Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2996, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

Mr. POLIS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111–184) on the resolution (H. Res. 578) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2996) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2647 and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 572 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2647.

□ 2241

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2647) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2010 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, with Mr. ALTMIRE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. The House Armed Services Committee brings before the House a bill reported out of committee by a vote of 61–0. This consensus was achieved after a great deal of hard work. Our mark lasted almost 17 hours. We considered 129 amendments; we adopted 107 of them. We had an excellent debate on the issues in the best traditions of our committee. I am confident we will have a similar experience here in the full House.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be joined in support of the bill by my friend and my partner, BUCK MCKEON. I am thrilled that he is our ranking member, and I commend him for jumping in head first on his first official day on the job, which of course was a full day for our markup. He has been a very able and constructive partner as well as, when required, a skilled opponent. I must, however, mention our esteemed colleague, JOHN MCHUGH, who has agreed to become the Secretary of the Army, but who leaves our committee having established a lasting legacy, especially on issues of personnel.

In this debate we will consider, and I am confident that we will adopt, an amendment that is sponsored by both Mr. MCKEON and me that is a tribute to the work of JOHN MCHUGH on our committee.

Likewise, I must thank the subcommittee chairmen and ranking members who contributed so much on this bill. They did their homework, and I am pleased with the outcome of our efforts. They solved almost every problem set out for them, and they accomplished a lot of good government at the same time.

□ 2245

They were ably assisted by our committee staff, the amazing professionals in the Office of the Legislative Counsel, and the Office of the Parliamentarian.

This bill authorizes $550.5 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. The bill also authorizes $130 billion to support ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during fiscal year 2010. These amounts are essentially equal to the President's budget request for items in the jurisdiction of our committee.

H.R. 2647 reflects the Congress' deep commitment to supporting American servicemembers and providing the necessary resources to keep Americans safe. The bill provides our military personnel with a 3.4 percent pay raise, an increase of .5 percent above the President's request. The bill also includes a number of initiatives to support military families. In this, the Year of the Military Family, we provide funds to establish a Center for Care for military members and their families. We also increase the weight allowance for senior noncommissioned officers, and authorize the transportation of a second vehicle for members who are changing stations from or to a nonforeign area outside the United States. The bill also provides funding to enhance the Health Professions Scholarship program for mental health providers to support the troops and their families.

The mark fully funds the President's budget request for military training, equipment, maintenance, and facilities upkeep. By doing so, the committee continues its efforts to address readiness shortfalls that have developed over the past 8 years.

To address some of these concerns in this mark, we have added $1.6 billion to operation and maintenance, including $395 million for Navy aviation and ship depot maintenance, $762 million to achieve 100 percent of the requirement for sustainment of facilities, including the Department of Defense schools, which, by the way, are excellent, and $450 million to improve the quality of Army training barracks.

The war in Afghanistan is a critical mission that is finally getting the attention it demands, and I've been saying that for quite some time. To ensure our strategy in both countries is effective and achieves the intended goals within well-defined timelines, the bill requires the President to assess American efforts and regularly report on progress. It also authorizes the new Pakistan Counter-Insurgency Fund to allow our commanders to help Pakistan quickly and more effectively go after the terrorists in their safe havens.

On Iraq, the committee supports the President's policy while also upholding the Congress' responsibility to provide oversight to the process of drawing down the mountain of material purchased, transported and built up in Iraq at tremendous expense to the taxpayer.

In the area of nonproliferation, the bill increases funding and creates new authorities to strengthen the Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction program. The bill also fully supports the Department of Energy's nonproliferation programs, and adds substantial funding in support of the President's plan to secure and remove all known vulnerable nuclear materials that can be used for weapons.

The bill takes additional steps on acquisition reform beyond what we did in the bill on weapons acquisition which was enacted and signed into law by the President last month.

It also ensures that the Quadrennial Defense Review currently being undertaken by the Department of Defense both complies with the law and gives Congress the insight it needs to make judgments about force structure and programmatic changes.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, I believe this bill can be supported by every Member of this House. I recognize that some who have deep objections to current defense policy on various issues may feel compelled maybe to oppose the bill. That's their right, of course. But even in most of those cases, I believe that solid progress is made in this bill toward protecting our national security in the right way.

I ask Members to vote for H.R. 2647, for our troops and their families, and for a strong national defense for our Nation.

The object of our affection, Mr. Chairman, are the young men and young women in uniform who do professional, outstanding work for our country. This bill helps them in their efforts. All of us are proud of them, and I hope that the vote on this bill, when we vote tomorrow, will reflect that pride in the military of the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, as legislators, we meet once again to address the wide range of important national security issues undertaken by the Departments of Defense and Energy.

We all take our legislative responsibilities very seriously. This is especially true during a time of war, and it is always true of my good friend and colleague, Armed Services Committee chairman IKE SKELTON.

I would be remiss, Mr. Chairman, without saying a word about the outgoing ranking member, JOHN MCHUGH. I know we all agree that this committee, this Congress, and the 23rd District of New York will all miss the leadership of JOHN MCHUGH. I look forward to speaking more about JOHN later in our debate.

As a result of Chairman SKELTON's tireless efforts to put forward this bill, our committee reported out the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 last Wednesday. The vote was unanimous, 61–0.

Consistent with the longstanding bipartisan practice of the Armed Services Committee, this bill reflects our committee's continued strong support for the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

This legislation acknowledges that the United States has a vital national security interest in ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists, supports a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy that is adequately resourced and funded by Congress, and calls on the President to provide our U.S. military commanders with the military forces they require in order to succeed.

In Iraq, the committee ensures the Congress will support the President's plan to redeploy combat forces while providing our commanders on the ground the flexibility to hold hard-fought security gains and ensure the safety of our forces.

Mr. Chairman, we owe our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines the very best available equipment, training and support in order to provide them with the best possible tools to undertake their missions and return safely. The provisions that are already in this bill go a considerable way in demonstrating this support, but we can, and should, improve it.

Congress, and particularly the Armed Services Committees in both Chambers, has the unmistakable obligation to ensure that the Department of Defense develops and deploys defensive capabilities that protect the American people, our forward-deployed forces, and our allies. This includes promising programs in the areas of missile defense.

In a year where Iran and North Korea have demonstrated the capability and intent to pursue long-range ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons programs, elements of genuine national security threat, this bill endorsed reductions to capabilities that would provide a comprehensive missile defense system to protect the U.S. homeland, our forward-deployed troops, and our allies.

We need to take steps that would reverse the administration's 35 percent reduction to a critical component of the national missile defense system located in Alaska and California, which is designed as a last line of defense to protect the U.S. homeland. It's unfortunate that we've been forced to trade national missile defense capabilities for more theater missile defense. Both are necessary, and both could have been adequately funded without such deep cuts.

Building on the Weapons Acquisition Reform bill that the President signed in May, this legislation takes a number of important steps on major weapons programs. I am pleased that this bill provides $368.8 million in advance procurement funding for 12 additional F–22s. Keeping the F–22 production line open is not only necessary to meet military requirements, but also sustains a critical sector of the defense industrial base and provides over 95,000 direct and indirect jobs at a time when our economy is struggling through a recession.

