

Castle Bill Will Help Ensure Dover Air Force Base is Prepared in the Future -- October 19, 2007

Washington, DC - Rep. Mike Castle (R-Del.), along with Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.), has introduced bipartisan legislation to ensure the future of the nation's strategic airlift capability, including that of Delaware's Dover Air Force Base, home of the 436th and 512th airlift wings. The United States Airlift Requirement Act calls on the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study on the various alternatives for the size and mixture of the Air Force inter-theater airlift force, with a specific focus on the current and planned capabilities and costs of the C-5 and C-17 aircraft fleets, and submit a report to Congress.

The study is to be carried out by a federally funded research center, with the findings provided to Congress by February 2009. It will look at the current strategic fleet's adequacy and whether it is sufficient for future combat and noncombat missions as well as training and domestic operations.

The Dover Air Force Base has repeatedly been singled out as the preeminent airlift base in the country. In fact, last year Congress provided over \$30 million to support military construction projects related to the C-17 bed-down at Dover. This builds on the hundreds of millions that the federal government has spent on the base over the last several years.

"The men and women who serve our nation in the Armed Forces depend on U.S. airlift, and it is our duty to make certain they have the tools and resources to execute their missions," said Rep. Mike Castle. "The C-5 and the C-17 have proven their importance in operations throughout the world, and it is critical that we leverage the strengths of both airlift systems in the most effective way possible. Our military needs the ability to transport equipment and personnel at a moment's notice, and since 1941, Dover Air Force Base has excelled at this important mission. This legislation will provide proper oversight to ensure our military is prepared for the future."

The legislation mirrors an amendment by Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) and Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) to the Defense Authorization Bill.

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