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Armed Services Committee Approves Defense Bill

Wittman Supports Military Pay Raise, Increased Shipbuilding and Improved Veterans Benefits

Washington, D.C. – Earlier today, Congressman Rob Wittman voted in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. The U.S. House Armed Services Committee, of which Wittman is a member, approved the legislation, which will now be considered by the full U.S. House.

“This year’s Defense Authorization Bill demonstrates the House Armed Services Committee’s strong desire to ensure our military men and women in uniform are properly resourced and the national security needs of our nation are appropriately addressed,” said Wittman.

“I fully supported and am pleased to see the bill includes a 3.4 percent pay raise for all service members, extends the Department of Defense’s authority to offer bonuses and incentive pay, and expands TRICARE health coverage to reserve component members and their families for 180 days prior to mobilization,” said Wittman.

“As a member of the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces subcommittee, I am particularly pleased that the bill makes progress towards achieving a robust 313 ship Navy, fully funds repair and overall costs for our carrier and submarines, and authorizes funding for maritime ship loan guarantees,” said Wittman.

“I am also glad that we were able to secure authorization for a Telework Center Pilot Project that will allow many First District residents with security clearances to work from alternate work locations closer to their homes. This project will help us create and retain quality local jobs,” said Wittman.

“While I am supportive of this bill, I do have reservations about the final outcome of some programs and policies. I was disappointed the committee did not support our efforts to fully fund long overdue and promised veteran’s benefits to include elimination of the “widow’s tax” and extend TRICARE to Guard and Reserve members who are already receiving early retirement. I was also disappointed by the failure to prohibit the transfer of Guantanamo detainees into the U.S. and by the budget cuts to our missile defense program,” said Wittman.

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The comprehensive defense policy bill authorizes \$550.4 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. Additionally, the legislation authorizes \$130 billion in funding to support operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Global War on Terrorism for Fiscal Year 2010.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

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