Congressional Budget Office
Nonpartisan Analysis for the U.S. Congress

The Congress, the Golden Fleet, and the Shipbuilding Industrial Base in 2026

January 15, 2026

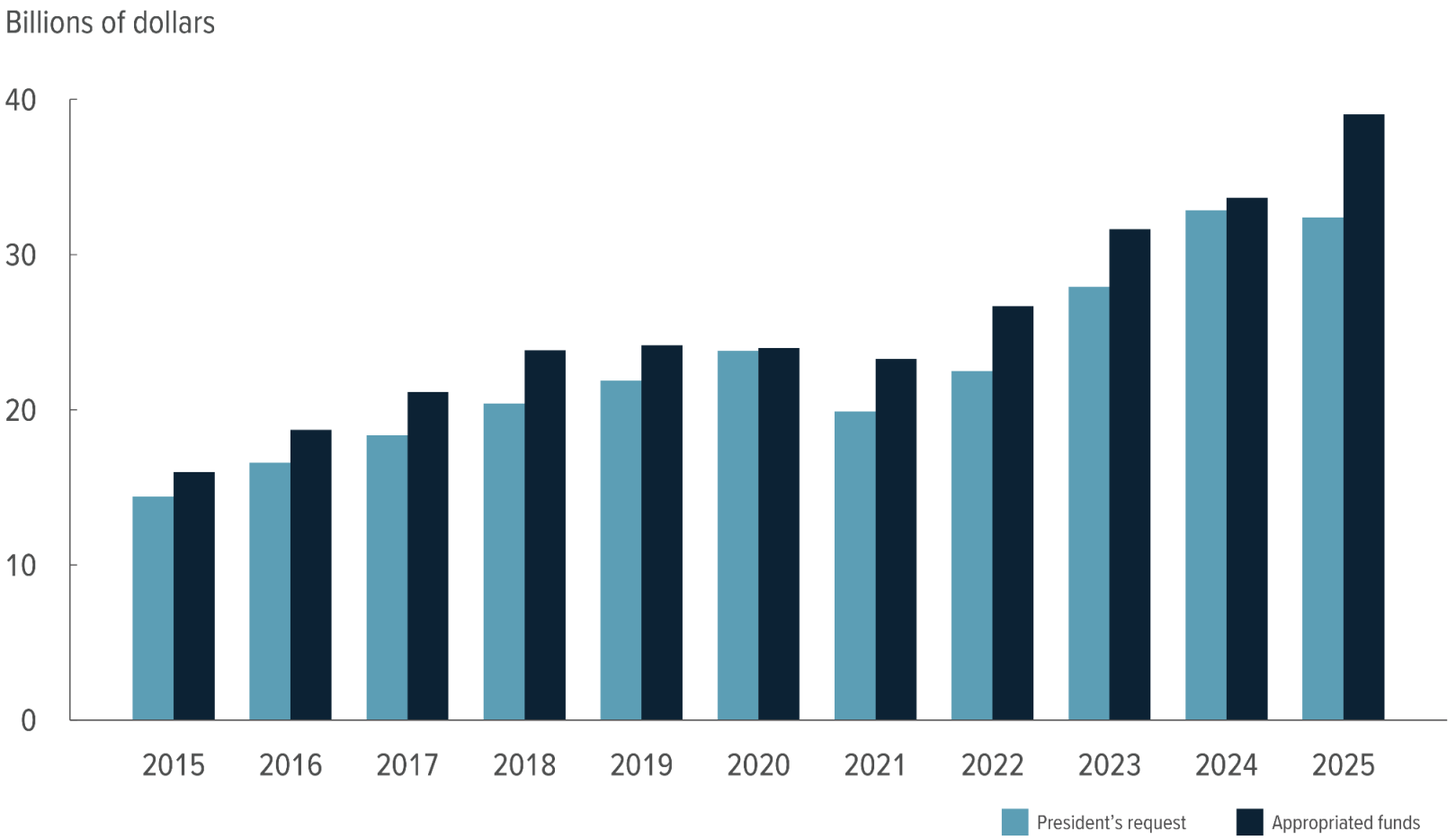
Presentation at the 38th National Symposium of the Surface Navy Association

