Assessing the Role of Congress in Defense Acquisition Program Instability

Seamus P. Daniels, Associate Fellow for Defense Budget Analysis

CSIS | CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES | International Security Program

Research Objective

Goal: to evaluate the impact of Congress on funding instability for Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition programs.

How:

- Compare requested funding levels for procurement and research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) programs with the actual level of funding
- Identify trends in programs Congress consistently funds above or below the requested level between FY 2010 and FY 2020

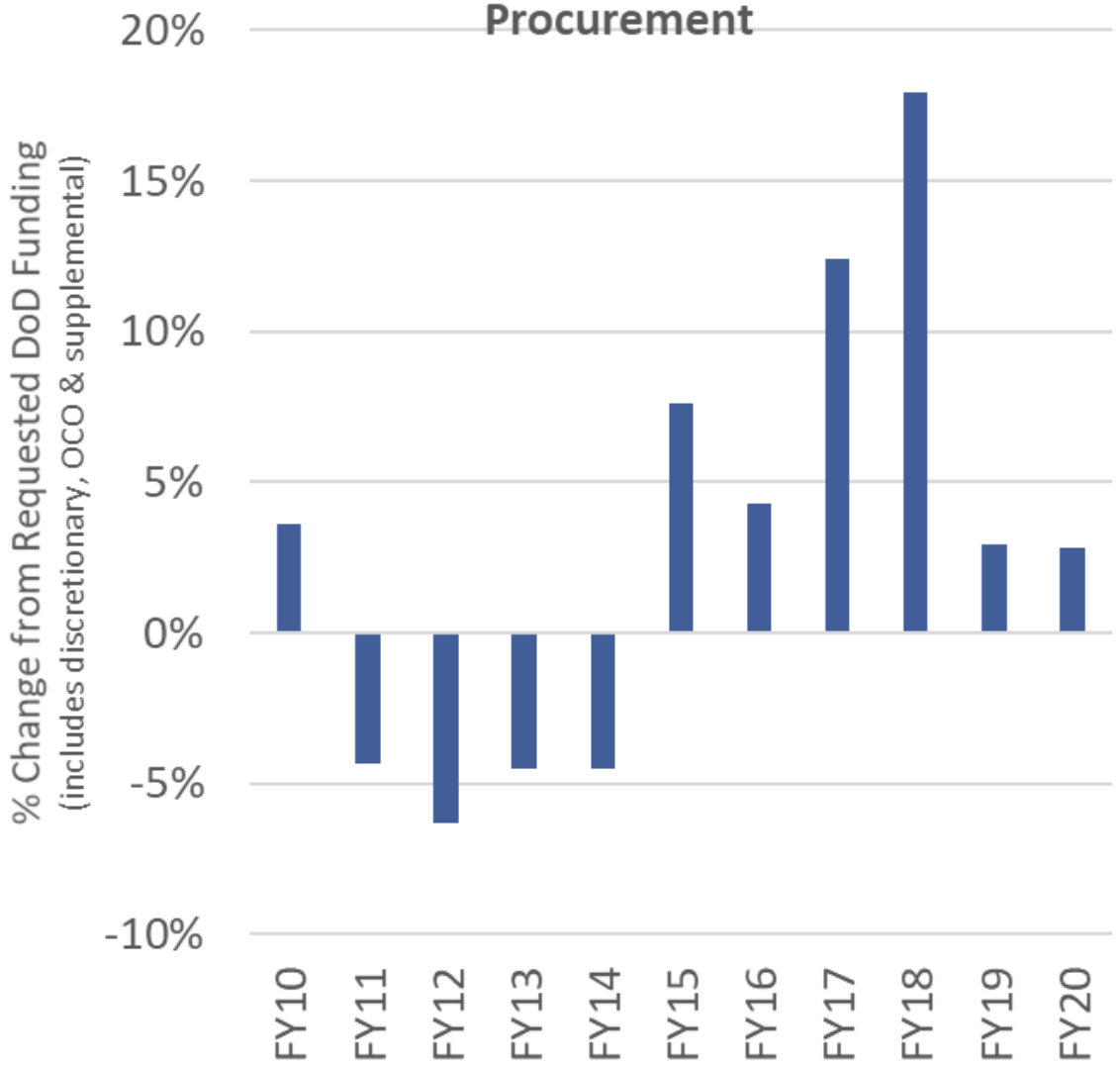
Methodology

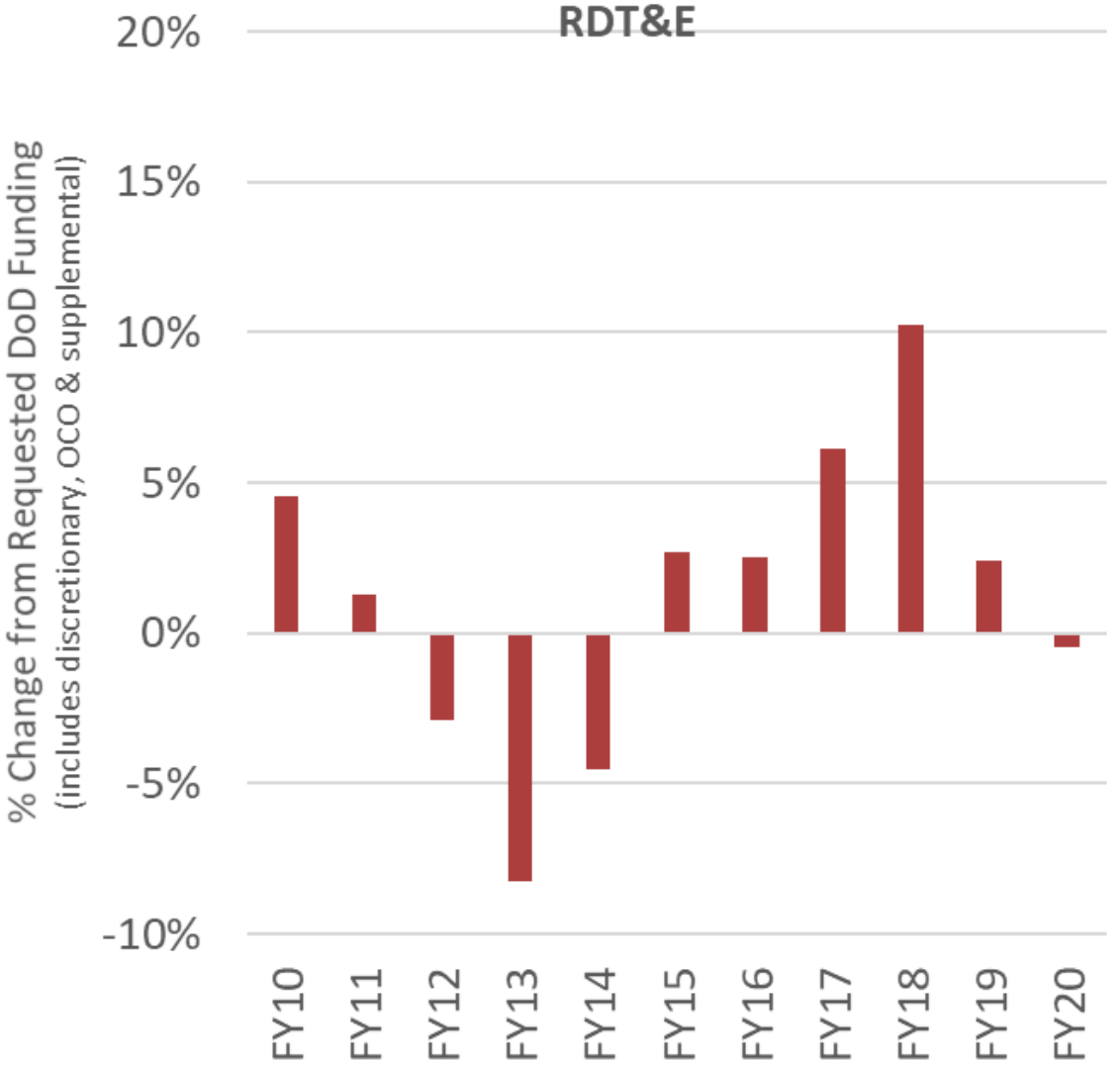
1. Collect data for *requested* and *actual* (2 years after request) level of funding for procurement and RDT&E programs from P-1 and R-1 justification books

2. Calculate percent change between request and actual levels at various levels of aggregation (e.g., topline, department, account)

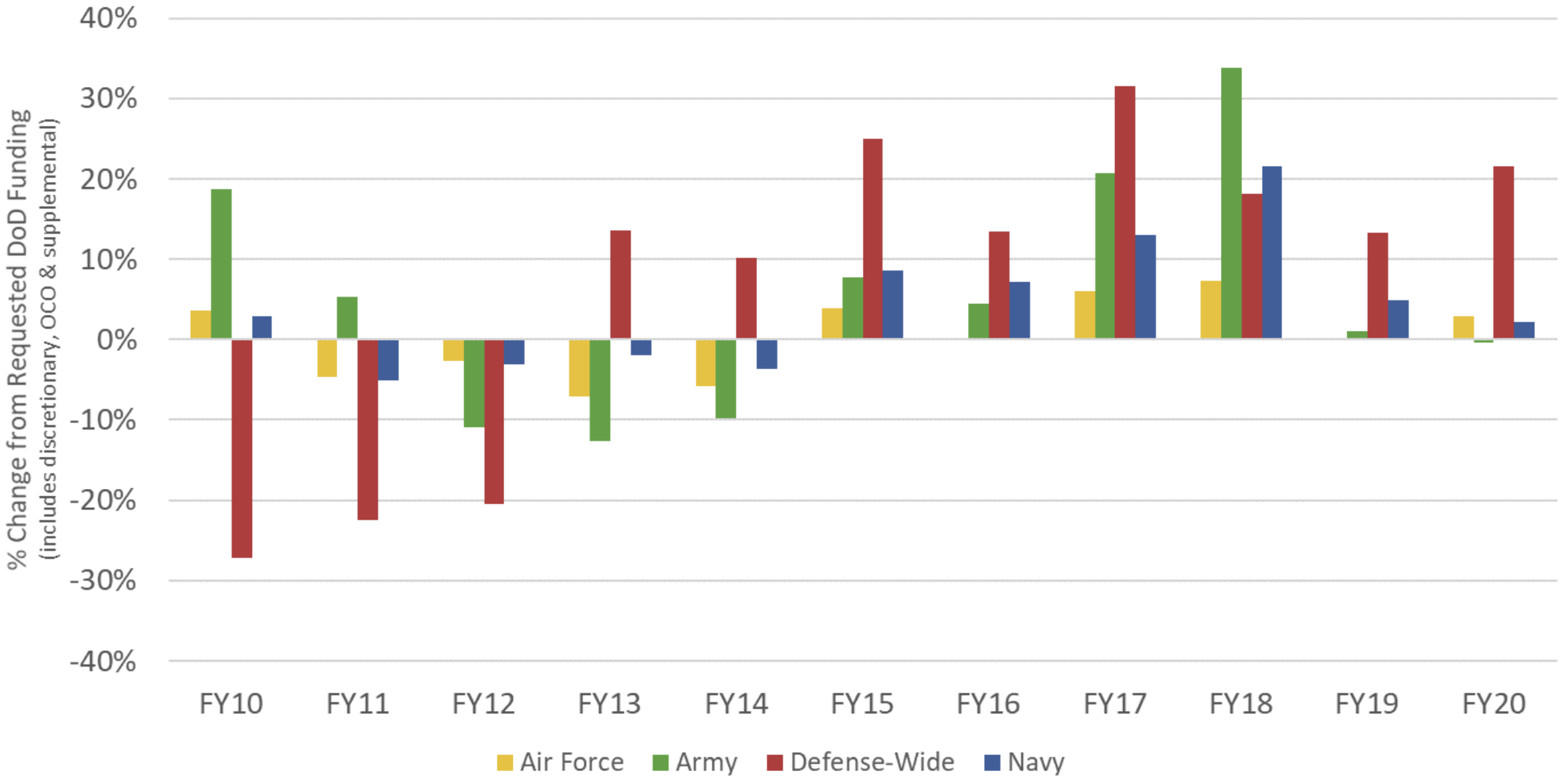
3. Identify trends and priority programs/categories

