

September 24, 2025

The Honorable John Thune  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

As the leading authority on oral health in the United States, the American Dental Association (ADA), representing more than 159,000 dentists across the country, writes to share our views on oral health priorities as the Senate considers S. 2296, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, and related legislation.

H.R. 3838, the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, which passed the House of Representatives on September 10, 2025, contains important provisions that will bolster the military dental system and ensure the health of our service members.

One such provision is House Floor Amendment No. 44<sup>1</sup> offered by Representative Brian Babin that strengthens accreditation efforts in military dental treatment facilities (DTFs). This amendment requires a report to Congress on the implementation of Section 744(b)(4) of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021<sup>2</sup>, which mandated the accreditation of all military medical treatment facilities (MTFs), including DTFs. This amendment stipulates that the report must include exact data on the scope of DTF accreditation including any “gaps,” determine any remaining barriers to full accreditation, identify the necessary resources to ensure compliance, estimate associated costs, and provide recommendations for fulfilling the mandate.

Successful accreditation efforts help guarantee operational excellence and the highest standards of care within MTFs and their DTF components. The ADA strongly supports this amendment and applauds its inclusion in the House version of the NDAA.

Routine dental care not only supports overall health, but is also essential to maintaining military readiness. Service members with a 'class 3' dental readiness status are ineligible for deployment, and half of them will face a dental emergency

within just two months.<sup>3</sup> We support the aforementioned oral health provisions to promote total body health and secure the national defense.

We respectfully request your consideration of these oral health provisions within any final, unified version of the NDAA that comes before the Senate. The ADA will continue to support initiatives to strengthen the military dental treatment system and ensure military readiness.

We stand ready to assist in achieving the shared goal of guaranteeing the highest standard of care for our brave service members. For further discussion, please reach out to Nicholas Cargas at [cargasn@ada.org](mailto:cargasn@ada.org).

Sincerely,

/s/

Brett Kessler, D.D.S.  
President

/s/

Elizabeth A. Shapiro, D.D.S., J.D.  
Interim Executive Director