

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger today voted in favor of H.R. 1585, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008," which the House passed by a vote of 397 to 27. This measure authorizes funding for protective equipment and advanced weapons, a 3.5% pay raise for all military personnel, an increase in the size of the Army and Marine Corps, and ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. It also includes provisions relating to the Global Hawk and U-2 spy planes, both of which are stationed at Northern California's Beale Air Force Base. Herger made the following comment regarding House passage of the measure:

"Our unmatched military protects Americans and enables our nation to stand as the leading beacon of freedom in the world," Herger stated. "Since the early days of our republic, millions of brave and selfless Americans have served in uniform and defended our nation and allies against the likes of fascism and communism. Americans fighting the war against radical jihadists are serving with equal valor and skill. As we approach Memorial Day, we honor all of those who have fallen in our nation's defense, and extend our deepest gratitude to those who are currently protecting Americans and keeping our nation secure.

"House passage of the Defense Authorization bill will help ensure that the men and women of our armed forces will have every tool and resource they need to successfully prosecute their missions," continued Herger. "Additionally, I am pleased the measure recognizes that the Global Hawk has extraordinary capabilities and will be a tremendous intelligence asset to U.S. commanders for many years to come. The bill also recognizes that the remarkable U-2 spy plane should remain in theater until advanced models of Global Hawk can match its capabilities. These provisions help in our efforts to ensure that Beale AFB will remain as our nation's premiere high altitude reconnaissance base."

Herger concluded, "Unfortunately, the Defense Authorization bill is not perfect. I am troubled most by the majority party's decision to cut missile defense funding by nearly \$800 million. We know that North Korea and Iran seek long range missiles that could threaten our shores and our allies. An effective missile defense system is technologically achievable and could provide the last line of defense against such attacks. However, I believe it is important to support our troops and hope as the legislative process moves forward that the Senate will restore full funding for missile defense in its version of the Defense Authorization bill."