Congressional Adjustments to Topline Acquisition Funding

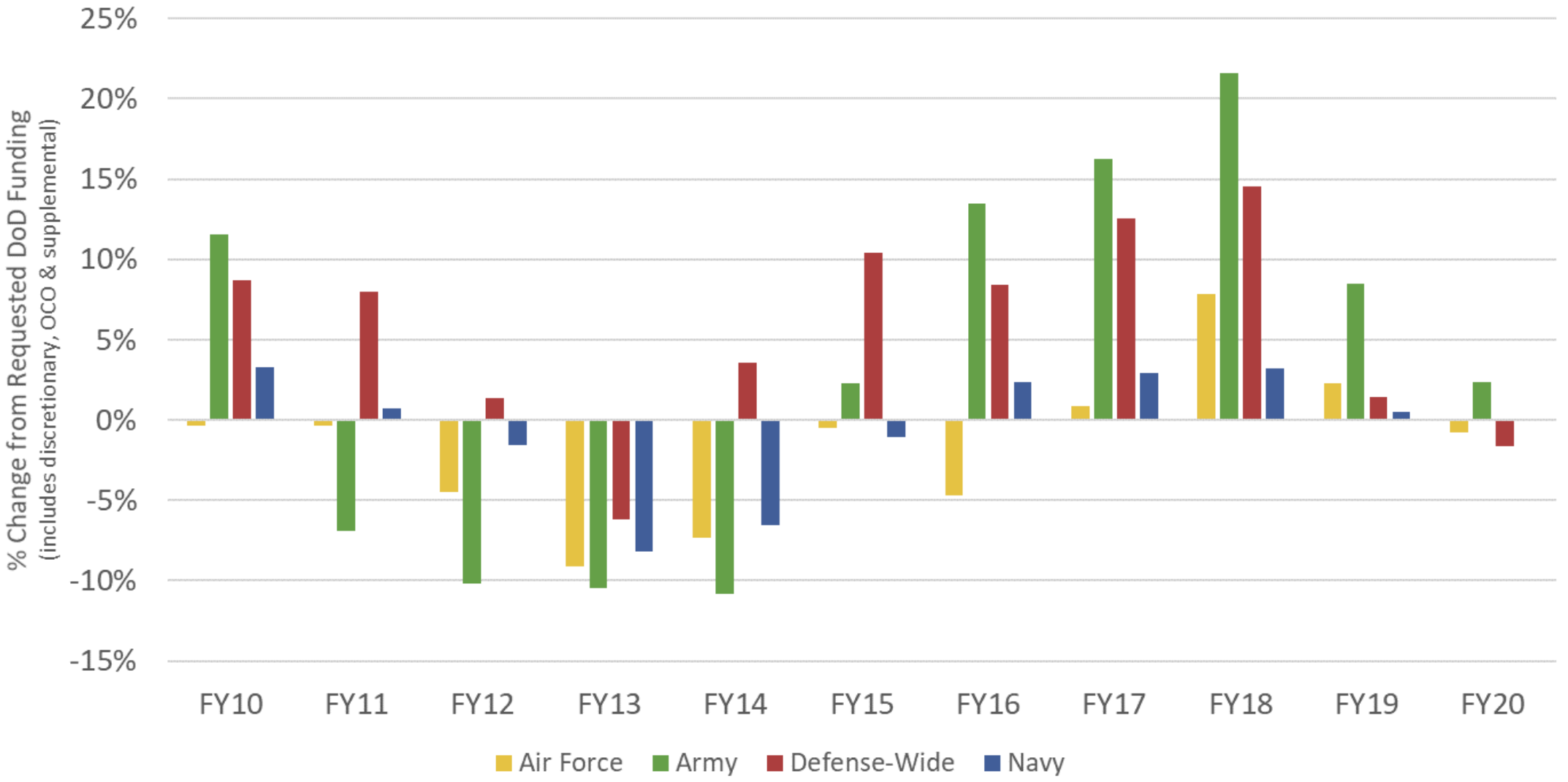




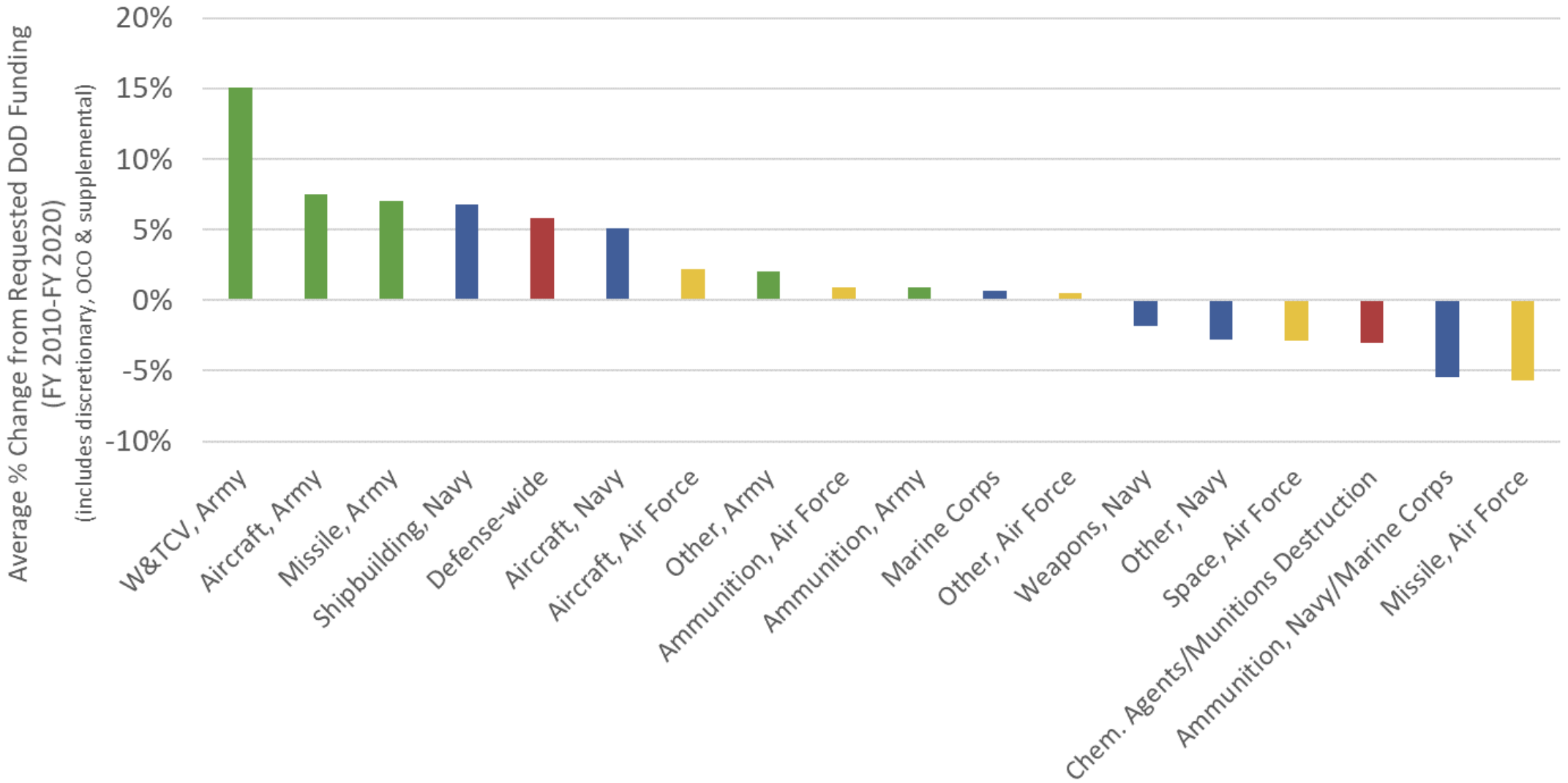
