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Wittman Votes To Approve Defense Bill

Includes Military Pay Raise, Shipbuilding and Improved Veterans Benefits

Washington, D.C. –Congressman Rob Wittman voted today in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, which authorizes \$550.4 billion for standard operations of the Department of Defense (and \$2.5 billion for Department of Energy national security programs), as well as \$130 billion for funding ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The House approved the legislation by a vote of 389 to 22.

“This year’s Defense Authorization Bill ensures that our men and women in uniform are properly resourced and that the national security needs of our nation are appropriately addressed,” said Wittman.

Included in the bill are two provisions that aim to prevent a carrier moving from Norfolk to Mayport, Florida. Wittman worked in concert with Reps. Nye and Forbes to draft the amendment that strips dredging funds for Mayport Harbor in Florida and requires a report on military basing decisions.

“Stripping the dredging funding injects some common sense into this process. The Department of Defense needs to first determine whether or not moving a carrier away from Norfolk is a good idea before they start spending money on the transfer,” said Wittman.

Today’s bill also includes a 3.4 percent pay raise for all service members, extends the Department of Defense’s authority to offer bonuses and incentive pay, and expands TRICARE health coverage to reserve component members and their families for 180 days prior to mobilization.

“As a member of the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces subcommittee, I am very pleased that the bill makes progress towards achieving a robust 313 ship Navy, fully funds repair and overall costs for our carrier and submarines, and authorizes funding for maritime ship loan guarantees,” said Wittman.

“While I am supportive of this bill, I am disappointed by its failure to permanently fund veteran’s benefits, to eliminate of the ‘widow’s tax’, or to sufficiently extend TRICARE to

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Guard and Reserve members who are already receiving early retirement. I am also disappointed by the failure to expressly prohibit the transfer of Guantanamo detainees into the U.S. and by the budget cuts to our missile defense program” said Wittman

“I will continue to work with my colleagues to address these issues in the final conference report” said Wittman.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

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