

WASHINGTON – U.S. troops will get a boost in pay and additional resources for military health care under legislation passed today by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell and the House of Representatives. H.R. 3222, the Department of Defense Appropriations for FY 2008, passed the House with a strong, bipartisan vote of 400 to 15.

The House also took significant steps to improve America's military readiness, which has declined under the Administration's Iraq policies.

"America's military must be strong enough to defend our people from any and every threat," said Mitchell. "We also owe our men and women in uniform fair pay and quality health care."

The Department of Defense Appropriations conference report includes

- \$2.2 billion for a 3.5 percent military pay raise, which is a higher raise than the President asked for,
- \$23.5 billion for military health care programs, \$918 million more than requested by the President,
- \$11.5 billion for next generation fighter jets including the F-22A Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and the F/A-18 E/F,
- \$428 million to strengthen the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program which aids in the dismantlement of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union, and
- \$11.6 billion in emergency funding for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and increases funding for body armor and other protective equipment,

The legislation also provides for additional oversight of military contractors, and restricts the establishment of permanent military bases in Iraq.

The measure does not include Iraq or Afghanistan war funding.