Actual Procurement Funding vs. Requested by Department



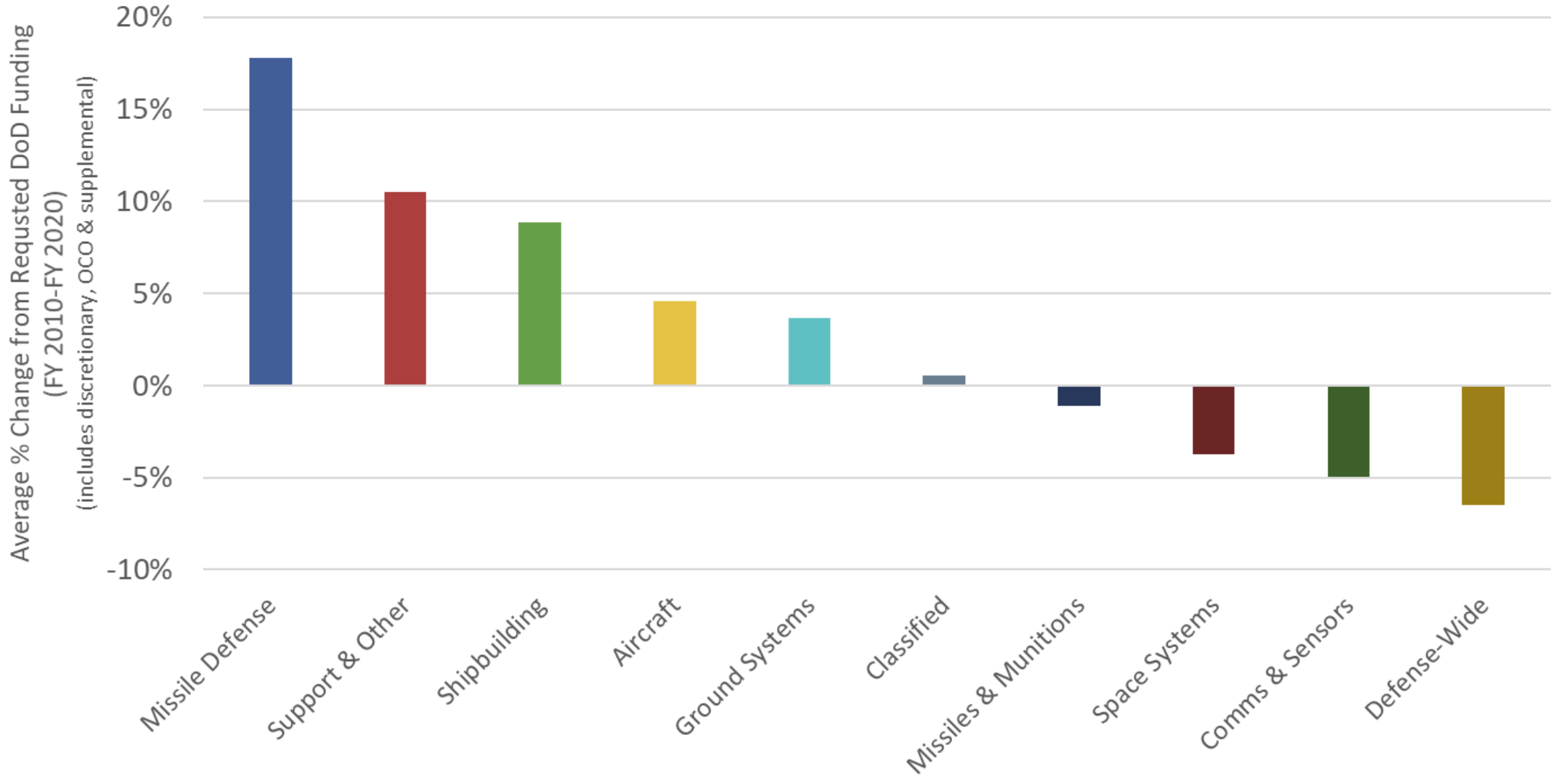
Actual RDT&E Funding vs. Requested by Department



