

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

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HOUSE APPROVES NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

H.R. 2586 boosts programs to combat terrorism and provides the military resources it needs to win the war on terrorism and defend our homeland and national security interests.

Today, the House endorsed H.R. 2586, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, on a bipartisan 398 to 17 vote. Upon final passage, Chairman Bob Stump, issued the following statement:

“Today, the House of Representatives sent a message of unity, bipartisanship, and commitment to winning the global campaign against terrorism by passing H.R. 2586.

“In light of the September 11 terrorist attacks on America, it is now more important than ever to ensure that our nation’s military has the proper tools and resources to win the war against terrorism. H.R. 2586 is a bipartisan effort to rebuild the United States military and to establish the foundations of our campaign against terrorism.

“Significantly, H.R. 2586 contains approximately \$6 billion for Department of Defense programs to combat terrorism, including force protection, intelligence, and related operations. I consider this to be merely a downpayment on what must be a long-term commitment by our nation to defend against, seek out, and eliminate terrorism.

“In addition, H.R. 2586 marks the most significant increase to the defense budget since the mid-1980s. While this increase is targeted at two of the most critical areas to maintaining a healthy military – quality of life and readiness – additional resources will be needed. A single year of defense increases will not rebuild America’s defenses, win the war against terrorism, or ensure that we are able to protect Americans against emerging threats. The effort to improve our nation’s defenses and ensure the security of our people must be significant and it must be sustained.

“Further, funding levels in this bill are not sufficient to support the Department of Defense’s efforts to hunt down the perpetrators of the September 11 attack and to destroy the roots of terrorism. The Pentagon and the Administration are currently in the process of identifying the additional resources they will need for this effort, and I expect to receive their proposal soon.

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“When their request arrives, it is vital that Congress promptly adjust the annual defense bills to reflect the needs of our nation’s military. I have no doubt that this will require a significant increase to the defense budget. The enormous price we paid on September 11 was a clear sign that this nation has entered a new era. We must do what is necessary to defend our homeland and our national security interests, even if it means rethinking previous budget plans.

“It is also worth noting that H.R. 2586 supports development and testing of an effective, layered ballistic missile defense system. The September 11 terrorist attacks should put to rest any doubts that there are powerful interests in this world who are constantly seeking to exploit our vulnerabilities, including our complete inability to defend against ballistic missile attack. H.R. 2586 will hasten the day when this nation’s window of vulnerability to ballistic missile attack begins to close.

“H.R. 2586 is a good bill, and I’m pleased that we were able to move it through the legislative process – the sooner we are able to send this legislation to the President, the sooner we will be able to enhance America’s military and better defend our homeland and our national security interests.”

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H.R. 2586 authorizes \$343 billion in budget authority for fiscal year 2002, approximately \$33 billion more than the fiscal year 2001 spending level.