

September 29, 2006: Sanchez on Passage of '07 DoD Authorization

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Armed Services Democrats Praise Passage of Key Provision in National Defense Authorization Act FY07

WASHINGTON, DC – Today the House of Representatives will consider the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2007. This legislation provides \$462.9 billion, including a \$70 billion bridge fund to pay for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is also an increase of 30,000 and 5,000 in end strength for the Army and Marine Corps respectively. Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee are pleased to note that many of their legislative priorities were included in the final bill.

Army and Marine Corps Readiness

The bill includes \$23 billion extra to fully cover the reset needs of the Army and Marine Corps for fiscal year 2007. The bill takes important action to address shortfalls in operations, training and maintenance funding that the Department of Defense failed to address in the regular budget process “l am very pleased that after drawing attention to this issue for several months, we were finally able to include the money necessary to begin the reset of Army and Marine Corps equipment rapidly being depleted in the war in Iraq. Additional money will undoubtedly be needed in future years, but this bill is a big step in the right direction,” said Ranking Member Ike Skelton (MO).

TRICARE and Prescription Drug cost shares

A one-year moratorium is placed on increases in TRICARE cost shares and retail prescription drug co-pays.

TRICARE for Reservists

TRICARE Reserve Select is expanded to members of the Selected Reserves, and the current three-tier eligibility program is terminated.

Servicemembers Group Life Insurance

Full premiums for Servicemembers Group Life Insurance are paid for servicemembers in the theater of operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Regulating Payday Lending

This bill prohibits creditors from charging servicemembers annual percentage rates of interest for loans that are higher than the legal limit for state residents, or no more than 36 percent. It also directs the Secretary of Defense to set specific limitations on lending practices for creditors who extend credit to service members and their dependents.

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