As a Nation, we owe more than our gratitude to the brave men and women in uniform and their families, past and present, for the sacrifices they make to protect our freedom. I am pleased that this legislation includes a 3.4 percent pay raise, which is half a percentage point above the President's request. I commend and thank Chairman SKELTON for working to address the concurrent receipt in the suspension bill addressed earlier today. However, I remain concerned that we were not able to fund payments to military surviving spouses by repealing the ''widow's tax'' and allowing access to TRICARE for Guard and Reserve members who receive earlier retirement. If this is truly to be the Year of the Military Family, we must make it a priority to fund these programs, too.

One of the few areas where there is disagreement within our committee is detainee policy. These are differences that I believe need to be debated and given a vote within the full House. As you know, many Members believe the American people do not want detainees in Guantanamo brought to the sovereign territory of our country. I am disappointed we will not debate amendments dealing with the transfer or release of detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba into the United States.

Finally, I strongly agree with many Members who believe that Congress should do everything possible to ensure that the detainee pictures presently subject to the Freedom of Information Act are not released. The President and our military commanders determined that these photos, if released, would risk the safety of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the overwhelming support for this language in the Senate, I regret that we could not address this issue on the House floor today.

As in years past, I believe that this legislation reflects many of the Armed Services Committee's priorities in supporting our Nation's dedicated and courageous servicemembers.

I thank Chairman SKELTON for putting together an excellent bill and helping us to stay focused on delivering a bill that protects, sustains, and builds our forces. I look forward to working with my colleagues to improve and pass H.R. 2647.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, the Member I am about to yield to for 3 minutes will be giving her last presentation in this House, for she will be, very shortly, a member of the administration within the State Department with a high-ranking position. We wish her well, as well as wishing her well in her upcoming marriage.

I yield 3 minutes to my friend, my colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, the gentlelady from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for those very kind words. It has been a pleasure to work with you and my colleagues on the committee and my colleagues in the House. Thank you for your patriotic service.

I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, and to summarize the portions of the bill drafted by the Strategic Forces Subcommittee which I am proud to have chaired for the past 3 years.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, including Ranking Member TURNER for his hard work and always good willingness to work in a bipartisan way.

H.R. 2647 includes $14.3 billion for the Department of Energy national security programs, not including nuclear nonproliferation programs, $9.3 billion for ballistic missile defense programs, the amount the President requested, and $11 billion for military space programs, including just over $9 billion for Air Force space programs.

For Department of Energy national security programs, the bill authorizes $6.5 billion for nuclear weapons activities and $5 billion for the Defense Environmental Cleanup.

H.R. 2647 authorizes a new stockpiling management program to provide better guidance to the National Nuclear Security Administration on the

maintenance of our nuclear weapons and to establish clear limits on that maintenance. The bill also adds a new requirement for lab-to-lab peer review called ''Dual Validation'' as part of the annual assessment of the nuclear stockpile.

For missile defense, the bill authorizes the President's request of $9.3 billion overall, including nearly $8 billion for the Missile Defense Agency. The bill focuses on the highest priority threats and on making our missile defense system more effective. As such, the bill shifts away from the capabilities-based approach of the last few years, which meant that if a contractor said they could build it, MDA would fund it whether or not it addressed a current threat or whether or not the combatant commanders requested it. That approach yielded several early-to-need programs that fell behind schedule and went way over budget and left us with ground-based interceptors in Alaska that we are currently spending millions of dollars to fix and upgrade.

□ 2300

In contrast, as MDA Director General Patrick O'Reilly told our subcommittee in May, the process leading up to this year's request on missile defense was the first that involved the combatant commanders in a meaningful way and the first with a mature Missile Defense Evaluation Board in place.

This more sensible process yielded a balanced, threat-based approach to missile defense.

H.R. 2647 includes $1 billion to further develop the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system to defend against emerging long-range threats, and it includes a requirement to prepare a sustainment and modernization program for the ground-based system.

H.R. 2647 also substantially increases the deployment of proven missile defense capabilities such as Aegis BMD and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, THAAD, which are designed to counter the ballistic missile threats our troops are most likely to face: Short, medium-range missiles.

Over the next 5 years, the Aegis Standard Missile-3 inventory will grow from 133 to 325.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for working with me. I think this is a very good bill. I think we address the threats to our forward-deployed troops, our allies, and I hope my colleagues work with us to support the bill and get its passage.

In military space programs, the mark builds on the bipartisan approach the subcommittee took in the last Congress.

The bill makes reductions in programs with significant schedule and cost risks, including the Third Generation Infrared Satellite System and the High Integrity GPS program.

The bill reflects the subcommittee's support for the Operationally Responsive Space (ORS) program, and includes an increase of twenty-three point four million dollars to support the launch of the first ORS imaging satellite, ORS SAT–1.

H.R. 2647 also requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a space science and technology strategy when the President submits the budget request to Congress. This provision will help guide the Administration and Congress as we approach major investment decisions in national security space.

H.R. 2647 also provides a twelve month extension for the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the U.S., to allow the commission to review the strategic security issues addressed by the pending Nuclear Posture Review and Quadrennial Defense Review.

Finally, in intelligence-related matters, the bill recommends a funding increase to boost the focus and resources of the Intelligence Community devoted to analyzing foreign nuclear weapons capabilities, programs, and intentions.

H.R. 2647 also includes two important planning requirements related to intelligence.

First, it requires the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense, to prepare a plan to maintain a robust foreign nuclear activities analysis capability in the DOE national labs.

Second, it requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the DNI, to assess foreign ballistic missile intelligence analysis gaps and shortfalls, and prepare a plan to address such gaps.

In sum, H.R. 2647 smartly tackles the critical national security priorities within the jurisdiction of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 2647.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) the ranking member on the Air and Land Forces Subcommittee such time as he may consume.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

I would like to thank my good friend from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) the chairman of the Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, for his continued professionalism and all the hard work that has taken place behind the scenes to get this bill done. This is not an easy process and the legislation before us reflects many difficult decisions.

Once again, this bill places force-protection issues at the top of the priority list. It provides additional funds for the National Guard equipment account and the services' unfunded priority lists. And the changes that this bill makes in regards to body armor is long overdue and will provide better protection for our war fighters for years to come.

As I said during our oversight hearings and subcommittee markup, there is no doubt that this budget and the decisions that come along with it will fundamentally change the United States Air Force and Army.

I see two problems. First, the budget should not drive the strategy. The strategy should be set, then the funding requirements are laid out in the budget that follows. It appears to me that in many cases funding limitations in the FY 2010 budget top line were the sole driver in major policy decisions.

The second problem that I see is that instead of openly engaging the legislative branch on policy matters proposed for structure changes and the shifting requirements for major weapons platforms, the executive branch has chosen to lock us out of those debates and tie our hands by unveiling sweeping policy changes buried under the guise of a budget request.

A case in point is the joint cargo aircraft. I have asked witnesses in the Army, the Air Force, the Office of the Secretary of Defense: What has changed? Why is this mission being moved out of the Army and solely over to the Air Force, when not 4 months ago we received the Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report that stated, ''the option that provided most value to the joint force was to assign the C–27J to the Air Force and Army. ''

None of them have been able to answer the question, but all of them stated that there was no new study or analysis conducted that countered the existing plan or reduced the JROC recruit requirement for 78 joint cargo aircraft.