Eric J. Labs

National Security Division

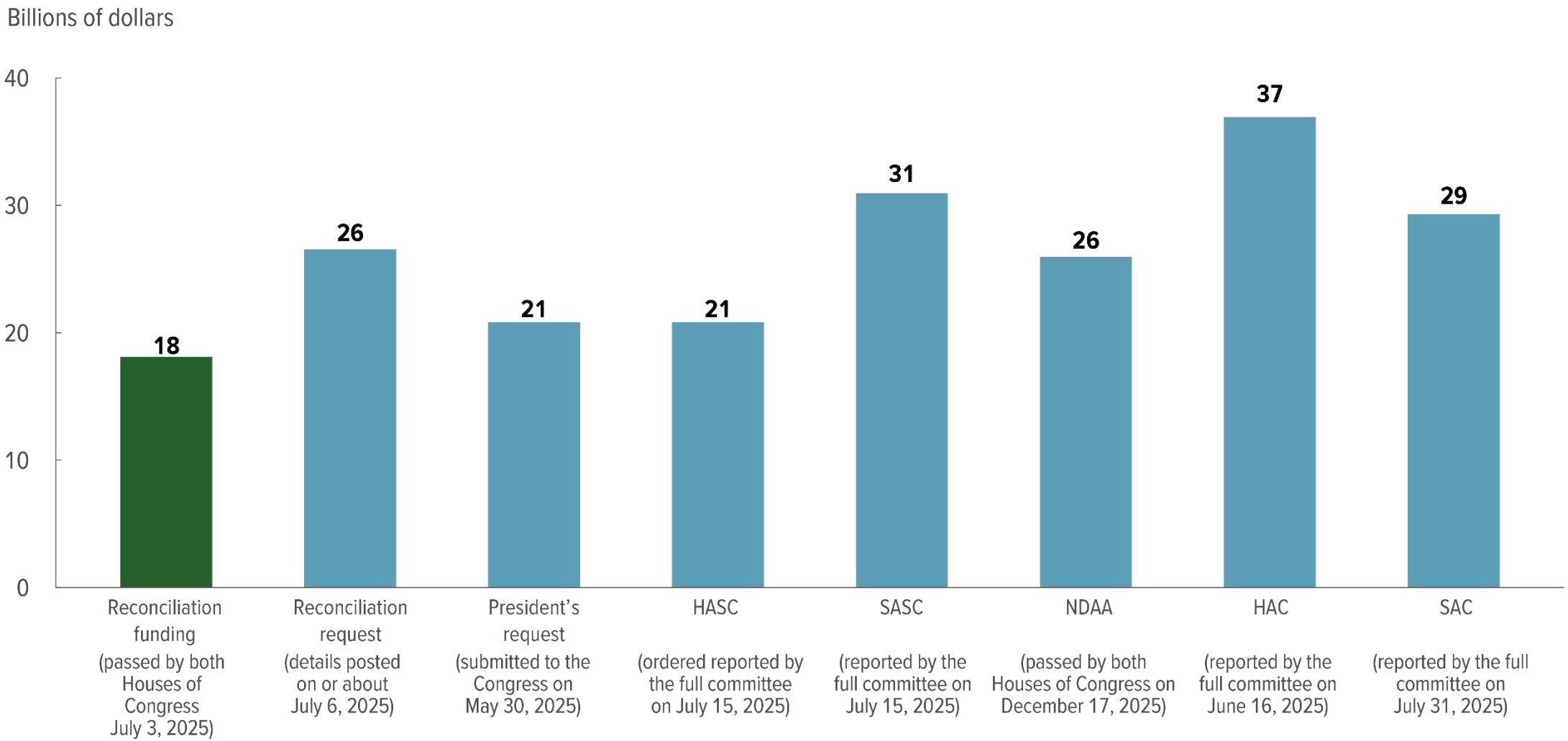
For more information about the symposium, see https://surfacewarfare.org/events/national-symposium.

Shipbuilding Requests and Appropriations, 2015 to 2025



The Congress has consistently appropriated more funds for shipbuilding than Administrations have requested.

Congressional Action on Shipbuilding for Fiscal Year 2026



HAC = House Appropriations Committee; HASC = House Armed Services Committee; NDAA = National Defense Authorization Act for 2026;
SAC = Senate Appropriations Committee; SASC = Senate Armed Services Committee.

