



For Immediate Release: January 17, 2008

**BARROW VISITS TROOPS IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, BACKS
PLAN TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY, SUPPORT OUR TROOPS**

Our Troops Will Get the Pay Raise, Bonuses, and Other Critical Benefits They Deserve

Washington, D.C. – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) joined a bipartisan majority yesterday and backed a plan to strengthen our military, support our troops, and improve military readiness. The Defense Authorization bill was approved by a vote of 369-46 and is expected to pass the Senate as soon as it returns next week. The Administration has said that the President will sign the bill. That morning, Congressman Barrow returned from a Congressional Delegation trip to Iraq and Afghanistan, where he met with members of the armed forces and reassured them that they will receive the benefits they deserve.

The Defense Authorization bill includes provisions ensuring that the military pay raise, as well as special pay and bonuses for the troops, are retroactive to January 1st of this year.

“Our men and women in uniform need this pay raise,” said Barrow. “In the last week I’ve visited with our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. They told me they need this money to support their families at home, who are serving our country on the home front while their loved ones are serving on the front lines in the war on terror, and many of them are living paycheck-to-paycheck as it is.”

“The American military is the greatest in the world, and I was proud to back legislation that will make our armed forces stronger and our nation more secure. This bill protects our troops and their families, and helps ensure that our fighting men and women have all the resources they need and deserve.”

The Defense Authorization bill authorizes new resources for additional Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs,) up-armored Humvees, and body armor. The legislation also includes resources for efforts to stop Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that are such a great threat to American troops in Iraq.

The legislation also includes critical support for troops and their families by providing a pay raise for troops that goes above the President’s request and blocks the fee increases in the military health care program (TRICARE) proposed by the Administration. The bill also includes the Wounded Warrior Act, which responds to the Walter Reed Army

Medical Center scandal by improving the care of injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

News of Barrow's trip, which began January 8th, was strictly embargoed until he returned yesterday. It was his second trip to Iraq, and his first trip to Afghanistan.

"I'm in awe of by the bravery and determination of the folks we met. I'm more committed than ever to making sure we honor them in our words and our actions. Those who put their lives on the line for our country shouldn't have to worry about getting the pay they need now, or the support they'll need when they get home. I'll work with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to make sure of that."

Also on the trip were United States Congressmen Lincoln Davis (D-TN), Brad Miller (D-NC), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Timothy Walberg (R-MI), and Niki Tsongas (D-MA).

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