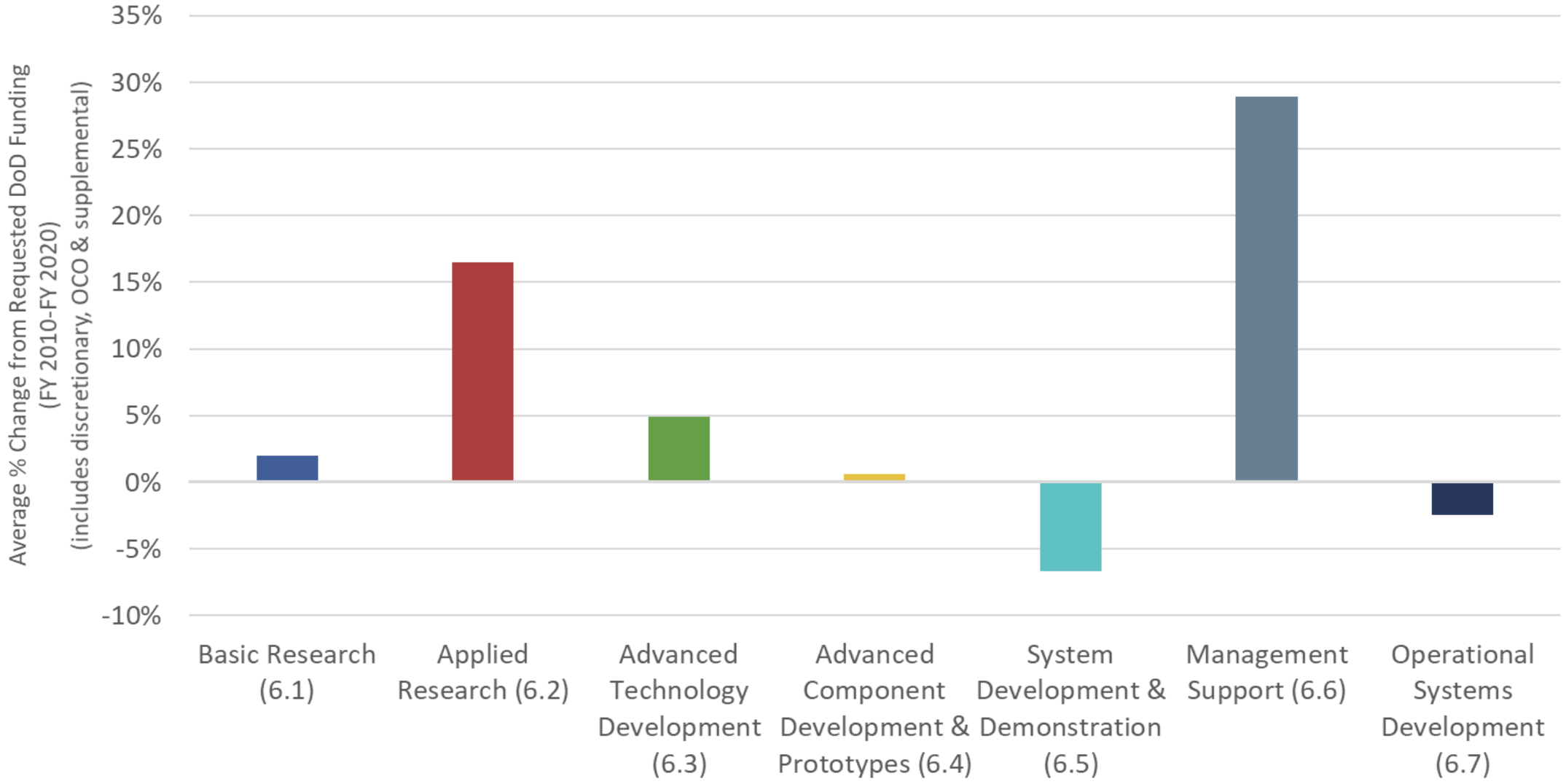
Average Change in Procurement Funding by Account



