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U.S. Representative

***John Spratt***

South Carolina # 5th District

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**News Release**

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August 4, 2001, For Immediate Release

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**New Shaw Education Center Clears First Hurdle**

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that the House Armed Services Committee has authorized \$5.8 million for a new education center at Shaw Air Force Base. The funds were included in the defense authorization bill the committee reported this week.**

“This is a win I have been working on for years,” said Spratt, a senior member of the committee, “but it’s just the first big hurdle the education center must clear. Next comes authorization in the Senate, and then appropriations, which will be the longest step. I’m hopeful we can win there as well, but I expect the budget to get tighter with the August update on the budget and economy.”

Spratt said most classrooms at Shaw are cinder-block buildings built in the 1940s and 50s and scattered about the base, “more suited to storage than to the continuing education of Air Force personnel.” The newest is a 20 year-old trailer.

Spratt said that Air Force officials at Shaw have told him it is “inconsistent of the Air Force to stress the importance of continuing education, then to offer it in such substandard classrooms. But funds for educational facilities have been hard to get because of the funding needs of military housing. That’s why the next stage, getting this appropriated, will still be a challenge.”

The new center would enhance the base significantly. “With this facility,” said Spratt, “Shaw can offer educational opportunities they currently cannot because of inadequate space. Shaw can also save on maintenance and repair, and round out their campus by locating the center near housing and dining. All in all, it’s a big plus for quality of life, and it could be another feather in Shaw’s cap in the next base closure round. I’ll keep working to make it happen.”

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