What has happened as a result of all this is that the Congress is now left to debate the puts and takes in the budget when there has been no vetting of the underlying threat assumptions policy or strategy. This body, not the executive branch, is charged with a constitutional mandate to raise and support armies and navies. I am extremely troubled that these decisions have been made in a vacuum and appear at least on the surface to be informed by nothing other than top-line budget pressures.

I want to be clear that my frustration is with the Department, not this bill. In fact, given the little information that we have received, I believe our Members on both sides of the aisle and our really excellent staff have done an amazing job. As I said on many occasions, the House Armed Services Committee has a long tradition of focusing on those issues that most impact and help our brave men and women in uniform. And I, like all our Members on both sides of the aisle, am very proud to be serving on this committee.

Finally I would like to briefly comment on the Army's Future Combat System. As we all know, the Secretary of Defense announced a decision to restructure the decision and terminate the Manned Ground Vehicles. Our committee has scrutinized the Future Combat System program in a bipartisan manner since 2004. We have consistently had concerns in regard to the survivability of the Manned Ground Vehicles, but we have never questioned the need for the Army to modernize and replace a combat vehicle fleet that is in excess of 30 years old.

The problem that I have is there is still much information that we need from OSD so that we can make informed decisions. As a result, we have been forced to make some very difficult decisions I would prefer to make with more information.

Again, on balance, this is a good bill, and I encourage all members to support it.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to my friend, my colleague from Texas, who is the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness, Mr. ORTIZ.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I rise in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. The bill before us today reflects our committee's continuing efforts to reverse a decline in the readiness posture for Armed Forces.

I would like to thank the ranking member from my subcommittee, my good friend, Mr. FORBES of Virginia, for his help in bringing together this excellent bill.

The United States military is, without a doubt, the premier fighting force in the world. However, military leaders face significant challenges as they seek to fulfill the basic equipment and training needs.

H.R. 2647 is dedicated to providing the necessary resources and authorities to help reverse declining trends in training and equipment readiness. H.R. 2647 includes the following provisions to improve the overall state of the United States military readiness:

It provides $13 billion for reset of Army and Marine Corps equipment, deployment. It adds $762 million to fully sustain military base facilities and infrastructure, including Department of Defense schools.

It adds $450 million for Army barracks improvements and provides $440 million to support National Guard and Reserve military construction programs. It adds $395 million to Navy depot maintenance accounts for ships and aircraft.

It authorizes $90 million for energy conservation projects and encourages use of renewable energy and hybrid and electric vehicles. It requires a GAO report on DOD's approach to balancing the dueling requirements of troops.

It includes a 1-year extension of premium pay for Federal civilian employees deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and it provides $4.7 billion for training opportunities for the Army.

This bill also does many good things for south Texas. It provides additional space for the Army Reserve to warehouse equipment in a controlled humidity environment in Robstown, Texas.

The bill also authorizes an energy demonstration project at Naval Air Station Kingsville that would reduce carbon emissions and provide a renewable source of free electricity.

I support this bill, H.R. 2647, and am proud of what this bill does to restore strength to our military.

My friends, this is a good bill that reflects our bipartisan desire to improve readiness and balance the many priorities of our Armed Forces.

I urge my colleagues and my friends to vote for this bill.

Mr. MCKEON. I yield now to the gentleman from Virginia, the subcommittee ranking member on the readiness committee, Mr. FORBES, 3 minutes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to stand in support of this year's defense policy bill.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member MCKEON for their leadership and hard work in crafting a bipartisan bill that was unanimously supported by the Armed Services Committee. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) for his friendship and the foresight with which he conducts the readiness subcommittee.

This bill does much to address the readiness issues facing the Department of Defense by providing the Navy with $395 million to address both of the Navy's shortfalls in ship repair and aviation maintenance. We have fully funded other key readiness accounts so that our men and women have the tools, training and equipment they need when they deploy to protect our Nation.

I am pleased that this bill continues a steadfast commitment to fully funding the 2005 BRAC round for the Army, Air Force and Navy so that it can be completed by September 2011. However, I am deeply disappointed that the measure does not fully fund $350 million for defense-wide BRAC projects, which includes the construction of critical military hospitals for our men and women in uniform.

The amendment that was adopted by the full committee that led to this reduction will end up costing taxpayers more than $2 billion in 2010 alone, which is enough money to fully fund these critical health care facilities and restore $1.2 billion for comprehensive missile defense. Instead, this provision will lead to inflated wages in Guam, while taking American jobs from construction projects in Texas, Maryland, and Virginia.

That provision notwithstanding, there are many worthwhile provisions in this bill that will support our men and women in uniform, as well as the communities that support them.

I am pleased that we have added $9 billion above the President's request to assist small businesses and allow them to compete for local defense contracts, an additional $65 million to provide aid to school districts impacted by military families, and $20 million above the President's request to assist the military and conservation groups working together to protect against encroachment at our military installations.

All in all, Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is a good bill, and it will do much to support the readiness of our military.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to my friend, the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Sea Power and Expeditionary Forces, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR. I very much want to thank our outstanding chairman, Mr. SKELTON for giving me this opportunity.

I rise in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act. As chairman of the Sea Power and Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee, I am pleased to report to the House that this bill strengthens our Navy and Marine Corps by providing the necessary equipment for the brave young sailors and marines to carry out the tasks that our Nation requests of them. In all, this bill authorizes $38 billion for Navy and Marine Corps procurement, $19.6 billion for Navy and Marine Corps research and development efforts, $3.2 billion for Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Contingency Operations, and $401.9 million for maintaining a robust United States merchant fleet.

I believe that the balance between quality, capability, and affordability is met head on with the bill before the House tonight. The bill provides authorization for the correct number of ships, planes and ground vehicles with the right capability to meet the threat, but with the recognition that unless equipment can be procured affordably, we will never be able to build our fleet or our air wings. That's why, working in a bipartisan manner, the subcommittee recommended and the full committee adopted our recommendation to grant multiyear procurement authority for the construction of DDG 51 destroyer programs, the world's best destroyer, and multiyear procurement authority to realize significant cost savings in the procurement of F/A 18 Strike Fighters to repopulate our air wings on the decks of our carriers.

In particular, the bill would authorize construction of eight new battle force vessels to include a Virginia Class submarine, three Littoral Combat Ships, one DDG 51 Burke Class Destroyer, two T-AKE Dry Cargo Ammunition Ships and one Joint High Speed Vessel. In addition to new construction, the bill would authorize procurement of long lead material construction for seven additional vessels in coming years, most importantly, two submarines per year starting next year.

The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into multiyear contracts for the purchase of additional F/A 18 Superhornets and E/A 18 Growlers. The bill contains over $100 million in additional funding to buy long-lead equipment and materiel necessary to continue production of these aircraft.

These are the finest aircraft in the world today, save our own Air Force F22 Raptor. Since it's unlikely that our Navy and Air Force will go to battle against themselves, that means the Superhornet is unmatched by any other strike fighter in the world.

