



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
JOHN McHUGH, NEW YORK
CHAIRMAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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Statement of John M. McHugh

Markup of H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Military Personnel Subcommittee report contains many important initiatives, including:

- A 2.7 percent across-the-board military pay raise. That is .5 percent above the raise included in the budget request and marks the eighth consecutive year that the basic pay raise has exceeded the employment cost index (ECI).
- An increase in the active Army end strength by 30,000, or six per cent, and the Marine Corps end strength by 5,000, or nearly three per cent above the budget request.

Furthermore, the subcommittee recommends an Army National Guard end strength of 350,000, and an increase in Army National Guard full-time support personnel by nearly 2,300.

With regard to health care, the subcommittee recommendations would prohibit (until 31 December 2007) the Department's ability to increase TRICARE Prime, Standard and TRICARE Reserve Select cost shares. That delay will allow the subcommittee to assess recommendations from an independent task force, as well as the Comptroller General and the Congressional Budget Committee, for a comprehensive policy and fiscal basis for sustaining the future military health care benefit. The mark would also add \$735 million to the Defense Health Program to restore funding cut from DHP by the budget request in anticipation of increased beneficiary cost shares.

Chairman Hunter's full committee mark also contains a number of important initiatives that will not only improve the pharmacy benefit, and expand the TRICARE Reserve Select benefit, but also enable the Department to better manage the overall costs of health care.

There are many other important recommendations in the subcommittee report dealing with recruiting and retention, casualty assistance programs, and POW-MIA efforts, but given the lateness of the hour, I will not elaborate on them.

As we put together the recommendations of contained here and throughout the year I have worked closely with the subcommittee's Ranking Democrat, Dr. Vic Snyder, and have been assisted by the active participation of the subcommittee members. That has ensured that the recommendations included here represent a bi-partisan effort. I want to thank all the subcommittee members for their contributions and involvement.

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