U.S. diplomacy as a force for global change, I am proud that this year’s *National Defense Authorization Act* includes provisions I championed to modernize our diplomatic capabilities to meet 21st century needs. As we look to diplomatically counter our adversaries’ influence across the globe, my *Department of State Authorization Act* will enhance passport services for Americans, bolster our cybersecurity capabilities, support the State Department’s workforce, strengthen our response to overseas crises, and expand U.S. economic diplomacy.

“In addition to strengthening the State Department, I am pleased at the successful inclusion of a bipartisan effort I championed to advance the critical AUKUS partnership. These important measures will enhance deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and signal our strong support for two key allies. They will also streamline the export of U.S. military technology, while guarding against espionage.

“I am also proud that this year’s NDAA supports families of Americans wrongfully or unlawfully detained abroad. Their loved ones face an unimaginable nightmare. My provision, stemming from my *Supporting Americans Wrongfully or Unlawfully Detained Abroad Act*, will ensure that families are compensated for travel to Washington D.C. to help support the repatriation of their loved ones and that families and detainees have access to mental health support.

“As the United States seeks to invest in solutions to ongoing global issues, one of my measures will help uplift children with disabilities around the world who are frequently denied the opportunity to grow up in a loving family and thrive in their communities. This provision authorizes funding for an ‘International Children with Disabilities Protection Program’ to empower organizations and families advocating for children with disabilities globally.

“I am proud of the transformative priorities we were able to secure in this year’s NDAA, and look forward to getting this bill to President Biden’s desk.”

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