

November 19, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

As Congress turns to the end-of-year legislative agenda, I write to encourage you to enact important policies that will support America's security, families, and sustainability. These include completion of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), federal spending bills for fiscal year 2025, the farm bill, energy permitting reform, legislation to address the safety of children online, and extension of expiring health care provisions. Our country needs Congress to take strong bipartisan action on these critical measures, all of which will directly benefit every American.

We strongly urge you to include these provisions in the final FY25 NDAA bill:

Retain Critical Minerals Provisions

The United States depends heavily on a secure supply of critical minerals and materials such as cobalt, lithium, and graphite for modern technologies, military readiness, and energy infrastructure. However, global demand for these minerals and materials is outpacing production, and the United States relies almost exclusively on other countries—particularly China—for our supply. Both parties recognize that it is vital for the U.S. to strengthen our domestic supply chains to meet the nation's long-term economic, national security, and clean energy interests, and we are glad to see critical minerals provisions included in the House and Senate NDAA bills. Together, these provisions will help secure U.S. supply chains by reducing dependence on China's critical mineral supply, bolstering the American workforce, and strengthening national security against market manipulation by foreign adversaries:

- ***BICAMERAL – Title XIV, Subtitle B; (Senate) Title XIV, Subtitle B (House), National Defense Stockpile:*** Ensure 1) a domestic source of strategic and critical minerals through

the procurement program and 2) readiness for a sustained national emergency by requiring a plan for restocking of critical minerals.

- **BICAMERAL - SEC. 844 (Senate) SEC. 845 (House):** Prioritize domestic recycled and reused minerals in Department of Defense strategies for securing supply chains.
- **HOUSE - SEC. 855, Lithium-ion batteries:** Require DOD to procure lithium-ion batteries produced in the United States or in allied nations beginning in 2026.
- **SENATE – Division K, Hardrock mines:** Create an EPA pilot program to improve the clean-up and water quality of abandoned hardrock mines as found in H.R. 7779/ S. 2781, the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act.

Retain Paid Family Leave Expansion

[Policymakers](#) and [voters](#) across the political spectrum support and recognize the critical need for federal paid family leave policies to bolster the economy and American families. The FY24 NDAA included important provisions broadening eligibility for military families, including extending paid parental leave to fathers and adoptive parents serving in the reserves and National Guard and allowing veterans in civil service jobs to count their military service toward the eligibility requirement for paid parental leave under the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act. BPC Action is supportive of a provision in the House FY25 NDAA that would build upon this momentum by expanding paid family leave to adoptive parents and fathers of the Coast Guard Reserve:

- **SEC. 602. Extension of Parental Leave to Members of the Coast Guard Reserve:** Expand parental leave for up to 12 inactive-duty training periods during the year following the birth or adoption of a member's child. This provision ensures that members of the Coast Guard Reserve receive the same parental leave benefits as reservists for other armed forces.

Include Artificial Intelligence Legislation

Expanding access to artificial intelligence (AI) systems is crucial to maintaining American global leadership in AI, strengthening national security, and spurring AI innovation. BPC Action urges policymakers to include the bipartisan Creating Resources for Every American to Experiment with Artificial Intelligence Act (CREATE AI Act, H.R. 5077/S. 2714) in the final NDAA package. The CREATE AI Act would establish the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource to expand access to AI tools to researchers from universities, nonprofits, and government, improving U.S. capacity for AI innovation. We also encourage passage of the Department of Energy AI Act (H.R. 9671/S. 4664). This bill would establish the Frontiers in AI for Science, Security, and Technology (FASST) initiative to harness DOE's resources and expertise to drive AI advancements in science, energy, and national security.

Other Bipartisan Legislative Priorities for Consideration:

Before the end of the year, BPC Action urges Congress to complete FY25 appropriations to provide critical funding for priorities such as energy innovation, child care, and affordable housing, in addition to several other pieces of legislation that have cross-party support. These bills—the **2024 farm bill, permitting reform, children’s online safety bills, and health care extensions**—would directly benefit Americans of all ages and backgrounds. They also represent years’ worth of hard-fought collaboration and compromise. We hope to see Congress finish this substantial work and pass these priorities before the end of the year.

Farm Bill Reauthorization

BPC Action [urges full reauthorization](#) of a farm bill to support American farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and rural communities while strengthening nutrition programs and recognizing our country’s fiscal challenges. The cost of waiting to pass a farm bill is high. The Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) farm income forecast projects a \$43.1 billion (27.1%) decline in 2023-2024 net farm income.¹

Permitting Reform

A more efficient permitting system for energy infrastructure is vital for the U.S. to ensure affordable, reliable energy while reducing emissions. We [ask that Congress include](#) the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee-passed Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024 (S. 4753) and additional bipartisan reforms in end-of-year legislation to ensure a more effective structure to help streamline energy infrastructure permitting while achieving environmental and economic goals.

Children’s Online Safety

Amidst increasing concerns over the youth mental health and substance use crisis—which shows a direct link between social media usage and youth depression, anxiety, and self-harm—Congress [should pass legislation](#) like the Children and Teens’ Online Privacy Protection Act (H.R. 7890/S. 1418) and the Kids Online Safety Act (H.R. 7891/S. 1409), which have broad bipartisan support. Together, these bicameral bills [would address](#) many challenges around harmful online content, data availability, privacy, and other important issues, helping ensure Americans of all ages, especially children, stay safe online.

Expiring Health Care Provisions

We also urge Congress to extend [telehealth](#) and [Acute Hospital at Home](#) waiver flexibilities for two years and five years, respectively, to ensure that patients maintain their continuity of care before these services expire in December. We are glad to see continued bipartisan support for their extension, with both House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees’ passage of extension bills—the Preserving Telehealth, Hospital and Ambulance Access Act (H.R.

¹ USDA, Economic Research Service, 2024 Farm Sector Income Forecast.

8261) and Telehealth Modernization Act of 2024 (H.R. 7623). We ask Congress to work together to finalize a bipartisan package before the end of the year that extends these necessary services while continuing work toward establishing a sustainable and permanent solution.

We thank you for your leadership. BPC Action looks forward to working with you to advance the above bipartisan legislative priorities this year and to advance fiscally responsible policies in the next Congress.

Sincerely,



Michele Stockwell
President, BPC Action

Cc: Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Stabenow (D-MI)
Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Boozman (R-AR)
Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Reed (D-RI)
Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Wicker (R-MS)
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Manchin (I-WV)
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Barrasso (R-WY)
House Agriculture Committee Chairman Thompson (R-PA)
House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Scott (D-GA)
House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rogers (R-AL)
House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Smith (D-WA)
House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)
House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Pallone (D-NJ)