



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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House Gives Final Approval to FY2005 Defense Authorization Act
“Year of the Troops” Legislation Focuses on Force Protection and Personnel Benefits

Washington, DC – October 9, 2004 – Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) announced that the House approved the Conference Report for H.R. 4200, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, today. The legislation sets policies, programs and funding levels for the nation’s military. The conference report authorized \$445.6 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. The Senate will pass the bill later today and it will then go to President Bush for his approval. Hunter’s statement follows:

“This bill makes clear our dedication to the men and women who wear America’s uniform. We owe them our gratitude for defending our freedom. The bill ensures that we protect our troops on the battlefield while supporting their needs at home.

“For our deployed forces, we provide critical force protection resources, including countermeasures for improvised explosive devices, improved surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and the latest infantry equipment. At home, this legislation meets the needs of our military personnel with numerous quality of life improvements. Among the many initiatives are a 3.5% across-the-board pay raise, special pays and bonuses, and improved housing – as well as the complete phase-out of out-of-pocket housing expenses.

“I commend President Bush, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and our military leaders for continuing our strategy of taking the fight directly to those who would do us harm, before they can strike us here at home. I am grateful to Ranking Member Ike Skelton (D-MO), Subcommittee Chairmen Curt Weldon (R-PA), Joel Hefley (R-CO), Jim Saxton (R-NJ), John McHugh (R-NY), Terry Everett (R-AL), Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), and all the members of the House Armed Services Committee for their hard work in advancing this important legislation.”

Additional highlights of the conference report include:

- \$25 billion to support the Global War on Terror’s operational costs, personnel expenses and procurement of new equipment.
- Army and Marines end strength increases.
- Enhanced TRICARE benefits for reservists and family members.
- Eliminating the reduction in Survivor Benefit Plan annuities.
- Concurrent Receipt phase-in improvements.
- Military housing privatization initiative fix (allows for continuation of the program to revitalize military housing).
- Rapid acquisition and armor initiatives to protect our troops.

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