

**TESTIMONY OF  
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COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD**

**ON  
“THE COAST GUARD’S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET REQUEST”**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
April 28, 2026**

Chairman Ezell, Ranking Member Carbajal, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the President’s Fiscal Year 2027 Budget and the historic results the Coast Guard is delivering for the American people.

The Coast Guard is a vital instrument of national power. We save lives. We control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches; facilitate the safe and secure flow of maritime commerce that is vital to our economic prosperity and strategic mobility; and respond to crises and contingencies. As a key member of both the Department of Homeland Security and the Joint Force, every mission we execute delivers proven value to our Nation. The American people depend on the Coast Guard, and we provide a remarkable return on their investment.

The Coast Guard is in greater demand now more than ever before. We are at the forefront of advancing U.S. national strategies in an era of persistent Great Power competition. To win, we must modernize and innovate. The President’s National Security Strategy calls for a more robust Coast Guard presence to control vital sea lanes, combat illegal migration, and disrupt drug trafficking. The Coast Guard also directly advances the National Defense Strategy by defending the Homeland and deterring threats in the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, we have a central role in restoring America’s maritime dominance by increasing our presence in the Arctic, expanding our icebreaking capabilities, and rebuilding our maritime industrial base.

Under the leadership of President Trump, the Department of Homeland Security, and with the support of Congress, the Coast Guard is emerging from a decades-long readiness crisis. A landmark \$24.6 billion capital investment from the Working Families Tax Cut Act is fueling the most significant modernization in a century, transforming our Service into a more agile, capable, and responsive force equipped to confront the challenges and risks in this era of competition. However, this historic investment is only a start. To complete this transformation, we require consistent, predictable annual top-line growth. The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget is the next critical step to support our people, grow our workforce, and expand our capabilities.

**A Clear Return on Investment**

In 2025, the Coast Guard demonstrated its extraordinary value as we fought to protect our Nation. We seized a record-breaking 511,000 pounds of cocaine, preventing over 193 million lethal doses

from reaching our communities and averting an estimated \$2.3 billion in related healthcare costs. Our search and rescue operations saved 5,220 lives and assisted over 19,000 people.

We launched three major operations to secure our borders:

- **Operation Border Trident:** Achieved operational control of the California coastal region, increasing interdictions by 44% over 2024.
- **Operation Pacific Viper:** Seized over 200,000 pounds of narcotics in the Eastern Pacific.
- **Operation River Wall:** Secured 260 miles of the Rio Grande River.

Last summer, we commissioned the Cutter *Storis*, our first new icebreaker in over 25 years. In a clear demonstration of our resolve, Cutters *Storis*, *Healy*, and *Waesche* intercepted and chased away five Chinese research vessels operating over the U.S. extended continental shelf in the Arctic. Simultaneously, we facilitated a 13 percent increase in maritime commerce, ensuring the safe movement of 1.8 billion tons of cargo. From conducting high-profile boardings of illicit oil tankers to ensuring the security of our ports, the men and women of the Coast Guard execute our missions with unmatched excellence. In these dangerous and unforgiving environments, we lead our crews to conduct disciplined operations to get the mission done and safely return.

These successes were achieved by a force that in recent years has been stretched to its breaking point. To sustain this performance—and to meet the growing threats to our Nation—we must increase the investment in our readiness, workforce, and capabilities now.

### **Rebuilding the Readiness of the Service**

Service readiness starts with the readiness of every Coast Guard man and woman, and their families. Upon that cornerstone we build the readiness of our crews and the entire force. Our people are our greatest treasure, and we must provide them with quality housing, childcare, medical services, and support systems they deserve.

The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget prioritizes these investments. It funds a pay raise for military Service members, with a targeted increase for our most junior members. It expands childcare services, funding a \$35 million increase in subsidies to finally provide our members parity with their Department of War counterparts, and staffs two new Child Development Centers. Furthermore, we will strategically expand medical and logistics support at 35 Sectors, 24 Air Stations, and 22 Bases to ensure our people and assets are always ready. To enhance mission readiness, the budget allocates \$124 million to address maintenance backlogs and provides critical parts to sustain current operations.

### **Growing our Workforce**

To restore readiness and outpace our adversaries, the Coast Guard must grow by at least 15,000 military members. In 2025, we achieved our best recruiting gains since 1991, and our successes continue. The Fiscal Year 2027 budget builds on this momentum, requesting an increase of 5,768 positions, including \$136 million and over 700 positions dedicated to expanding recruiting and training capacity.

To support national strategies, the budget adds 2,676 positions to bolster our frontline operators. We will establish two new Cyber Protection Teams to safeguard our Nation’s critical maritime infrastructure and expand our new Robotics Mission Specialist rating by 284 positions. Additionally, we will begin to crew the assets funded by the Working Families Tax Cut Act, allocating 864 positions for new assets, including Arctic Security Cutters arriving in 2028.

### **Expanding our Capabilities**

To navigate the Service into the future, we must equip our people with modern, capable assets. The Fiscal Year 2027 budget continues and expands on recent capital investments, including \$204 million to initiate the third stage of the Offshore Patrol Cutter acquisition—the future backbone of our surface fleet.

However, acquiring assets is only the beginning. The nearly 100 new assets funded by reconciliation require homeports, hangars, and infrastructure. This budget funds the necessary planning and design of these facilities and provides \$306 million to begin constructing the infrastructure for the first two Arctic Security Cutter homeports.

To enhance maritime dominance, we are embracing innovation. The budget invests \$221 million in unmanned systems and counter-unmanned systems to provide persistent airborne and surface surveillance and reconnaissance. Additionally, it funds \$50 million to deploy Coastal Sentinel—a suite of advanced sensors, networked communications, and analytic tools to defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches. Pairing our recapitalized fleet with these advanced capabilities will maximize our operational effectiveness.

### **The Way Forward: Securing America's Future**

Looking to the horizon, we are filled with certain hope. If our distinguished history proves one thing, it is this: with a ready Coast Guard crew and the strong support of the American people, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. With your continued support, and with the funding requested in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, we will ensure enduring Coast Guard mission success for decades to come.

*Semper Paratus.*