We must always remember that the Navy and the Marine Corps are our Nation's 9–1–1 force; they can arrive anywhere in the world quickly with full combat power. They do not need weeks or months to ship and stage equipment. This is why the expeditionary force desperately needs more of these strike fighters. The bill will provide that capability.

This bill would also continue vital research and development efforts to ensure that our fleet maintains the technology and the superiority necessary to defeat all threats.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield an additional minute to the gentleman.

Mr. TAYLOR. Most notably, advanced missile and advanced submarine threats. The bill would fund the design and development of the next class of missile submarine, the next class of nuclear powered cruiser, and the next class of aircraft carriers.

Finally, the bill authorizes the resources necessary to maintain a robust United States Merchant Marine and authorizes $60 billion for the Title XI program.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Captain Will Ebbs, Ms. Jeaness Simlar, Heath Pope, Doug Bush, and Jesse Tollson for their work in putting together this portion of the bill. I recommend it to the full House for its passage.

□ 2315

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Missouri has 12 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the ranking member on the Terrorism Subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I do rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. As the ranking member of the Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, I think we have put together a good and an excellent mark. And I'd like to thank the chairman of the subcommittee for all of his cooperation in putting this together.

The members of the subcommittee have worked hard to address the many issues that face special operations, information technology, and science and technology investments, just to name a few of the areas that our subcommittee has handled.

We have provided important support to the Department's effort to enhance NATO capabilities so that our forces do not bear the entire burden of the efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the globe.

I believe we should support additional efforts to increase NATO's ability to contribute, especially at a time when irregular threats are only increasing and partnerships will prove of the utmost importance.

Our bill also addresses the needs of our special operators by increasing the budget request to address the command's unfunded requirements. These forces are at the tip of the spear in our military's efforts to counter terrorism and to bring stability to regions on the brink of chaos.

The bill includes measures to strengthen the Department's ability to operate in cyberspace and to address vulnerabilities to our information technology systems. The bill directs the establishment of a joint program office to better coordinate the acquisition of cyber capabilities across the Department and continues to push the Department to establish processes for the timely acquisition of needed information technology systems.

Finally, this bill continues our previous support of science and technology programs. Sustained investment in this area is very important for our military forces to maintain their warfighting capability not just now, but well into the future.

I would say that we need to continue to work on strategic communications, combating the potential use of weapons of mass destruction, and ensuring our national defense strategy addresses appropriately the range of threats found in our security environment today.

We must not lose sight of the importance of these issues and to ensure our forces have the resources, the authorities, and the equipment needed to provide for our Nation's defense.

Before finishing, I'd like to thank our former ranking member, Mr. JOHN MCHUGH, for all of his help, confidence, and advice. We wish him Godspeed. With that, I ask for my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague, my friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act and to discuss briefly the portions of the bill contained under the subcommittee that I chair on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. And I want to begin by thanking Ranking Member MILLER from the great State of Florida for his support for this bill. We work in true bipartisan fashion on the subcommittee, following the lead of our able chairman, who does the same with the full committee, and I think, in large part as a result of that, we produce a very good product.

I also want to thank the chairman for his overall leadership on the committee in putting together this mark. It places the priorities exactly where they belong, first and foremost, on our troops and their families, giving them the support they need to continue to fight and defend our country.

In program after program, you can see the priority that that is put in this bill. I really appreciate the chairman's work on that and, particularly, the 3.4 percent pay raise across the board for our military.

The bill also prioritizes our fight in Afghanistan, the central front now in the war against al Qaeda. It is absolutely clear that the battle over there has a profound impact on the national security of this country. This bill gives our troops over there the resources and equipment they need to fight the fight, to defeat al Qaeda, and to protect us against the violent extremists in that region.

In particular, it also recognizes the battle in Pakistan by funding counterinsurgency efforts there that are so critical not just to success in Pakistan but to success in Afghanistan as well.

On the subcommittee portion of our mark on the Terrorism Subcommittee, we are focused on three main issues: First of all, support for counterterrorism efforts, the fight against al Qaeda, and broader counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts across the globe; second, the support for innovative new technologies to give our troops the updated equipment that they need to best fight those fights; and lastly, to protect our homeland against unconventional threats.

All of these areas are focused on irregular warfare, unconventional threats, and the emerging threats that we face. And I want to take just a moment to thank Secretary Gates for his leadership in funding the money necessary, the programs necessary, the troops necessary to fight these fights. He made some bold steps in this bill to move us past a cold war mentality to focus on the threats that are right there before us from al Qaeda and other violent extremist groups. I think that makes an enormous difference.

In particular, in our mark we do everything we can to support our troops with the special operations command. They are the tip of the spear in fighting terrorism, in fighting insurgencies throughout the globe. We are growing their force—in the process of growing their force. It is necessary to fund that growth and fully support their outstanding efforts in protecting us across the globe.

We are very pleased with the operations and always make a high priority funding their efforts. We fully fund all of their unfunded requirements in this mark.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I simply again want to compliment Chairman SKELTON, Ranking Member MCKEON, also Ranking Member MCHUGH for all of his work on this committee and on this bill and Ranking Member MILLER for his support as well. I think we have put together an outstanding bill that will best protect the national security interests of this country.

Mr. MCKEON. I yield, at this time, 3 minutes to the ranking member on the Seapower Subcommittee, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN).

Mr. AKIN. I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. As ranking member of the Seapower and Expeditionary

Forces Subcommittee, I applaud the efforts of Chairman TAYLOR and his staff, who have done an excellent job in meeting the needs of our sailors, aviators, and marines.

With respect to aviation, the bill takes an important step toward addressing the Navy's strike-fighter shortfall. The Navy completed a study required in last year's bill to evaluate the potential benefits of a multiyear procurement for the F/A–18 Super Hornet, which is the only ''hot'' production line we have for fighters for the Navy.

Unfortunately, the Secretary of Defense refused to allow the report to be submitted to Congress. In the absence of any analysis of this issue from the Department, the committee used its own judgment and included a multiyear authority for the Super Hornet.

We also provide sufficient long-lead funding to allow the Navy to execute this multiyear contract. I believe this is imperative, especially as the Navy continues to find more and more areas of concern on the legacy fleet that may make it challenging to extend the service life of these aircraft. I want to thank Chairman TAYLOR for working with me on this issue, as well as a number of others.

For the Marine Corps, the bill fully funds the Marine's Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle program, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, known as MRAPs, and all of the items on their unfunded requirements.

Despite the fact that the Department of Defense refused to provide the 30-year shipbuilding program required by law, which made this committee's work difficult, the bill largely supports the President's budget request in this area.

At the full committee, Representative CONAWAY and I, along with Chairman TAYLOR, introduced an amendment that would put some teeth into the changes made to the Littoral Combat Ship program cost cap. The Navy needs to know that we're serious about controlling costs and do not adjust cost caps lightly.

The main concern I have with this bill does not fall under the Seapower Subcommittee, but I must mention it. Cutting missile defense by $1.2 billion makes no sense, particularly when North Korea and Iran are both working on nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. A cut of this magnitude is unacceptable.

I also continue to have one other overarching concern. We're not investing enough in the future of our military. The top line provided by the administration and, frankly, by this Congress, is too low. While we seem to be throwing money into every other problem under the Sun, we're tightening our belts on defense. This makes no sense.

