

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC**  
**News Release**

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Thursday, June 26, 2003 – For Immediate Release

Contact: Andy Davis (Hollings), 202-224-6654  
Chuck Fant (Spratt), 202-225-5501

**Hollings, Spratt Move Shaw Project Forward**  
***New Deployment Center at Shaw AFB Clears Key Hurdles in Congress***

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC) and U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that their request for a new \$8.5 million "Deployment Processing Center" at Shaw Air Force Base has cleared two more legislative hurdles and is headed toward final approval.

Today, the full House approved funding for the center in passing the Military Construction Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004; and in the Senate, the Appropriations Committee passed its version of the bill with funds for the processing center intact. As senior members of the Senate Appropriations and House Armed Services committees, respectively, Hollings and Spratt have been working to secure funding for the processing center since the first of the year.

"For forces that see action as often as our pilots from Shaw, they need to have modern facilities that ensure speedy and efficient deployment, and this center will help do just that," said Senator Hollings, a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "We made some important progress on this project today, and I want to thank my friend John Spratt for his leadership and for his consistent commitment to work together and get things done."

"The military construction budget is tight this year, and was pared back by a billion dollars. I am extremely pleased that we were able to squeeze this project into the appropriation bill," Spratt said.

The President's defense budget for next year did not request funding for the center, even though the project is a pressing need, and the Air Force wants to build it. Shaw processes hundreds of Air Force personnel, using an assortment of old buildings, none designed for the mission. This center will facilitate processing and may give Shaw what amounts to a new mission, processing 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force and other personnel for overseas assignments.

"I am pleased that we were able to move this bill to passage in the House, but this is just half the process," said Spratt. "Senator Hollings is the reason the

Senate Appropriations Committee approved it - his support of Shaw and this project in particular has been crucial."

The military construction bill also includes \$3.4 million in funding to support private construction of about 1,400 new housing units at Shaw to replace older units. "The housing project is a positive sign for Shaw's future, and this money means that it's on track," said Spratt.

Spratt said he has met with Air Force officials running the housing program. "They are confident the housing project will begin on schedule, later this year," said Spratt. "This means Shaw will begin to see its military family housing renovated and replaced as part of a full scale modernization effort."

Hollings and Spratt said final approval of the new Deployment Processing Center is now only steps away in Congress. The full Senate must approve the bill and any differences will need to be resolved in conference.

Since the House has already passed the bill, funds for the center should be included in the final bill, the lawmakers said. "This is the fourth year we have been able to speed up funding of important military construction projects at Shaw," said Spratt. "In the last three years, we have helped speed up construction of a new dining hall, a new education center, and a new flight-line maintenance facility last year."

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