

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106979](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD receives billions in annual appropriated MILPERS dollars to pay service member wages, benefits, and housing, among other things. Recognizing that unforeseen requirements can arise, Congress permits DOD to realign (that is, move) appropriated funds within MILPERS or from MILPERS to other appropriations accounts, such as Operation and Maintenance, under certain circumstances.

Senate Report 118-58 includes a provision for GAO to review DOD's management of MILPERS appropriations. This report (1) identifies the amounts that DOD realigned into, out of, or within MILPERS appropriation accounts for fiscal years 2013 through 2023 and what factors influenced the need for the realignments; and (2) assesses the extent to which realignments affected the ability of military components to fund MILPERS program obligations and are transparent.

GAO reviewed relevant budget data documentation, policies, and guidance; and interviewed DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making five recommendations, including that DOD revise its Financial Management Regulation to require a report to Congress with complete information on individual program MILPERS realignments, and to implement the revised guidance by annually reporting program level realignments. DOD concurred with four recommendations and partially concurred with one recommendation. GAO believes all recommendations are sound and should be fully addressed.

View [GAO-24-106979](#). For more information, contact Rashmi Agarwal at (202) 512-4077 or AgarwalR@gao.gov.

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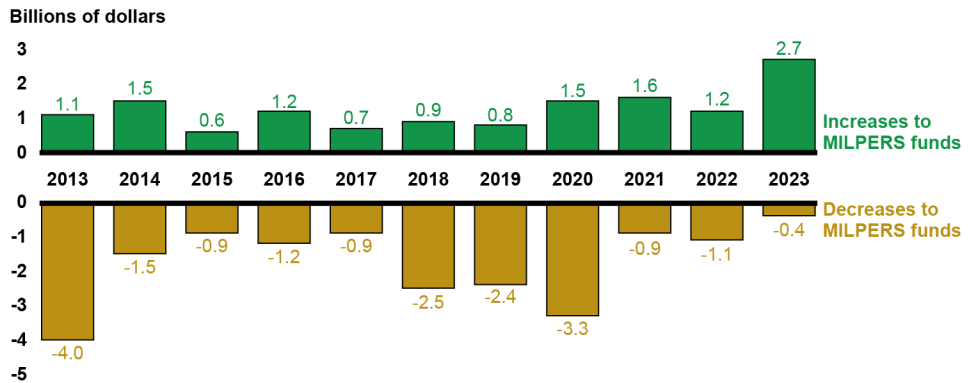
DEFENSE BUDGET

Additional Information about Military Personnel Realignments Would Facilitate Congressional Oversight

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) realignment of Military Personnel (MILPERS) appropriations for fiscal years 2013 through 2023 totaled nearly \$32.9 billion (about 2 percent of total MILPERS appropriations). During this period, DOD experienced annual increases and decreases due to these realignments.

Increases and Decreases to Military Personnel (MILPERS) Funding Resulting from Realignments, Fiscal Years 2013–2023



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-24-106979

Note: Limited budget data exist for Space Force given that it received its first MILPERS appropriation in fiscal year 2023. Therefore, we excluded Space Force from our analysis.

DOD's realignments resulted in the cumulative net transfer of \$5.4 billion out of MILPERS from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2023 and into other DOD appropriations, such as Operation and Maintenance and Procurement. In general, DOD conducted MILPERS realignments because planned estimates were either higher or lower than the actual costs incurred. However, DOD officials noted that specific reasons for differences between estimates and actual costs can vary by realignment action. For example, funds may need to be realigned to address emergent requirements.

According to DOD officials, realignments did not negatively influence the department's ability to fund MILPERS program obligations. GAO's analysis of MILPERS budget data for fiscal years 2013 through 2023 found that the military components collectively obligated and expended almost all (about 99 percent) of their MILPERS funding. Although DOD provides required reports to Congress on MILPERS realignments, information on program level realignments is not required and therefore is not consistently provided in the reports. Rather, information reported by DOD to Congress on total MILPERS realignments are largely aggregated, which can make it difficult for DOD and Congress to identify individual program funding needs. Without DOD fully accounting for the individual program-level realignments of MILPERS funds in the annual reports that it provides to Congress, decision-makers will continue to lack the visibility needed to effectively exercise oversight into how the department manages its funding.