

## Castle Continues to Support Deployed Troops and Their Families -- November 13, 2007

Washington, D.C. -- With President Bush's signature today, H.R. 3222, the fiscal 2008 Defense spending bill became law. This legislation provides \$459.3 billion in discretionary funding for Defense Department programs in FY 2008, including funds for military pay raises and family support among others.

"I am pleased to see the President support this legislation by signing it into law today. We have spent time this week honoring our veterans here in Delaware, and it is essential that we also focus on supporting the troops who are currently overseas serving our country. This bill recognizes the many contributions of our men and women in the military by funding much deserved benefits and pay raises.

Deployments are very difficult for soldiers' spouses and children, and therefore it is also vital that we do everything possible to assist these military families. For this reason, I strongly support funds in the bill for Department of Defense schools, housing, and family advocacy programs," Castle said.

Specifically, H.R. 3222 will:

- Provide funding for a 3.5% pay increase for military personnel, effective January 1;
- Fund an increase in the basic housing allowance to ensure that servicemembers have no out-of-pocket living costs;
- Appropriate \$2.6 billion for support for military families, which includes \$237 million in funds for department dependant schools as well as \$400 million for family advocacy programs;
- These department dependant schools now educate more than 100,000 military children each year.
- Supply \$30 million for impact aid as well as \$5 million for impact aid for children with disabilities;
- The Education Department's Impact Aid program provides supplementary funds to school districts nationwide to support the education of nearly 600,000 children of servicemembers.

- Provide  
\$10 million for the construction and furnishing of additional Fisher  
Houses; and

- The  
Fisher House Foundation operates "comfort homes" on the grounds  
of major military and VA medical centers, which enable family members to  
be close to loved ones during hospitalization for specialized care for an  
unexpected illness, disease, or injury.

- Require  
the department to report of Congress, not later than 90 days after  
enactment, on mechanisms for expanding public-private partnerships with  
military and family organizations, especially for the minor dependent  
children of deployed service members.

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