But, again, this is a good bill overall, and Chairman SKELTON has done his best with these constraints. We're very thankful for his leadership.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to give my best wishes to our former ranking member, JOHN MCHUGH, who has a fine record in this institution, and I know he will continue to serve and fight for the men and women in uniform. Nevertheless, he will be missed on this committee.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield 3 minutes to my colleague and my friend, the distinguished chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I certainly want to salute our exemplary leader on this committee, Mr. SKELTON, and thank him very much for all his support.

Mr. Chairman, I join my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee in support of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. As chairwoman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, I'm particularly proud of the provisions in the bill that improve the quality of life for our servicemembers, their families, retirees, and military survivors.

I want to recognize my colleague and ranking member, the gentleman from South Carolina, JOE WILSON, for working with me in support of these very important initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, servicemembers and their families are bearing the burden of multiple deployments after nearly 8 years of conflict. It is our responsibility to support our men and women in uniform and their families, given the enormous sacrifices they are making in defense of our Nation.

We all agree that these men and women are the heart and soul of our military. All the weapons systems in the world cannot substitute for their competency, their dedication and sacrifice.

Sadly, a recent survey shows that 94 percent of military families do not believe that the American people truly understand the sacrifices they are making on behalf of our country, so we have a responsibility to change that, and we're trying to do that with this bill today.

Fortunately, this year the subcommittee did not have to deal with the dramatic increases to TRICARE fees and premiums previously proposed by the Department of Defense. Secretary Gates has indicated a willingness to work with the committee to address the significant growth in military health care expenditures. And we need to work together not only with the Department of Defense, but with those who represent our military personnel, retirees, survivors, and their families to find a fair and equitable solution that protects our beneficiaries and ensures that the financial viability of the military health care system is real.

Some of the highlights of the bill include a 3.4 percent pay raise, which is half a percent higher than the President's budget request. Those who are serving on the front lines every day have earned this pay raise.

The bill also includes a number of initiatives that are focused on military families, such as TRICARE coverage for reservists and their families and a monthly compensation allowance for members with combat-related catastrophic illnesses and injuries to receive assistance for activities related to daily living.

The committee has taken more steps to address the serious mental health issues faced by our military. I am pleased that we will be able to include a series of amendments to make the mental health provisions in this bill even stronger. We must continue to work on this issue.

Lastly, this bill continues the committee's oversight and commitment to significantly reducing sexual assaults and harassment within the Department of Defense.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield now to the subcommittee ranking member on Military Personnel, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2647. This bill contains significant policy and funding initiatives that address important issues for our military personnel and quality of life.

I was honored to serve with Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairwoman SUSAN DAVIS, who I have seen firsthand promote our servicemembers, their families, and veterans.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to thank Chairman IKE SKELTON and the professional staff for their efforts; particularly John Chapla and Jeanette James.

To that end, the bill contains many important initiatives, including a military pay raise of 3.4 percent. The raise is 0.5 percent above the President's budget request.

□ 2330

Mindful of the challenge the Army is having with large numbers of nondeployable personnel, we have recommended continued growth in Army end strength. The bill would allow the Army to increase by 30,000 in 2011 or 2012. I am particularly pleased that we changed the matching fund requirement to a 75–25 percent ratio between the Department of Defense and the States for the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.

In addition, the bill protects child custody arrangements for deployed parents, championed by Congressman MIKE TURNER of Ohio. With all these good things in the bill, I must again raise my disappointment that we were unable to even debate my amendment in full committee dealing with concurrent receipt; the elimination of the survivor benefit plan; the dependency and

indemnity compensation offset, more sadly known as the widows tax; the extension of health care to early retiring Reserve component members; and the use of the misnamed Reserve fund in the budget resolution.

Had the Democratic leadership seen eliminating these injustices as a priority, they could have allocated the small percentages necessary in the $15 trillion they provided for government spending in 2010 to 2014. This is less than one-sixth of 1 percent of mandatory spending for this period.

In addition, I was disappointed by the fact that for the second year in a row, we were unable to include my amendment to extend early retirement credit for service for National Guardsmen and Reservists back to September 11, 2001, retrospectively. The prospective retirement credits since January 28, 2008, is a start; but as a 31-year veteran of the Army National Guard, I know more needs to be done. As a Nation, we owe more than our gratitude for the brave men and women in uniform and their families, past and present, for the sacrifices they make to protect our freedom.

With that, Mr. Chair, H.R. 2647 is a strong defense authorization bill. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' in support of H.R. 2647.

Congratulations to our dedicated colleague Congressman JOHN MCHUGH of New York for his selection to serve as Secretary of the Army.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2647, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. This bill contains significant policy and funding initiatives that address important issues for military personnel and quality of life.

I was honored to serve with Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairwoman SUSAN DAVIS who I have seen firsthand promote our servicemembers, their families, and veterans.

Mr. Chair, I would also like to thank Chairman IKE SKELTON and the professional staff of the Armed Services Committee for their efforts, particularly John Chapla and Jeanette James.

To that end, this bill contains many important initiatives, including: A military pay raise of 3.4 percent. The raise is .5 percent above the President's Budget request which reduces the pay gap to 2.4 percent from 13.5 percent in fiscal year 1999, culminating ten years of enhanced pay raises.

Mindful of the challenge the Army is having with large numbers of non-deployable personnel, we recommend continued growth in Army end strength. The bill would allow the Army to increase by 30,000 in 2011 or 2012. Such growth would significantly improve the Army's ability to deploy fully manned units.

I am particularly pleased that we changed the matching fund requirement to a 75–25 percent ratio between the Department of Defense and the states for the National Guard Youth Challenge Program. Other initiatives I would mention are:

The statutory mandate for the Department of Defense to account for all the missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and other conflicts designated by the Secretary of Defense, and increase the number of identifications from the current 70 per year to 350 per year by 2020; and

Extending TRICARE Reserve Select to members of the Retired Reserve who qualify for a non-regular retirement but have not reached age 60, otherwise known as "grey area retirees."

Continuing our commitment to support our wounded warriors, the bill would:

Establish a database to track service members who have been exposed to blasts to further enhance the care provided to for blast-related health issues, and;

Require medical examinations before service members with post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury may be involuntarily separated from the service.

In addition, the bill protects child custody arrangements for deployed parents championed by Congressman MIKE TURNER of Ohio.

With all the good things in this bill, I must again raise my disappointment that we were unable to even debate my amendment at full committee dealing with concurrent receipt, the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan and the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset, more sadly known as the widow's tax, the extension of health care to early retiring reserve component members, and the use of the misnamed Reserve Fund in the Budget Resolution.

I would note that since the introduction of my amendment, the Democratic leadership has found a way to fund for nine months a very limited concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees. That is a step forward to eliminating some of the injustice inflicted on disabled retirees. It however does nothing to cure the injustice still being suffered by most persons losing their rightly earned benefits because of the remaining concurrent receipt prohibitions.

Had the Democratic leadership seen eliminating these injustices as a priority, they could have allocated the small percentages necessary in the 15 trillion dollars they provided for government spending in 2010 to 2014. This is less than one-sixth of one percent of mandatory spending for this period. Or, they could have used the Reserve Fund authority as proposed in my amendment.