Congressional Action on Shipbuilding for Fiscal Year 2026 (Cont.)

Millions of dollars	Reconciliation funding	Reconciliation request	President's request	HASC	SASC	NDAA	HAC	SAC
Battle force ships	**16,259**	**24,773**	**16,904**	**16,904**	**25,778**	**21,038**	**32,840**	**24,684**
Columbia class ballistic missile submarines		1,926	8,995	8,995	8,995	9,695	10,490	12,930
Aircraft carriers			3,282	3.282	3,282	3,282	3,282	3,282
Attack submarines	4,600	7,135	3,944	3,944	5,144	6,478	11,397	6,478
Destroyers	5,400	5,400	11	11	7,685	911	5,069	1,761
Frigates							100	100
LHA-6 amphibious assault ships		3,895						
LPD-17 amphibious transport docks	1,470	2,600						
LSM medium landing ships	1,964	1,964					225	
T-ATS towing, salvage, and rescue ships							142	
T-AGOS ocean surveillance ships			612	612	612	612	425	612
T-AO oilers	2,725	1,853	8		8	8	1,657	8
Other	**1,845**	**1,771**	**3,937**	**3,937**	**5,180**	**4,936**	**4,095**	**4,626**
Refueling and complex overhaul			1,779	1,779	1,779	1,779	1,822	1,579
Sealift: new/used	750	700	45	45	570	21	206	335
All else	1,095	1,071	2,113	2,113	2,831	3,136	2,067	2,712
Total	**18,104**	**26,544**	**20,840**	**20,840**	**30,958**	**25,975**	**36,935**	**29,310**
Industrial base	5,037	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Unmanned systems	5,546	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

HAC = House Appropriations Committee; HASC = House Armed Services Committee; NDAA = National Defense Authorization Act for 2026;
SAC = Senate Appropriations Committee; SASC = Senate Armed Services Committee; n.a. = not applicable.

Potential Cost of a Lead-Ship BBG-1, Using Cost-by-Weight Historical Analogues, If the Ship Was Ordered Today

Billions of 2025 dollars

Analogue	BBG-1 displacement in long tons: 30,000 (Full load) 24,000 (Est. lightship)	35,000 (Full load) 28,000 (Est. lightship)	40,000 (Full load) 32,000 (Est. lightship)
CG-47	15.2	17.8	20.3
DDG-51	15.4	18.0	20.6
DDG-1000	14.3	16.7	19.1

The average cost of follow-on ships could range from $9 billion to $13 billion, depending on displacement, program size, ship analogue, and other factors.

The lead ship is the first ship of its class. BBG = guided missile battleship; CG = guided missile cruiser; DDG = guided missile destroyer; Est. = estimated.

Potential Cost of a Lead-Ship BBG-1, Using Cost-by-Weight Historical Analogues, If the Ship Was Ordered in 2030*

Billions of 2025 dollars

	BBG-1 displacement in long tons		
Analogue	30,000 (Full load) 24,000 (Est. lightship)	35,000 (Full load) 28,000 (Est. lightship)	40,000 (Full load) 32,000 (Est. lightship)
CG-47	16.0	18.7	21.4
DDG-51	16.2	18.9	21.6
DDG-1000	15.1	17.6	20.1

The average cost of follow-on ships could range from $10 billion to $15 billion, depending on displacement, program size, ship analogue, and other factors.

The lead ship is the first ship of its class. BBG = guided missile battleship; CG = guided missile cruiser; DDG = guided missile destroyer; Est. = estimated;
* = estimates include real (inflation-adjusted) cost growth in the shipbuilding industry.

