

Defense Acquisition Reform: Executive and Legislative Branch Actions

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Background

The Department of Defense (DOD) procures its weapon systems through the defense acquisition system (DAS), which typically determines the process by which DOD develops and buys goods and services from contractors. Over the past year, both the executive branch and Congress have introduced efforts to reform the DAS. Such efforts continue over a decade of DAS reform initiatives. While [some analysts](#) assert these initiatives have improved DOD acquisition processes, [other analysts](#) have [argued](#) that such acquisition reform efforts have generally yielded limited results, due in large part to DOD’s bureaucracy and processes.

[Title 10, Subtitle A](#), Part V, “Acquisition,” of the *U.S. Code*, addresses DOD-specific procurement policy. [Title 10 also designates](#) the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) as the “chief acquisition and sustainment officer of the [DOD] with the mission of delivering and sustaining timely, cost-effective capabilities for the armed forces (and the Department).” [The Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement \(DFARS\)](#) implements this statute. [DOD Directive \(DODD\) 5000.01](#), “[The Defense Acquisition System](#),” is one internal DOD issuance that further implements statutes and regulations, and outlines policies and responsibilities for the operation of the DAS.

Executive Branch Actions

The Trump Administration has made deregulating government functions, including DOD acquisition, a policy priority, and issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14192, “[Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation](#),” in January 2025. Its stated aim is to “alleviate unnecessary regulatory burdens,” a goal reflected in subsequent E.O.s and DOD-specific memoranda.

Selected Executive Orders

In April 2025, President Trump issued E.O. 14275, “[Restoring Common Sense to Federal Procurement](#).” The E.O. called for “removing undue barriers, such as unnecessary regulations, while simultaneously

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allowing for the expansion of the national and defense industrial bases.” Also in April 2025, President Trump issued E.O. 14265 “[Modernizing Defense Acquisitions and Spurring Innovation in the Defense Industrial Base](#).” This E.O. states that it aims to “rapidly reform our antiquated defense acquisition processes with an emphasis on speed, flexibility, and execution” and “modernize the duties and composition of the defense acquisition workforce.” The E.O. required that the Secretary of Defense submit a plan to reform the acquisition process and review and/or revise DOD’s internal acquisition-related regulations (e.g., DODD 5000.01).

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Re-Write

In May 2025, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a [memorandum](#) pursuant to E.O. 14275, titled “Overhauling the Federal Acquisition Regulation.” It stated the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) is to be “refocused on its statutory roots,” FAR supplements are to be “streamlined,” and federal contracting regulations “will be replaced with ... buying guides” intended to “highlight proven innovative buying techniques for different phases of the acquisition lifecycle.” To date, [proposed changes](#) to several parts of the FAR are available for “informal input,” and the FAR Council has updated 21 of 23 sections of the FAR. It is not clear whether updated buying guides have been issued. GSA also noted that the DFARS would be overhauled.

Congressional Actions

In December 2024, Senator Roger Wicker introduced S. 5618, the Fostering Reform and Government Efficiency in Defense (FoRGED) Act. The bill included provisions that would have repealed and modified selected statutory authorities and responsibilities provided in the DAS. A report published by Senator Wicker alongside the FoRGED Act [stated that](#) “these moves would open the aperture for the president to retain, revise, or remove regulations.” The FoRGED Act included efforts concerning DOD acquisition organizations and their roles and responsibilities, the acquisition process, the defense industrial base, and the defense budgeting process.

In June 2025, Representative Mike Rogers introduced H.R. 3838, the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery (SPEED) Act, [describing](#) it as “legislation to restructure, streamline, and modernize [DOD’s] acquisition system.” The bill included efforts concerning the defense acquisition workforce, the defense industrial base (including “leveraging commercial innovation”) and DOD’s requirements process.

While the House and Senate have not yet passed their own respective versions of a National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2026, the current committee-approved versions include many of the provisions introduced in the SPEED and FoRGED Acts, respectively.

The defense industry appears receptive to the proposed legislation. For example, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) [issued a statement](#) saying that the FoRGED Act, if passed, “will streamline the Department of Defense’s acquisition system by removing cumbersome regulations to unleash industrial innovation.”

Issues for Congress

Statutory Repeals

Congress may consider the extent of various statutory repeals contained in existing legislative proposals, particularly as the executive branch has emphasized acquisition regulation “will be refocused on its statutory roots.” The FoRGED Act, SPEED Act, and both House- and Senate-introduced versions of an

NDAA would repeal or reduce certain DOD acquisition-related statutory requirements, including some [contract pricing](#) and [bid evaluation procedures](#). Additional proposed statutory repeals include certain reporting requirements and specific procurement programs, including [pilot programs](#). While some of these proposed provisions would eliminate statutory requirements related to situations that have since ended (e.g., expired statutory requirements related to the [conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq](#) or the [COVID-19 pandemic](#)), others may affect ongoing requirements.

Congressional Oversight

Congress may consider the degree of autonomy it provides for individual DOD agencies' acquisitions. Congress may also consider the degree to which it chooses to exercise statutory oversight over DOD acquisition processes as the executive branch attempts to reduce the regulatory requirements on DOD. Proposed legislation could shift requirements and [acquisition authorities](#) between [different](#) DOD entities. Additionally, certain proposed amendments to Title 10 of the *U.S. Code* could result in a more decentralized acquisition process, with some authorities being delegated to the program, portfolio, or component levels. Such delegation could result in reduced [Office of the Secretary of Defense \(OSD\)](#) and Joint Staff authority and oversight. Some of the proposed legislative changes lack definitions and, as such, could potentially be open to interpretation by DOD and/or may not align with congressional intent.

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