Instead we must settle for a small pittance for a small group of retirees.

I hope that since the authority for this limited concurrent receipt is for only nine months, that the Democratic leadership makes resolving all the concurrent receipt and the Survivor Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation injustices a real, not symbolic priority, next year. We should focus on eliminating the widow's tax.

In addition, I was disappointed by the fact that, for the second year in a row, we were unable to include my amendment to extend early retirement credit for service for National Guardsmen and Reservists back to September 11, 2001, retrospectively. The prospective retirement credit since January 28, 2008, is a start, but as a 31 year veteran of the Army National Guard I know more needs to be done.

As a nation, we owe more than our gratitude to the brave men and women in uniform and their families, past and present, for the sacrifices they make to protect our freedom.

With that, Mr. Chair, H.R. 2647 is a strong defense authorization bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" in support of H.R. 2647.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to section 4 of House Resolution 572 and as chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, I request that during further consideration of H.R. 2647 in the Committee of the Whole, and following consideration of amendment No. 1, printed in House Report 111–182, the following amendments be considered: amendment No. 3, printed in House Report 111–182; amendment No. 4, printed in House Report 111–182; en bloc amendment No. 1; amendment No. 2, printed in House Report 111–182; amendment No. 9, printed in House Report 111–182, as modified; amendment No. 15, printed in House Report 111–182, as modified; en bloc amendment No. 2; amendment No. 20, printed in House Report 111–182, as modified; amendment No. 24, printed in House Report 111–182; amendment No. 34, printed in House Report 111–182; amendment No. 39, printed in House Report 111–182; en bloc amendment No. 3; en bloc amendment No. 4.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. I rise to invite the chairman to engage in a colloquy with me.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to respectfully convey that I have three concerns with some of the practices employed by the Virtual Army Experience, a high-tech traveling exhibit employed by the Army as a recruiting tool. First, children as young as 13 years old are participating in the Virtual Army Experience, which paints an inaccurate picture of war by glorifying it while sanitizing the real effects. More than a mere video game, it includes interactions with real veterans who appear to be in perfect health. It also requires that the user, regardless of age, share personal information as a condition of participation. I think that we can find common ground on these issues. Specifically, I believe we can agree that the Virtual Army Experience video game must be revalidated to ensure that its age-appropriate rating is accurate in the context of how it's being employed, that the Virtual Army Experience content should be reviewed to ensure it accurately reflects the consequences of war, and that there must be increased transparency with regard to how the personal information of the participants collected during participation will be used by the Army.

Mr. SKELTON. As the gentleman knows, I support the VAE. At the same time, I know it can be improved. I would be happy to work with the gentleman to address the issues that you have so aptly raised.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the chairman for working with me on this.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield at this time 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), the ranking member on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

Mr. TURNER. I would like to thank and congratulate Chairman SKELTON,

Ranking Member MCKEON and his predecessor JOHN MCHUGH, who has been nominated for Secretary of the Army, and lend my support for H.R. 2647, the fiscal year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. I would also like to thank Mrs. TAUSCHER, Chairwoman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. She has provided a strong and thoughtful voice on national security issues. I wish her the very best in her new position as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

This bill contains sound bipartisan provisions that provide key capabilities to our warfighters, strengthens our Nation's strategic forces and sustains the intellectual capital supporting our national security infrastructure.

The National Nuclear Security Administration is provided with the flexibility necessary to increase the long-term reliability, safety and security of our nuclear weapons stockpile. I was disappointed, however, that the bill implements the administration's missile defense cut of $1.2 billion. Given North Korea's widely publicized nuclear missile tests and missile launches, not to mention Iran's recent missile tests, cuts in missile defense challenge common sense. I cannot reconcile why the administration has decided to decrease missile defense funding while daily news reports, substantiated by our own intelligence agencies, articulate an increasing missile threat. Despite the current threat posed by North Korea, including reports of a potential ICBM launch, the committee rejected amendments, many that were offered by myself and my colleagues, to restore missile defense funds. This included providing a modest amount of funds to complete a partially constructed missile interceptor field in Alaska designed to protect the U.S. homeland. Ironically, the bill includes $80 million for dismantling North Korea's missile program. I don't think anyone actually believes that Kim Jong Il is going to allow the Obama administration to enter North Korea and dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Unfortunately, the administration's $1.2 billion cut has set up false choices between protection of the United States homeland and protection of our forward-deployed troops and allies. Both are necessary, and both could have been adequately funded without such deep cuts. I am, however, pleased this bill included key provisions of the bipartisan NATO First bill that my colleague Mr. MARSHALL and I introduced to fortify America's transatlantic security links with our European allies.

I want to thank the chairman for his efforts, including these provisions in this bill. Lastly I would like to thank JANE HARMAN, JOE WILSON and SUSAN DAVIS for their support and assistance as this bill includes strong provisions to enhance sexual assault protections for women in uniform. Also with the chairman's support, this bill includes provisions that would protect the custody rights of our men and women who are serving. Unbelievably, courts across this country have denied our men and women their custody rights as a result of their absence in serving their country. Secretary Gates has committed to work with this committee, and I look forward to his work on this. I would like to encourage support for the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to the time remaining for each side, please.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Missouri has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SKELTON. At this time I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman and the chairman for his leadership and the opportunity to engage in a brief colloquy.

I rise today to ask for your help in improving the care of our wounded warriors. Later this week, I will introduce the Wounded Warrior K–9 Corps Act to establish a program for organizations that provide wounded warriors and disabled veterans with service animals, like physical therapy dogs and guide dogs. There are several organizations around the country that train animals to work with disabled soldiers and veterans. These organizations, like many not-for-profit organizations, are struggling at this moment to collect necessary resources in these difficult economic times. The difference between these organizations and others is that they're giving our soldiers and veterans a service that they have earned. I applaud their private fundraising, and at the same time I realize that this is our responsibility as well. Mr. Chairman, this legislation will allow the government to keep its promise to America's disabled soldiers and veterans and help them retain an excellent quality of life after their service. Thanks to modern medicine, more and more of our brave men and women are able to sustain wounds that may have been fatal in the past. This is a blessing, but it also requires new tools to allow them to return to civilian working life. I have seen these programs in action. I have witnessed the growth of these veterans and wounded soldiers after working with a guide dog or animal that can assist them with physical therapy and lifetime care and support. These programs succeed, and I believe every American who puts on a uniform and risks their lives for our country should have the full support of this Congress in this mission.

Mr. SKELTON. I certainly thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) for bringing this issue to the floor. As the gentleman knows, the bill under consideration calls for a report on military working dogs. Mr. KLEIN's legislation would surely take the next step with a grant for therapy dogs for disabled soldiers and veterans. I look forward to working with the gentleman from Florida to ensure that Congress stands behind our soldiers as well as our veterans.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2647.

Mr. SKELTON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the ranking member on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010, and I'd like to take a moment to highlight some important aspects of the bill. The members and the staff of the House Armed Services Committee are dedicated to supporting our men and women in uniform, and this bill truly reflects our undying commitment to those servicemembers. I am pleased to see that this bill makes progress towards strengthening our naval power and projection on the high seas. We must continue to develop the industrial base and promote shipbuilding to establish a floor, not a ceiling, of 313 ships in our Navy.

