

First Interim Report of the Section 809 Panel

Written by Nick Sanders
Friday, 26 May 2017 00:00

You review the NDAA in great detail because it tells you what's coming.

Each year we post an article linking to Bob Antonio's WIFCON analysis of the NDAA, and we point out things we believe to be of interest.

What's the NDAA? It's the annual National Defense Authorization Act, a piece of legislation passed every year that tells the Department of Defense what Congress expects and requires it to do. In Government Fiscal Year 2016, the NDAA (at Section 809) directed the Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L)—a position that was subsequently eliminated by the GFY 2017 NDAA—to establish “an advisory panel on streamlining acquisition regulations.” We noted this requirement in [our article](#) on that NDAA, and we wrote that we hoped it went better than other recent USD (AT&L) efforts at acquisition reform.

The quality of the panel's results will be largely driven by the quality of panelists. With that thought in mind, let's provide [a link](#) to the Panel's team. The Panelists, aided by a professional staff, have established nine Teams to address acquisition reform ideas—the nine teams are described [here](#). (For example, Team 9 is focused on “modernizing” the Federal Cost Accounting Standards.

The Section 809 Panel has been active for roughly eight months, and just issued its first [Interim Report](#)

. Along with the Interim Report came a [Supplemental Report](#) containing four recommendations at regulatory roll-backs—four “quick wins” or four pieces of “low-hanging fruit” if you will.

We have provided a number of links in this article so that you can see for yourself what the Section 809 Panel is up to. Here are a couple of quotes from the Interim Report that readers may find to be of interest (all emphases in original, internal footnotes omitted):

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DoD's focus must be on mission readiness and performance results. The current acquisition

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system is designed to achieve too many competing ancillary *good* policies, sacrificing innovation and technological dominance yet adding complexity, cost, and time.

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The time for superficial conversation and insubstantial changes to regulations and statutes has passed. The global threat is rapidly changing, the relevance of the unique defense industrial base is waning, the processes for acquisition are no longer efficient or effective, and implementing these processes is left to a workforce that is mired in constricted thinking and risk aversion.

Sounds like quotes taken directly from this blog—but they are from the official Interim Report.

Obviously, we shall all have to wait and see what recommendations the Panel ultimately puts forward, and which ones are accepted. We will be looking for those recommendations that create the most push-back from the DoD bureaucracy, which has a strong history of resisting change. We will also keep our eyes on the Team 9 Sub-Panel, to see if they can assist in untangling the Gordian knot that the Federal Cost Accounting Standards have become.

More to follow on this