

HIGHLIGHTS: Defense Conference

WASHINGTON – Today, House and Senate conferees met to consider funding legislation that is essential to the security of our nation. The Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Defense Appropriations legislation is tough, smart, and compassionate. The bill will strengthen America's security by investing in the future of our military and providing our servicemen and women with the tools they need to protect our nation. The legislation invests in health care for military personnel and works to expand our armed forces to meet future threats and fight terrorism more effectively.

The FY 2008 DOD Conference Report:

- Fully supports our men and women in uniform by investing in equipment, training and cutting-edge weaponry and helps to restore balance to our badly overstretched ground forces;
- Ensures that this nation properly respects the service of our wounded warriors by providing for them and for their families, including funding for the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act;
- Invests in equipping the National Guard and Reserves, which have faced severe shortages as a result of overseas deployments, making it more difficult to respond to disasters here at home and be ready to response to crises abroad; and
- Fully funds a 3.5 percent pay increase for all service members, 0.5 percent above the President's request.

The FY 2008 Department of Defense Appropriations bill passed the House and Senate with overwhelming and bipartisan support.

Department of Defense

Provides **\$459 billion** for the Department of Defense, \$39.7 billion above 2007, a 9.5% increase.

Defense Health Programs: Provides **\$23.5 billion, \$918 million** above the President's budget request. Adds \$70 million to fund programs authorized under the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warrior Act. Rejects the President's proposed increases in TRICARE co-pays by fully funding the \$1.9 billion TRICARE shortfall without cost to our troops.

Military Personnel: Supports efforts to grow the force including 7,000 new members of the Army, 5,000 new Marines, and 1,300 new Army Guard.

MRAPs and Body Armor: Provides \$11.6 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles and increases funding for body armor and other protective equipment for Special Operations Command.

National Guard: Adds \$980 million to help National Guard and Reserve forces better equip themselves in light of the severe shortages these components faced as a result of overseas deployments.

Support for Military Families: Includes \$2.6 billion to provide our military families with the immediate need for more counselors, teachers, and child care providers. This is \$237 million more than the President's request and this funding is urgently needed by our military families who are stressed by repeated and extended deployments.

[Read](#) Mr. Murtha's summary.