Factors That Could Decrease or Increase Costs of a Guided Missile Battleship

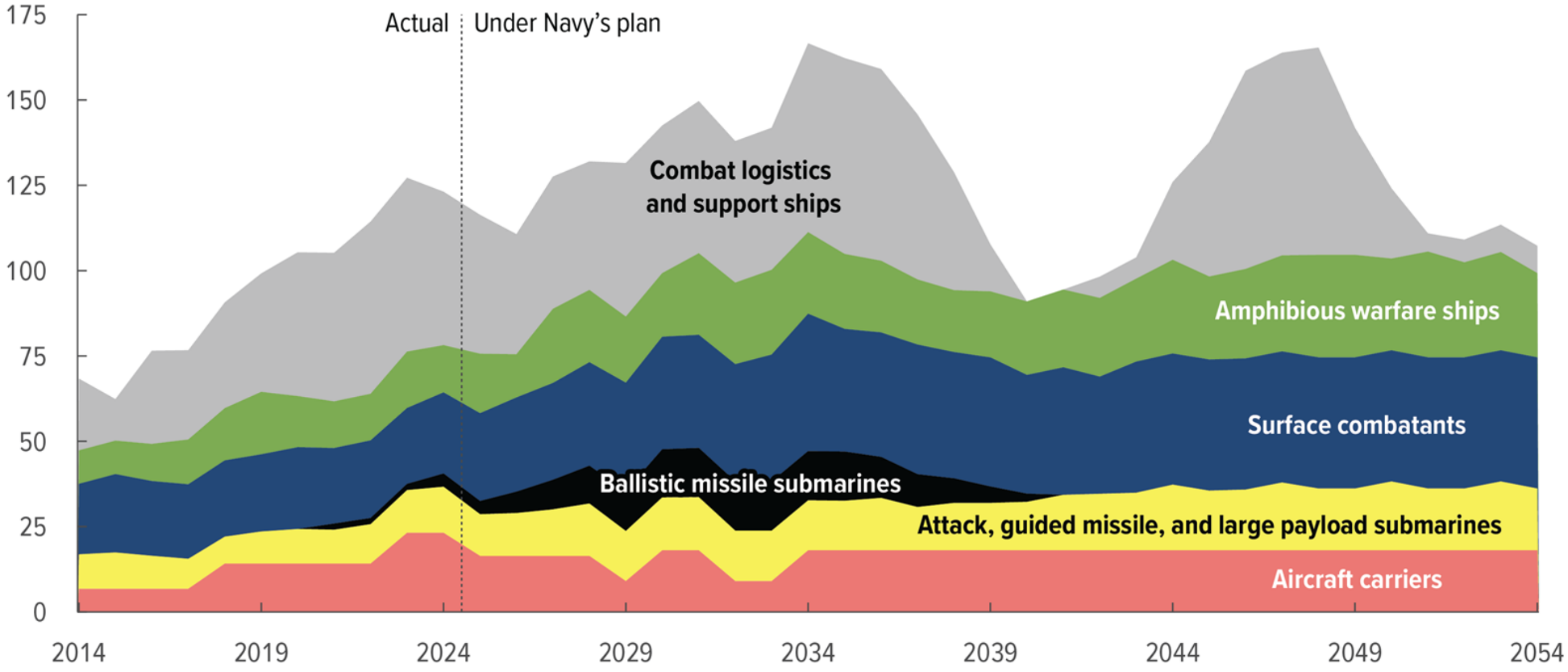
Decrease

- Modern shipbuilding technologies and techniques could make the ship easier to build compared with analogous ships built in the past.
- A larger ship could signify a simpler design and thus a ship that is easier to build.
- An armored ship could be cheaper to build per unit of weight. (How much armor will the BBG-1 have?)
- The ship could carry more weapons relative to its size and thus could cost less per unit of weight compared with analogous ships built in the past.
- A larger design margin could signify a ship that is easier to build. (How much design margin will the BBG-1 have?)
- Lightship displacement could be less than estimated.

Increase

- Weaknesses in the shipbuilding industrial base remain. Shipyards continue to suffer from an insufficient quantity of skilled labor, relatively inexperienced labor forces, and supply chain challenges.
- If the BBG-1 has more survivability features—greater compartmentalization or internal structure, for example—than the Navy's current surface combatants, costs could increase.
- Incorporating all the new weapons, sensors, and other capabilities could increase costs per unit of weight.
- A larger ship could lead to more capabilities' being added to the ship, which could then increase costs.
- Lightship displacement could be greater than estimated.

