

To infinity and beyond? US lawmakers advance 'Space Corps' plans

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US lawmakers on Friday advanced a defense bill that includes a provision to establish a new branch of the military—dubbed "Space Corps"—that would focus on space operations.

The space force measure has met stiff resistance from the Trump

administration, which says there's no need to establish another tier of military bureaucracy.

But proponents and some lawmakers see the military's space assets and its massive reliance on satellites as needing a stand-alone branch to protect and monitor them.

The huge National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) spending bill, approved by the House of Representatives on Friday, includes an amendment that would create a Space Corps by taking functions currently under the Air Force and placing these in a separate command.

It is unlikely, however, that Space Corps will come into being just yet, as the Senate's version of the NDAA has no such provision.

And Pentagon chief Jim Mattis made his feelings known in a letter to a congressman this week.

"At a time when we are trying to integrate the department's joint warfighting functions, I do not wish to add a separate service that would likely present a narrower and even parochial approach to [space operations](#)," Mattis wrote to Congressman Michael Turner, who is also against the creation of Space Corps.

It would be "premature to add additional organizational and administrative tail to the Department at a time I am trying to reduce overhead," he added.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson told lawmakers she too opposed Space Corps.

"To get focused on a large organizational change would actually slow us down right now," she said.

"It would actually move us in the wrong direction, slow us down from where we need to go.

Still, the effort to build a new military branch for space highlights the critical dependence the armed services have on [space](#) for many aspects of warfighting.

GPS systems are built into many military technologies and a network of sensors and satellites floating in orbit provide continual and vital intelligence.

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