



NEWS RELEASE

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WARRIOR PROTECTION AND READINESS COALITION (WPRC) COMMENDS APPROVAL OF FY 2016 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Warrior Protection and Readiness Coalition Secures Critical Legislative Successes for Domestic Industrial Base and Grows Membership

MARBLEHEAD, MA (November 30, 2015) – The Warrior Protection and Readiness Coalition ([WPRC](http://www.warriorprotection.net)) commends the United States Congress and President Barack Obama for adopting meaningful reforms and important legislative initiatives to maintain the strength of the domestic industrial base in support of our warfighters and peacekeepers. WPRC members advocated tirelessly for several provisions that were included in the final 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed into law by the President on November 25, 2015.

The WPRC successfully advocated for and secured an important provision (Section 884) that discourages the use of “lowest price technically acceptable” (LPTA) contracting methods for items of personal protective equipment (PPE) and critical safety items. The NDAA states that the service branches, overseen by the Secretary of Defense, shall “use source selection criteria that is predominantly based on technical qualifications of the item and not predominately based on price to the maximum extent practicable if the level of quality or failure of the item could result in death or severe bodily harm to the user.” Items of concern include combat helmets, body armor, ballistic eye protection, and other similar individual equipment issued to U.S. military personnel and manufactured in the United States by members of the WPRC.

Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee-Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee and Representative Rob Wittman (R-VA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee joined to lead the effort in Congress to maintain this important provision in the final NDAA text. This language is critically important to ensuring that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and operators are equipped with the safest, highest performing equipment and that the American taxpayer is receiving the best value for their dollars.

Ensuring that technical qualifications and capability take precedence over lowest possible pricing ensures a combat advantage for U.S. service members and consistently higher quality equipage. Best Value contracting is the most appropriate acquisition tool to prevent unnecessary injuries or casualties for those in harm’s way. WPRC members will continue to advocate for the use of Best Value contracting methods and ensure that the Department of Defense recognizes the importance of this provision to the health and safety of our service men and women.

In addition to this achievement, WPRC also successfully ensured the inclusion of language directing the Department of Defense to comply with previously passed directive language from the FY 2014 NDAA requiring the Secretary to “submit, as part of the defense budget materials for each fiscal year, a consolidated budget justification display that covers all programs and activities associated with the procurement of personal protection equipment (PPE).” The report states, “The committee expects the Department [of Defense] to comply with section 141 of the fiscal year 2014 NDAA and strongly encourages

the Department to consider including similar budget displays for environmental and fire resistant clothing, footwear, and organizational clothing and individual equipment [(OCIE)] as well.”

Providing this information, as directed by Congress, will allow Program Managers and Project Officers, as well as WPRC member companies to better plan for the future needs of our Armed Services and properly allocate budget, plan, and deliver superior clothing and equipment. A letter was also recently sent from several members of the U.S. House of Representatives, led by Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC) requesting a detailed plan for how the Department of Defense will comply with this reporting requirement in the FY 2017 budget. The implementation for this simple yet critical step in the Department of Defense budget process has strengthened on Capitol Hill and ensures that the U.S. industrial base that supports our armed services is provided the essential information needed.

Another priority for WPRC members is ensuring that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is complying fully with the Kissell Amendment, which requires the Department to purchase American made clothing and individual equipment where applicable. Earlier this year, the WPRC requested that the Department conduct an internal audit to identify how DHS has implemented and complied with this law. This process is ongoing, however Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) has called for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) independent audit of DHS to study how the Department has implemented the Kissell Amendment. WPRC leaders are working with Senator Shaheen and other Members of Congress to hold DHS accountable and ensure compliance with the law.

WPRC Executive Director David Costello said, “The legislative success our Coalition has achieved is a result of the bi-partisan recognition of the need to sustain innovative American manufacturing that supports our troops. This national asset provides our service members with a distinct advantage in both training and combat and is increasingly essential to the readiness of our warfighters and peacekeepers. The WPRC is grateful for the support of our congressional champions who have ensured this collective effort becomes effective legislation.”

As the WPRC continues to expand its advocacy efforts, new companies continue to join the organization as members. Recently, Bluewater Defense, D30 Impact Protection, Navajo Fabrics, and Worthen Industries have joined with 40 other companies to add their voice to the WPRC. The added impact of these industry leaders will be critical to advancing the WPRC mission to support the equipment and advanced clothing needs of the Armed Services and Department of Homeland Security.

Bluewater Defense – Bluewater Defense is a leading manufacturer of uniforms and equipment for the U.S. Department of Defense. During the past 28 years, the company has focused on manufacturing labor intensive, sewn items per military specifications - successfully completing 74 large contracts totaling \$800 million in revenue. www.blewaterdefense.com.

D30 Impact Protection – Located in North Carolina and Virginia, D30 is a groundbreaking impact protection solutions company that licenses a range of unique patented smart materials. The market-changing D30 technology is used to produce a shock absorbing material that can be found in a range of products across the motorcycle, sport, footwear, electronics, military and workwear sectors. Military forces benefit from head-to-toe D30 technology solutions that range from combat helmet liner systems to footwear insoles. www.d3o.com.

Navajo Fabrics – Navajo Fabrics is a Westerly, RI based diversified manufacturer of military uniform, police, tactical and equipment fabrics. Navajo is a leading supplier of fabric for the military, law enforcement, public safety, medical, and security markets. Navajo’s business focus is to produce fabrics for OCIE (Organizational Clothing Individual Equipment) as well as unique solid colors and camouflage patterns for specialty missions and specific environments. www.navajo-fabrics.com.

Worthen Industries – Worthen Industries' UPACO Footwear Products Group has been custom compounding, reacting, and extruding products for every operation of footwear, including military and law enforcement products, and allied trade manufacturing for over 40 years. Based in Nashua, NH, the UPACO group offers systems for waterproof footwear, film adhesives for both sole (in-mold) and upper footwear applications. In addition, UPACO offers liquid bonding adhesives (both solvent and water-based, natural, and synthetic), standard hot melts, and polyurethane reactives. www.worthenindustries.com.

The WPRC supports the readiness of the United States by providing a unified industry voice to the U.S. Congress, the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security and other stakeholders. We work at the intersection of the Personal Protective Equipment and Organizational Clothing/Individual Equipment industry, the federal legislative policy process, and the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. Our membership includes companies throughout the equipment and clothing industry and with companies at every point in the industrial supply chain who represent the best in American manufacturing.

About WPRC

WPRC is the unified voice of advocacy for the individual and unit level equipment needs of the warfighter and peacekeeper. The leading tactical equipment, apparel, materials, and technology companies of WPRC are committed to ensuring that American service members and Homeland Security personnel are provided with superior products built by a robust industrial base, now and in the future. For a complete listing of WPRC member companies, please visit www.warriorprotection.net.

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