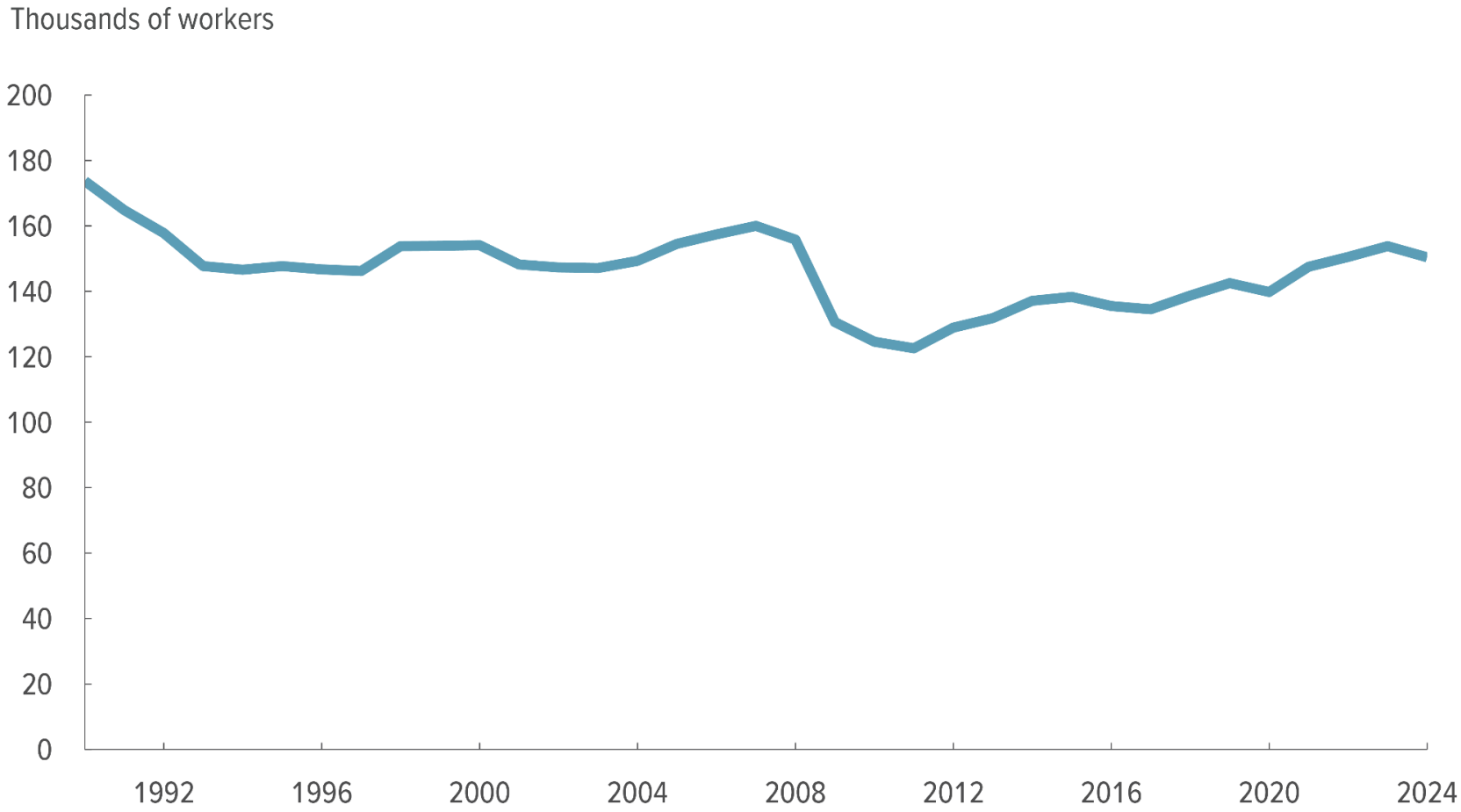
Amount of Tonnage That Would Be Constructed Under the Navy's 2025 Plan



The demands that the 2025 plan would place on the nation's shipyards would be greater than those they have faced over the past decade.

Tonnage is calculated using lightship displacement for surface ships and Condition A-1 weight for submarines. This figure was originally published in Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the Navy's 2025 Shipbuilding Plan* (January 2025), www.cbo.gov/publication/60732.

Total Employment in the Shipbuilding and Boatbuilding Industry



Employment in the shipbuilding and boatbuilding industry has not grown since 1990.

Data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.