

Trump signs defense bill into law with \$354.6M for Guam buildup, 4,000 H-2B workers

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(Photo: Department of Defense)

President Donald Trump signed into law a national defense spending bill that authorizes \$354.6 million for Guam military construction projects and allows up to 4,000 skilled foreign workers under the H-2B program per year to support military buildup projects.

Guam Del. Madeleine Bordallo, in a statement, said the president signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2018 which includes provisions important to Guam.

Bordallo said the law now provides U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services with flexibility in applying of the H-2B visa program on Guam, and it permits up to 4,000 H-2B visas per year to be approved for military and civilian projects directly related to, or associated with, the Marine relocation.

(Story continues below video.)

"USCIS and the Trump Administration have up to 120 days to implement this law, and I look forward to building on this provision for all our civilian needs," Bordallo stated.

'Critical first step'

Bordallo championed the H-2B provision, which would enable civilian infrastructure funded by the federal government, the government of Guam, or non-governmental sources that are being done, in part, because of the increased number of military personnel and military families moving to Guam.

"While it was a critical first step, I will continue working in Congress and with our partners in the Administration to ensure that Guam has an adequate workforce to meet labor demands," Bordallo stated.

The federal government has denied nearly 100 percent of H-2B visa applications for Guam since late 2015.

Lawsuit pending

A dozen businesses including the Guam Contractors Association sued the federal government for the visa denials that they said are harming the local economy and the military buildup. The federal government says the H-2B program has been abused on Guam. The case remains pending.

More: [After H-2B workers drop to under 50 on Guam, feds insist there's no change in foreign labor policy \(/story/news/2017/12/11/after-h-2-b-workers-drop-under-50-guam-feds-insist-theres-no-change-foreign-labor-policy/939418001/\)](#)

The 2018 defense spending law authorizes \$354.6 million for military construction projects for Guam for the Marine realignment, as well as for current operations which include the hardening of select military facilities.

These include:

- \$75.233 million for an aircraft maintenance hangar #2, Navy
- \$66.747 million for corrosion control hangar, Navy
- \$49.431 million MALS facilities, Navy
- \$37.180 million for Navy-commercial tie-in hardening, Navy
- \$56.088 million water well field, Navy
- 40.875 million replacement of Andersen housing PH2, Navy
- \$23.9 million to build truck load and unload facility, Defense Logistics Agency
- \$5.2 million for a Reserve Medical Training Facility, Air Force Reserve.

This story will be updated.

Reporter Haidee Eugenio covers Guam's Catholic church issues, education, business and more. Follow her on Twitter [@haidee_eugenio](https://twitter.com/haidee_eugenio) (https://twitter.com/haidee_eugenio). Follow Pacific Daily News on Facebook/GuamPDN (<http://www.facebook.com/guampdn/>) and Instagram @gua (<http://instagram.com/GuamPDN>)mpd (<http://instagram.com/GuamPDN>)n.

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