

September 24, 2008: Congressman Wittman Supports Defense Authorization Passage

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman voted today in favor of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, S.3001, which passed the House by a vote of 392 to 39 and reconciles the House and Senate versions of the annual defense authorization bills.

"The National Defense Authorization Act provides our men and women in uniform with the tools and training they need to accomplish their mission. It also goes above and beyond to care for military families in the First District," said Wittman.

In what will further bolster shipbuilding in Newport News, the legislation authorizes an additional \$300 million to begin construction of a Virginia Class Submarine. The bill also authorizes \$5.98 million for construction of the Officer Candidate School Headquarters at Marine Corps Base Quantico, \$3.9 million to construct a Vehicle Paint Facility at Fort Eustis, and \$1.4 million for Air Force satellite research at the Jefferson National Laboratory in Newport News.

The Defense Authorization Bill passed today also includes a 3.9% pay raise for service members and prohibits the Department of Defense from increasing premiums and fees associated with TRICARE, the military's health plan for active duty and retired personnel.

"Our military personnel and installations are the backbone of the First District. From shipbuilding in Hampton Roads to necessary construction in Quantico, this legislation is critical to supporting our national defense. I'm glad that Congress has been able to fulfill its obligation to our service members and their families," said Wittman.

Overall, today's legislation authorizes \$531.4 billion in discretionary budget authority for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. Additionally, the legislation authorizes \$68.6 billion in supplemental funding to support current operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Global War on Terrorism during the first few months of Fiscal Year 2009.