

Representative Rob Wittman (VA-1), Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, today supported passage of the final version of the Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act. Wittman delivered the following statement on the House Floor in support of the conference report of the annual defense authorization legislation, which provides direction for the missions and priorities of the nation's Armed Forces:

"This conference report addresses a wide array of policy issues from cooperation with nations like Israel and Georgia, operations in Afghanistan, our new partnership with Iraq, balancing strategic opportunities and risk with respect to China and Pakistan, to mitigating the threat from Iran and North Korea, enhancing missile defense, and enhancing this nation's nuclear deterrent. Passage ensures our troops get a 1.6 percent pay raise, and the benefits their families rely upon.

"This bill ensures that we continue to fulfill our nation's most sacred obligations to our brave men and women serving in the greatest all-volunteer force in history.

"The service by our men and women in uniform is priceless, especially during the last 10 years of combat operations. Besides thanking them for their service and sacrifice to this nation, and ensuring they are afforded the best benefits and care for their service, there is little we can do to repay them for standing the watch and keeping America safe. This bill authorizes a modest 1.6% pay increase, but it never can express how truly grateful we are as a nation for the service and sacrifice of our all-volunteer force and their families.

"Additionally some very important provisions were included to ensure our industrial base maintains a constant work load and a fully employed work force. \$14.9 billion was authorized for U.S. Navy shipbuilding, a total of 10 ships, which include two Virginia Class submarines. The bill also extends the multi-year funding authority for the second and third Ford-class aircraft carriers from four to five years of incremental funding authority. American ingenuity, creativity, and initiative are alive and well in our shipyards that build warships for the United States Navy.

"Shipbuilding is supported through business and industry spanning 50 states and designed and engineered by our greatest asset: the American people. The American aircraft carrier is the pinnacle of this industrial engineering, ingenuity and genius; where mechanical, nuclear, aerospace and electrical engineering converge with naval architecture to form a magnificent

100,000-ton, 1,092-foot-long piece of American sovereignty, that travels anytime, anywhere around the world.

“Additionally, the bill reinstates the requirement for annual delivery of the Navy’s 30-year shipbuilding plan, solidifying the need for the Navy to communicate their plan as it relates to the strategic objectives of the United States balanced against a very challenging budget environment.

“I’m pleased that this legislation came together, to support our men and women in uniform. In times of austerity, they remain a priority, as does the safety and security of this nation. Today, I stand to support this legislation and encourage my colleagues to support its passage.”

Background on Mayport

The conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 1540, addressed the issue of military construction funding for a road improvement project at Mayport Naval Station, Florida. Wittman, along with other members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation, has continued to question the duplicative home porting of a nuclear carrier, following a proposed aircraft carrier move from Norfolk, Virginia, to Mayport, Florida. The report states, “The conferees determined that the Massey Avenue Corridor Improvements Project had merit to support requirements at the Naval Station Mayport, Florida, whether or not a nuclear powered aircraft carrier was home ported there.”

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

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