

## House-Senate Agreement Reached on Defense Authorization Act, Bill Passes House

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the House of Representatives passed S. 3001, the National Defense Authorization Conference Report for Fiscal Year 2009. This legislation authorizes \$531.4 billion for the Department of Defense and \$68.6 billion to support ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during fiscal year 2009.

"I want to thank Chairman Skelton and the Ranking Member Hunter for their leadership and vision in crafting this agreement that is so important to the men and women of our armed forces," Rep. Taylor said. "I also want to thank the Ranking Member on the Seapower Subcommittee, Roscoe Bartlett, for his suggestions and guidance during the deliberations on this bill.

"It's a time of war, and with this bill, Congress is responding to the needs of our service members and their families," added Rep. Taylor. "With this bill, we are getting our nation back on a strong path toward achieving the Navy's requirement of having a 313-ship fleet. By passing this legislation, my colleagues and I in the House are making a substantial investment in our long-term national security, and I'm glad that we're taking care of one of our nation's most important investments: our military service members."

S. 3001 authorizes a total of \$1.7 billion dollars for the procurement of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs). These vehicles are designed with a V-shape hull that provides a significant improvement over the U.S. military's other armored vehicles in protecting troops against underbody mines and IEDs. Including these funds, Rep. Taylor has led the effort to provide nearly \$6 billion over the past two years for the procurement of the MRAP vehicle-which has been identified as Secretary of Defense Robert Gate's number one acquisition priority for force protection.

The defense bill also authorizes a 3.9 percent pay raise for our nation's military personnel. It also prevents the DOD from increasing healthcare fees charged to military retirees and their families. This controversial proposal was called for in the Bush Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2009. Additionally, S. 3001 increases the size of the Army by 7,000, the Marine Corps by 5,000, the Navy by 1,023 and the Air Force by 450 above requested levels. This legislation also increases the full-time manning level for the Army National Guard to 32,060 and the Air National Guard to 14,360

In the Seapower portion of the bill, Rep. Taylor sponsored several key initiatives aimed at restoring our nation's Navy and expeditionary force capabilities. Over the past seven years of the Bush Administration, the Navy fleet has declined by nearly 50 ships to a total of 275 ships-smaller than our pre-World War I fleet. To reverse that trend, this legislation authorizes \$14 billion to build seven ships and \$950 million for advanced procurement of long-lead material to build an additional three ships above the President's fiscal year 2009 requested level for Navy shipbuilding.

Other initiatives sponsored by Rep. Taylor in S. 3001 included a requirement that new classes of amphibious ships are designed and constructed with integrated nuclear power systems.

The measure also contains a National Guard Equipment Fund which authorizes an additional \$800 million for the procurement of critical, high-priority equipment to address National Guard and reserve component unfunded equipment shortfalls.

Additionally, S. 3001 authorizes funding for procurement of defense items or research that supports the U.S. military. A significant amount of this work will be performed in South Mississippi, including:

\$600 million for advanced procurement of 2 LPD-17 Amphibious Lift Ships: These vessels are the modern replacement for the Navy's aging fleet of amphibious lift ships. The LPD-17 class ships are being constructed at the Northrop Grumman Ship Systems shipyards in Pascagoula, Gulfport and New Orleans.

\$2.5 billion for the DDG 1000 Destroyers: The DDG 1000 is the Navy's 21st century land-attack destroyer. The provision also allows the Navy to use these funds for a return to production of the DDG-51 Aegis destroyer. Northrop Grumman Ship Systems in Pascagoula is one of two shipyards involved in this program.

\$350 million DDG-51 Aegis Destroyer: This provision authorizes funds for the DDG-51 program to be used either for advanced procurement or to procure major equipment spares. Northrop Grumman Ship Systems in Pascagoula is one of two shipyards involved in this program.

\$5 million for CVN Propeller Replacement: This work to replace worn propellers from the Nimitz-class aircraft carriers will be performed at the Rolls Royce Naval Marine Foundry at Pascagoula.

\$3.6 million for Special Operations Craft-Riverine Replacement Program: These craft will replace those used by U.S. Special Operations Forces. The SOC-R vessels are built by U.S. Marine Incorporated of Gulfport.

\$2 million for Composite Sea Lion Craft Project: This research and development effort will be performed by Seemann Composites of Gulfport.

\$2 million for Large-Scale Demonstration Item for Virginia-Class Submarine Bow Dome: This research and development effort will be performed by Seemann Composites of Gulfport.

\$1.2 million for CLUBS LIDAR for UAVs: This research and development effort will transition the CLUBS LIDAR capability to an unmanned aerial platform. This effort will be led by Optech International of Kiln, Mississippi.

\$4.6 million for Ballistic Precision Aerial Delivery System (BPADS): This effort will be performed by Pioneer Aerospace Inc. of Columbia, MS.

\$6.9 million for Regiment Headquarters Facility: This facility significantly upgrades regimental headquarters at the Navy's Seabee Base in Gulfport.

\$5.9 million for Battalion Maintenance Facility and Equipment Yard: This facility will improve military readiness of Combat Engineering Battalions stationed at the Navy's Seabee Base in Gulfport.

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