Our Nation's security and forward presence also depends on the timely delivery and deployment of our various naval platforms. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support the provisions that provide for the construction of a new Virginia-class submarine, research and development funds for the SSBN Ohio-class replacement submarine, and advanced procurement for the new Ford-class carrier. Although this bill provides a temporary waiver for the number of carriers to dip below 11, I have deep reservations about this provision and firmly believe maintaining 11 aircraft carriers is essential to maintaining our long-term naval superiority.

While I support this bill, I do have some concerns about the administration's overall direction for our military and the decision-making process that went into the budget. It is imperative that we preserve the integrity of the congressional oversight through appropriate and efficient transparency. Without a 30-year shipbuilding plan and a 30-year military aviation plan, we are denied a full understanding of the administration's perspective of what the defense of our Nation's interest requires. The strategic risk we accept in this defense authorization bill is equally as important as the dollar figure. The American people rightfully expect that the Members of this Congress are fully aware of the strategic risk associated with the President's budget request.

As we consider strategic threats facing our country today, I urge my colleagues to strongly support a bipartisan amendment that would be offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS). This amendment will rightfully restore funding for the Missile

Defense Agency by $1.2 billion. North Korea continues to test its missile capabilities while Iran pursues a nuclear weapons program. Therefore, it is imperative that we provide full funding to our Nation's most crucial missile defense programs.

□ 2345

Keeping Americans safe from terrorists at home is equally important. The American people have spoken and made it very clear that they do not want detainees from Guantanamo brought to the United States. I believe this issue should be openly debated and given a vote within the full House.

Again, I strongly support this bill and look forward to improving some of the provisions on the floor tomorrow. I would like to thanking Ranking Member MCKEON, Chairman SKELTON, and also Mr. MCHUGH for his service.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my friend, my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the chairman very much for his continued leadership and the leadership of the ranking member.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to raise three points, and I'd like to refresh the memory of the chairman. As he well knows, over a period of congressional terms, I brought to his attention the inability of families to publicly acknowledge their loved ones who lost their life in battle coming back from a foreign land as they came into Dover Air Force Base. I want to recognize the fact that this new administration, even though we had a number of legislative initiatives in previous defense authorization bills, have now allowed families to be able to have their loved ones publicly acknowledged as they have come in from losing their life on a foreign field. I think that is an important note, and I hope families of America will recognize that the fallen are respected the moment they hit the soil of the United States.

I also wish to make note of the increased coverage of TRICARE, but I would like to work with the committee as we go forward to expand the number of facilities which our active duty soldiers and others can access. In particular, I would like to see an emphasis on inner-city facilities that would allow or have TRICARE accreditation.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the GAO study that asked for a strategic response to Afghanistan and Iraq. As someone who has persistently or continuously expressed her opposition to the present Iraq war and the status, I want to keep the pressure on that we begin to downsize but, more importantly, that we have a strategy for doing so that we can do it safely. And then as it relates to Afghanistan to make sure that we also have a strategy so that we can ensure that our troops are, in fact, fighting a battle that we can win. We want peace. We want freedom. But we want to make sure that we can bring our troops home.

I thank the chairman for the time and the ranking member, and I appreciate their leadership on this legislation.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Utah, the one that led us in that great debate on the F–22 that saved the day.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for this bipartisan bill and the wonderful bipartisan amendment the saves our Air Force and moves us forward.

I rise this evening to support the bill H.R. 2647. I commend my friends on both sides of the aisle on the House Armed Services Committee for continuing the tradition of working in a bi-partisan manner to provide for the common defense of this country, and for the dedicated men and women of the armed forces.

However, I do have reservations. It is readily apparent that the Administration has taken a haphazard approach to cutting defense programs, such as missile defense, and the F–22 fighter, as budget drills. There are no studies by any qualified source, including military analysis, that support these reductions as a means of meeting the needs of the military. When asked in committee, for example, if 187 F–22s were what the Air Force needs or merely what the Air Force can afford, the answer was quick and direct; It was what the Air Force was "told" it could afford, and the basis of the decision was political and budgetary, not based on national security.

When the F–22 program requirement was first established, it was based on procurement of 750 aircraft. We on the committee have repeatedly requested that the Department provide us with analysis upon which this budget decision of only 187 planes was based. That analysis still has not been provided, leaving a strong indication that it is a budget drill, pure and simple. I am pleased that a majority of committee members supported an amendment to restore F–22 long-lead procurement funding for 12 additional aircraft in FY10. There were strong indications during markup that many members, a good majority on both sides of the political aisle, would like to have supported full F–22 production of 12 to 20 aircraft in FY10, and not just long lead procurement items.

One of the most disturbing recent developments on the F–22 is the release of a letter signed by Air Force Combat Commander General John D. W. Corley, wherein he verifies in writing that there are NO studies which support the Administration's decision to end the F–22 production at 187 aircraft, and he further maintains that 250 aircraft are necessary to ensure a "moderate risk" level. A copy of his letter was included in the House Committee report to accompany this bill. I urge all of my colleagues to read it. General Corley also states that the Administration developed its F–22 termination plan without even consulting with Air Combat Command. That's very disturbing. The very command with the technical expertise in charge of fighter operations was not even consulted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense? This alone raises very serious questions about the soundness of the Administration's decision. This decision on F–22 will have profound implications on our nation's strength and air dominance 15 and 20 years from now. We cannot afford to go "high risk" at only 187 aircraft. Not with Russia, China and other nations fielding advanced fighter aircraft in the next two years.

It is also ironic that, at a time when the Administration is spending hundreds of billions in tax dollars to create jobs, that it would be so intent upon cutting the F–22, which is responsible for 25,000 direct and 70,000 indirect jobs. Why are good defense jobs any less valuable than those that the Administration claims to have created in the $800 billion Stimulus package? These are good jobs that are producing a vital defense weapon system to protect our homeland, which will be lost unless funding is restored.

The F–22 and F–35 are not duplicative aircraft. They are not interchangeable. They were designed for different, but complimentary roles. We need both, but we also need adequate numbers of both.

I also oppose the cuts proposed by the Administration to missile defense programs such as Ground Midcourse Defense (GMD) and Kinetic Energy Interceptor (KEI). It seems that the "savings" from these cuts, at $1.8 billion, are rather small in comparison to the lost opportunities for further research and development in improving our defense of the homeland against emerging and future missile threats.

These cuts also have devastating impacts on the defense industrial base, especially large defense solid rocket booster production. If allowed to stand, every program associated with large-scale defense solid booster production will be decimated. Someone must pay more attention to the cumulative impact of these different programmatic budget decisions on the solid rocket booster industrial base as a whole. It also seems wasteful that DoD and the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) will not proceed with a planned booster test firing in September of this year with the KEI program when the booster has already been produced and delivered to the test site at Vandenberg AFB. The MDA should move forward with this test that has already been bought and paid for by U.S. taxpayer investment since 2004, and which could result in a significant harvest of scientific data for use on future defense projects.

