



# John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellowship Program



## Matthew Zielinski

Cohort 5 Fellow, John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellowship Program

**Organization:** Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE)

**Education:**

- The University of Alabama School of Law, Juris Doctor
- The University of Alabama, Bachelor of Science in Operations Management

Aaron “Matthew” Zielinski joins the John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellowship Program with a blend of legal expertise, analytical acumen, and a strong commitment to public service. With academic and professional backgrounds spanning law, operations management, and supply chain/logistics, he brings a comprehensive skill set to the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) office, where he is poised to tackle key challenges in national security and defense budgeting. Matthew is eager to contribute to CAPE’s mission by conducting data-driven evaluations and cost assessments that support informed decision-making across the Department of Defense. Matthew’s career has been marked by versatility and dedication. His experiences range from positions in federal service to roles in the private sector, where he has developed a strategic approach to problem-solving and a keen understanding of logistics and supply chain dynamics. His previous work at The Heritage Foundation, Mercedes Benz US International, and other organizations has honed his ability to address complex issues in both public and private sectors, and his multidisciplinary expertise positions him to help ensure defense programs are both cost-effective and aligned with national security objectives. His interests lie at the intersection of national security, defense policy, and strategic planning. Matthew views this fellowship as a chance to refine his leadership skills while contributing meaningfully to CAPE’s mission. Through this fellowship, Matthew aims to positively impact national security decision-making by ensuring defense programs are efficient, cost-effective, and aligned with strategic goals. He is also conversational in German, adding an international perspective to his analysis and further enhancing his ability to address defense challenges in an increasingly interconnected world. A newcomer to Washington, D.C., Matthew enjoys immersing himself in the city's rich history and cultural landmarks. Outside of work, he’s an avid traveler and a proud Alabama football fan. “Roll Tide!”

