

Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA) issued a statement regarding the 2010 Fiscal Year Defense Appropriations bill. The bill includes funding for troops serving overseas and improvements to health and family programs offered to servicemembers. Because of the late timing of the bill's passage, a number of other provisions were part of the bill, including infrastructure projects, and a provision to protect against Medicare's scheduled payment cuts to doctors. Herger's remarks follow below:

"I believe Congress has no higher duty than equipping our men and women in uniform with the resources they need to be successful in their missions. Those serving overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve nothing but our fullest support. We must take any and all appropriate steps to provide for their health and well being during and after their service, and to ensure that the military in which they serve remains the finest in the world. This bill provides funding for essential national security needs, and delivers the necessary resources to continue the nation's military efforts abroad. In addition, the legislation includes funding for important pay increases for our troops. It also provides substantial funding for vital weapons systems including Global Hawk, stationed at Beale AFB in Northern California, a much-needed new Air Force refueling tanker, and ten new Navy ships.

"The defense bill rejects the President's request for \$100 million to transfer suspected terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay to the United States. Unfortunately, it does not contain language that prevents him from ignoring the will of Congress and the American people and transferring terror suspects to U.S. soil and instead allows transfer for prosecution. I strongly believe that this is a mistake that represents a return to a pre 9/11 mindset that treats terrorism as a criminal issue rather than as an act of war.

"I am disappointed that House Democrats have failed to get things done on time and have been forced to include nine un-related authorization and entitlement extensions on this Defense spending bill. Some of these are time-sensitive provisions that I strongly support, such as protecting physicians from a devastating 21% cut in their Medicare reimbursements and keeping highway construction projects up and running, but this annual bill should be about our troops. The Majority party is using this must-pass bill to rush through other bills that deserved their own debate on the House Floor. I am proud to support our troops, but this bill is the latest indication of the way Congressional Democrats do business and the American people deserve better."