Average Change in Procurement Funding by Category



Average Change in RDT&E Funding by Budget Activity



Key Findings

- Congressional action on procurement and RDT&E accounts largely followed similar trends over the past decade, due in no small part to the impact of the BCA and subsequent budget deals

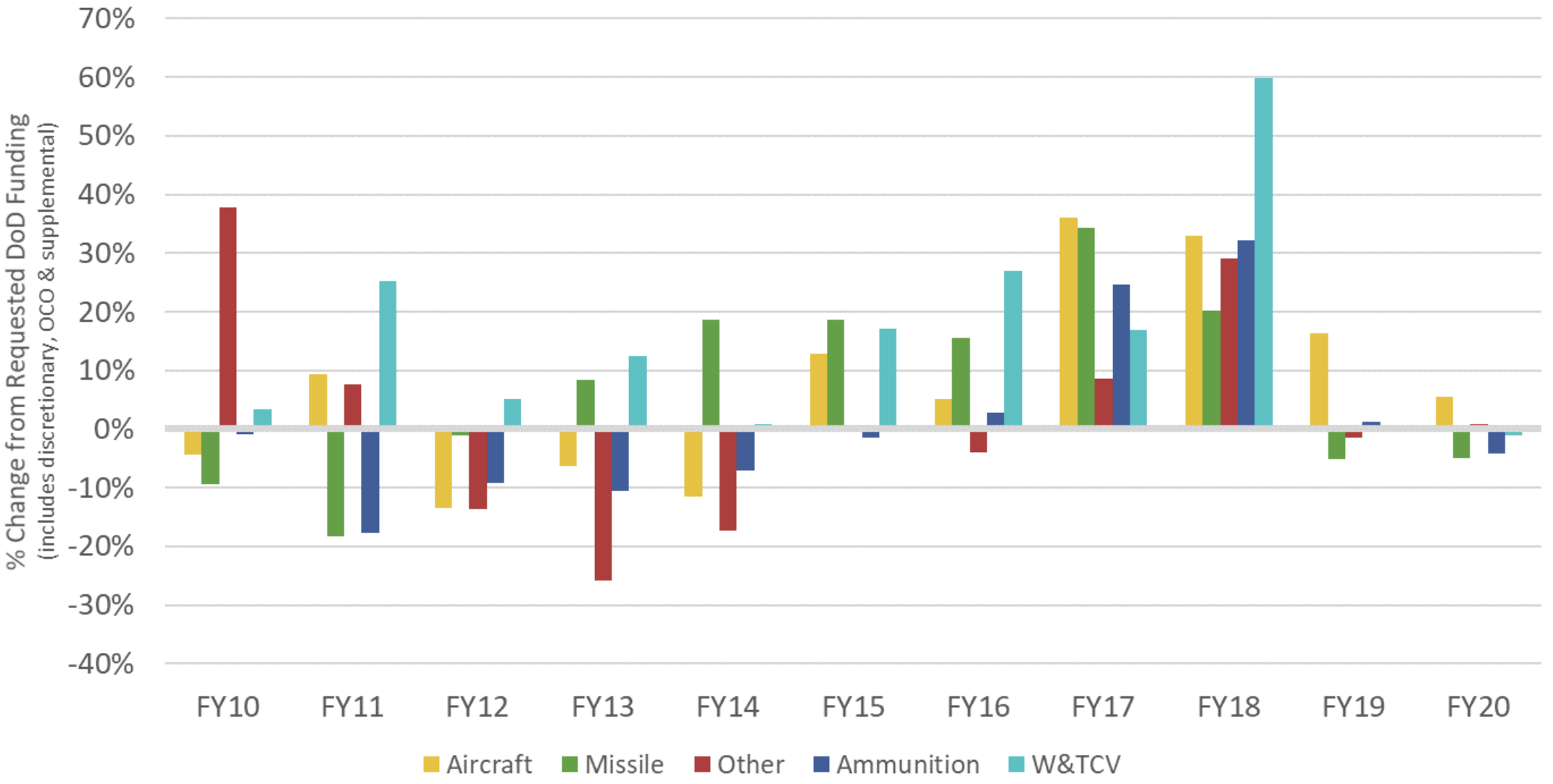
- Congress has clear favorites in procurement accounts that received increases above the requested level on average, including missile defense, shipbuilding, aircraft, and ground systems

- Lawmakers regularly increase RDT&E funding for Management Support (6.6) and S&T Funding (6.1, 6.2 & 6.3)

