



OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN RON KLEIN  
FLORIDA'S 22<sup>ND</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

---

CONTACT: 202-225-3026

April 24, 2008

## **Coast Guard Bill, Klein-Wasserman Schultz Provision Ensures Safe Borders and Strong Economy in South Florida**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representatives Ron Klein (FL-22) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20) today joined a bipartisan majority of their House colleagues to pass the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2830). This legislation provides resources and builds capacity for the United States Coast Guard. It has important national security provisions, including authorizing additional maritime security response teams to detect explosives and intercept drugs and smuggled persons.

“Florida is on the front lines of the Coast Guard’s fight to protect our borders,” Klein said. “We are surrounded on three sides by water, and are directly impacted by regional and international threats. It is essential that the Coast Guard have access to all the resources they need to keep our communities safe.”

“This bill gives the Coast Guard a rapid force capability to provide protection for strategic shipping, high-interest vessels, and other critical infrastructure which is an integral part of improving security at Port Everglades and the Port of Miami,” said Rep. Wasserman Schultz.

Included in the final bill, as passed by the House today, is language authored by Klein and Wasserman Schultz. The language, which changes decades-old law, reduces the negative effect of the national economic downturn on South Florida workers and small businesses by helping marine businesses which provide service and repairs to boaters.

The provision will remove the recreational marine industry from underneath the Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Compensation Act of 1927 and place it instead under state workers’ compensation law. It will also exempt recreational boat manufactures from Longshore coverage if they produce vessels shorter than 165 feet in length. This new length requirement is a 100 foot increase over previous, outdated regulations, and is necessary to adapt to a changing industry.

“This legislation will have a real impact on small businesses and their employees in South Florida,” Klein said. “The marine industry is a critical economic engine in our area, yet they are being hit hard in these difficult economic times. By making a common-sense change here in Washington, we can create jobs and save small businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is the kind of legislation I am proud to have passed.”

“South Florida is in the middle of an economic downturn and our marine businesses, an integral part of our economy, are hurting,” Wasserman Schultz said. “This legislation helps these marine businesses which in turn will help our local economy.”

The provision has bipartisan support, and has been in the works for nearly a decade.