

## May 21, 2008: Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

### DUNCAN HUNTER NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

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I wish to thank Chairman Skelton for his hard work and leadership in developing this important piece of legislation.

And, Mr. Chairman, I would also like to say to the gentlemen who are retiring this year, I think just on the top row of our committee, we are probably losing collectively about 65 years of experience on this committee, and it has been my pleasure over the last 12 years to serve on this committee with you all, and you will sorely be missed and the institutional knowledge that you carry will be missed also. So we have a lot of good colleagues who are leaving the Congress this year.

This legislation provides critical support to our Armed Forces through many important initiatives. I'm proud that the legislation, for example, provides a 3.9 percent across-the-board pay raise for the members of our services. And in addition, H.R. 5658 prohibits the implementation of the President's proposals to increase health care co-pays and cost sharing for beneficiaries of the TRICARE health care and pharmacy services.

This bill also takes a step in providing for the first time ever the military preventative health care programs, which will improve the lives of our service members, of our retirees, and family members. Preventative health care has been proven to improve individuals' long-term health and to provide substantial cost savings since healthier people require less medical service. And I'm very pleased that Chairwoman DAVIS proposed this innovative health care program and that it is also paid for.

This bill also includes several proposals that I sought to have included. And as the ranking woman on the Armed Services Committee, I am proud that one of these provisions establishes a centralized case-level database of information about sexual assaults that involve our service members. The database will be consistent with all privacy guidelines and restrictions while tracking information about the nature of assaults and the outcome of any legal proceedings in connection with the assault.