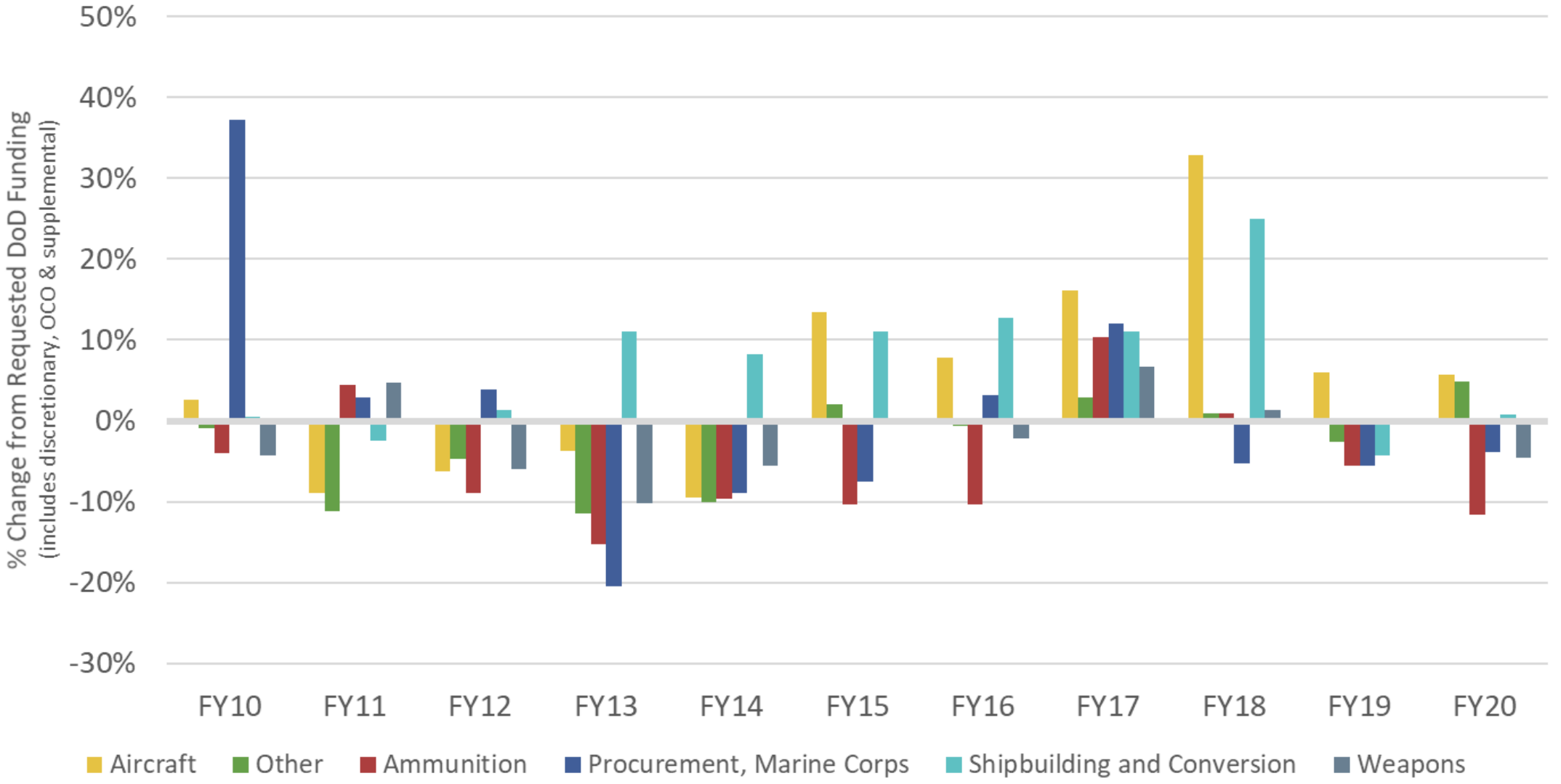
Questions?

CSIS | CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES | International Security Program

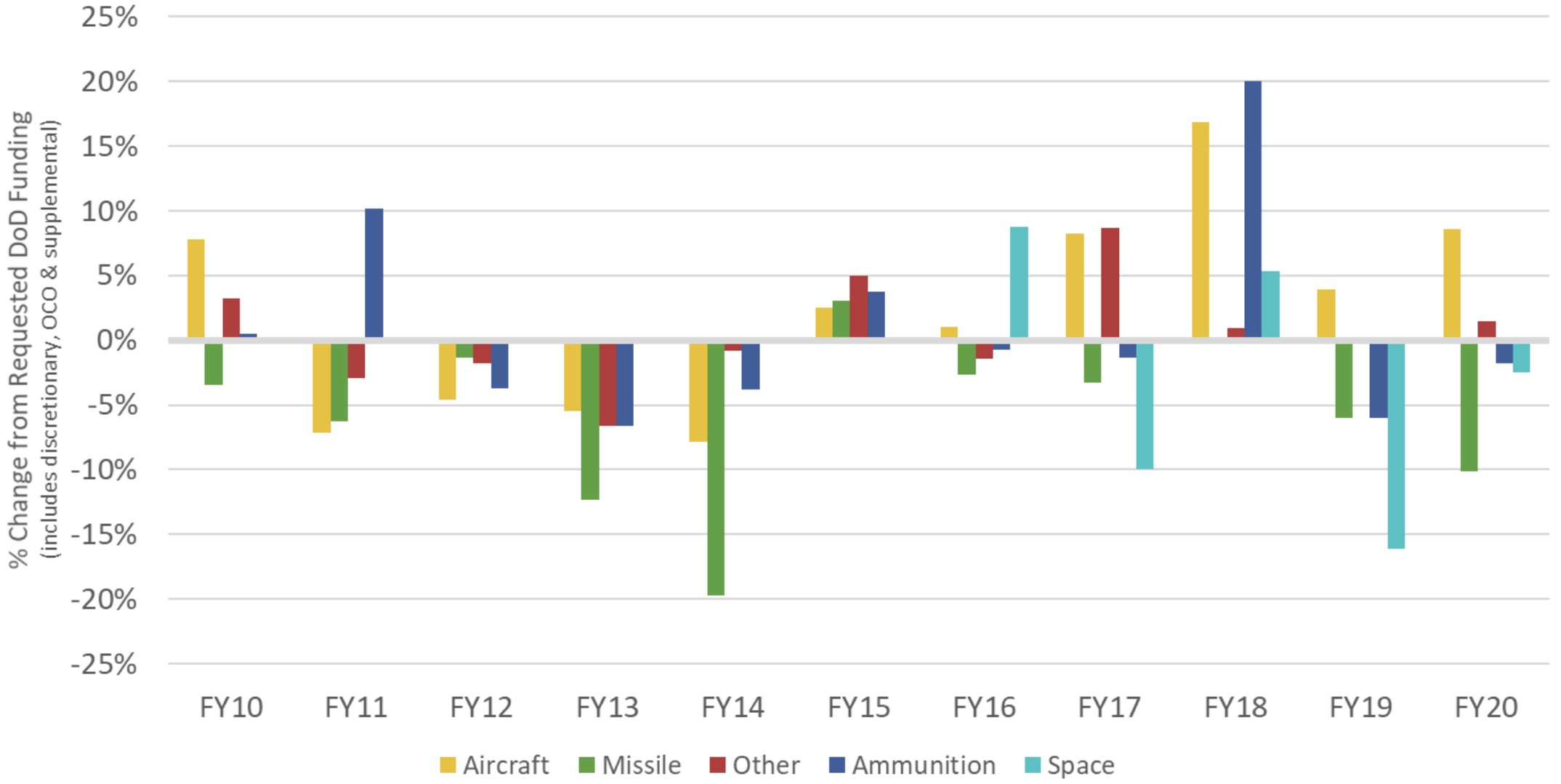
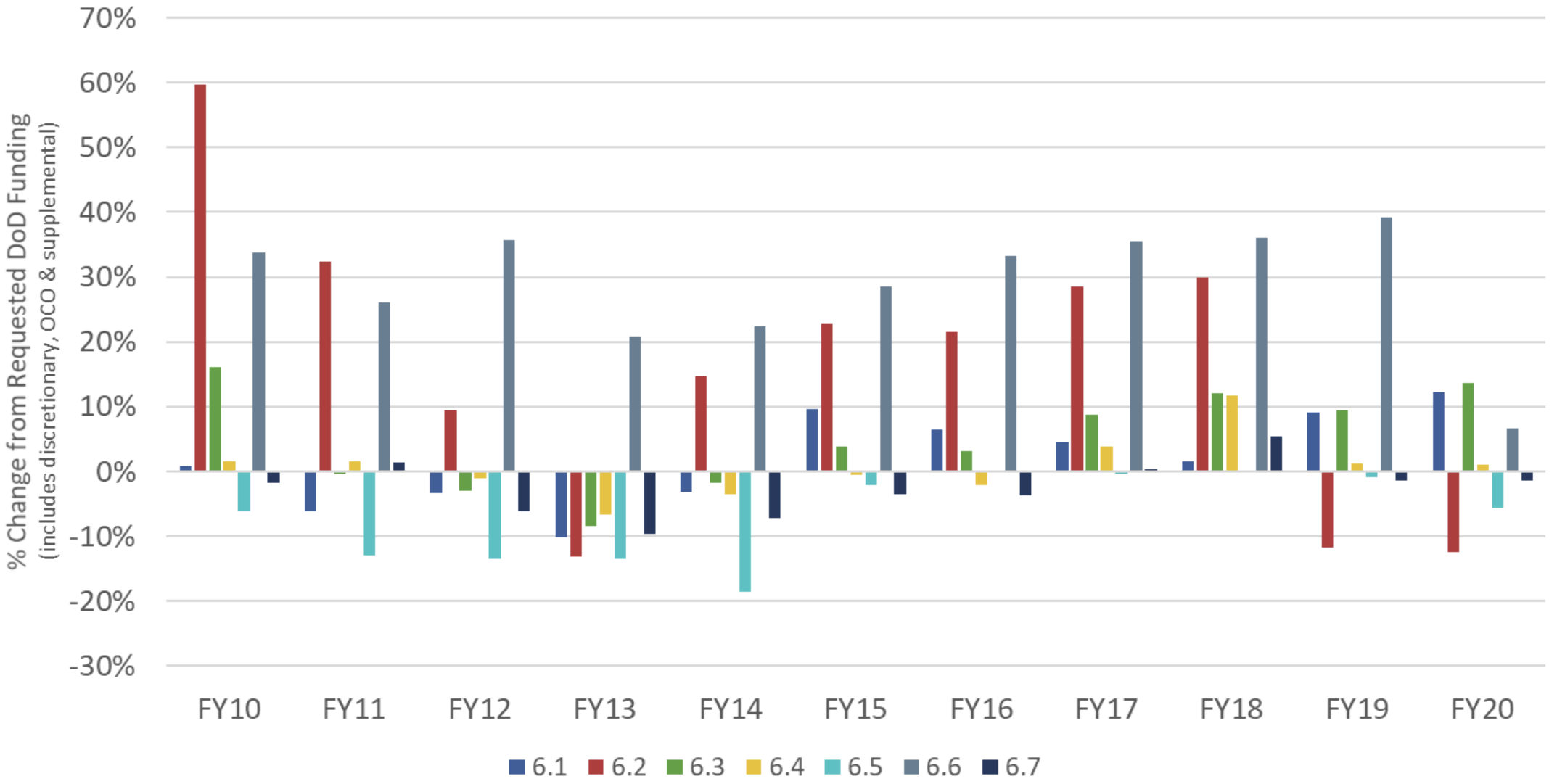
Army Actual Procurement Funding vs. Requested by Account



Navy Actual Procurement Funding vs. Requested by Account



Air Force Actual Procurement Funding vs. Requested by Account



Actual RDT&E Funding vs. Requested by Budget Activity