It is highly ironic that the Administration's announcement to end the Ground Based Interceptors at 30 land-based missiles occurred on the very same day that North Korea conducted its long-range missile test threatening Japan and possibly parts of the United States. Just this past week, with renewed missile threats from North Korea against Hawaii, the Secretary of Defense touted our ground-based interceptors as providing protection, even as the Administration continues to advocate a halt to their production! This is no way to protect the homeland. Secretary Gates has said his recommendation for GMD is "not a forever decision." That's fine, but one cannot quickly restart a production line in the future. And we may not have the luxury of time in the future.

Were any of our 30 interceptors to be fired, there would be no replacements. It is also highly likely that two or more interceptors would be fired at any incoming threat. So potentially one rogue missile threatening Hawaii, or the western U.S. would require the use of two, three or more of our ground based interceptors. The Administration's termination of

GMD allows for no replacements and worse—no defense industrial base capability to easily or quickly restart production of land based interceptors. Again, this is a short-sighted budget decision which endangers our long-term national security.

In conclusion, I urge that the cuts in missile defense be restored in order to adequately defend our homeland now and into the future. There is nothing more fundamental to the very survival of America than the United States military. Everything else is a corollary to that fundamental principle. It is my profound hope that we can work together over the next 3 to 4 years to build the additional F–22s until we reach the 240 to 250 numbers that Air Force planners have repeatedly stated are absolutely necessary.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield now 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

Mr. LATTA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the TRICARE Continuity of Coverage for National Guard and Reserve Families Act of 2009, of which I'm a cosponsor and which was amended into the National Defense Authorization Act.

Members of our National Guard and Reserves are eligible for TRICARE health insurance during their service and after the age of 60 but not during the time in between, the time in between when they retire until the age of 60, being referred to as being in the ''gray area. ''

Specifically, ''gray area'' retirees are Reserve component retirees under the age of 60 with more than 20 years of faithful and honorable service who have qualified for retirement at age 60.

The legislation fills in that gray area to ensure that these men and women have the opportunity to purchase TRICARE Standard health care coverage during that time and provides access to the care they deserve. This legislation is important because currently around 50 percent of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are Reservists and National Guard. And this option for purchasing TRICARE Standard will serve as an incentive for those Guardsmen and Reservists to continue to serve.

I thank the Armed Services Committee, the chairman, and the ranking member for including this important legislation in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to Mr. AUSTRIA for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. AUSTRIA. I thank Mr. MCKEON for yielding.

I appreciate you and Chairman SKELTON for bringing this important bill to the floor. It does provide what we need for national security and for our men and women who are serving so selflessly in our Nation's defense, and I thank you both for your hard work on this bill.

I was reading the committee report language that accompanies the bill regarding insourcing new and contracted-out functions. And I wanted to bring to your attention some very serious concerns small business owners in my district have raised in regard to this issue.

Small business owners dealing in defense contracting are losing employees to the Federal Government. This practice apparently is becoming a trend in the defense contracting community, a trend that I find deeply troubling.

Mr. MCKEON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. AUSTRIA. I certainly will be happy to yield.

Mr. MCKEON. I thank the gentleman for raising this issue.

You are correct, the Defense Department is moving toward reshaping its workforce by reducing the number of service support contractors and replacing them with government employees. We have been told this effort will hire over 13,000 government civilians to replace support contractors at a proposed savings of $900 million.

Mr. AUSTRIA. Let me just say, in my view, that we should not be growing government during this economic crisis. In my opinion, it's already too big. But we certainly should not be increasing the Federal Government at the expense of small businesses, in this particular case, small defense contractors. It's simply not fair and it's not in the best interest of the taxpayer.

Mr. MCKEON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. AUSTRIA. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MCKEON. As you know, Chairman SKELTON and I included in our committee report language that stresses our belief that these insourcing initiatives should not be driven by random goals or arbitrary budget reductions. In the language we also note that these insourcing initiatives should give appropriate consideration to the impacts on the contractor workforce. I'm also very concerned that the estimated cost savings will never be realized.

That said, I would be happy to work with the gentleman from Ohio and any other interested parties as the bill moves forward to revisit the important issue of how to balance the defense workforce: military, civilian employee, and contract.

Mr. AUSTRIA. I thank the gentleman, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on this very important issue.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, we have had, I think, a lot of good input tonight on the bill. I ask that all of our Members tomorrow support the bill.

In the morning we will move into the amendment process. The chairman and his staff have done a tremendous job of helping put the 60-plus amendments that were approved out of the Rules Committee into a process that I think will help us in moving forward in an expeditious manner in the morning. I look forward to that.

Again, I thank the chairman for his graciousness and his leadership in moving the bill to this point.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, let me first express my gratitude and admiration to the new ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. MCKEON. He hit the ground running, a veteran of our committee, and his first baptism of fire was in the markup of the some-17 hours of this bill in committee, and we thank him for his leadership and for his diligence in making this a success.

Tomorrow, under the rule, Mr. Chairman, we will consider the various amendments, four groups of en bloc amendments and several by themselves, according to the rule that's been set forth and the time limits set thereon.

This is an important piece of legislation. It deals with the security of our country, the security of our citizens. It deals with those young men and young women in uniform wherever they may be. It's our job to do our best to support them and this bill does just that.

I thank the members of the committee on both sides of the aisle. They have been magnificent to work with.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. In short, my amendment would provide the Department of Defense, and in particular, the Office of Economic Adjustment, the authority to financially support the development and construction of public infrastructure in communities which are directly impacted by the expansion and growth of military installations.

Mr. Chair, the last Military Base Re-alignment and Closure initiative, which occurred in 2005, coupled with the ongoing transformation of the Army and re-positioning of troops worldwide, has had a tremendous impact on the local communities which house our nation's military installations and facilities.

In its FY2009 Budget Justification, DOD estimated the total one-time cost for the most recent BRAC round in 2005 at nearly $32 billion, of which nearly $23 billion will be for military construction. For FY2009, DOD's budget request was $9.07 billion, while Congress approved $8.77 billion. And just yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee, of which I am a member, approved at total of $7.49 billion for BRAC construction activities.

The Muscogee County School District for example, which is located in my congressional district in Georgia, is estimated to receive 5,000 to 9,000 additional school-aged children as a result of the planned growth and expansion of Ft. Benning. DOD's most recent projections put the number of new school aged children at approximately 3,000 to 4,000. But no matter what the number, there is a consensus that several thousand new children will be attending a school system which currently does not have the facilities to house them.

According to some estimates, nearly 25 local school districts nationwide could be required to accommodate tens of thousands of additional military dependent school-aged children due entirely to DOD actions and decisions. The financial cost to school systems

across the county resulting from the latest round of DOD initiatives could exceed $2 billion over the course of the next several years. This includes the communities surrounding Ft. Bliss [Texas], Ft. Bragg [North Carolina], Ft. Carson [Colorado], Ft Lee [Virginia], as well as several other facilities where major growth is envisioned by DOD.

By providing DOD the authority to develop public infrastructure, including local schools, as provided in my amendment, we begin to address this challenge by providing the Department with expanded authority to assist select communities in addressing their local facility needs.

There is precedent. During Word War II, the Korea and Vietnam wars, our National leaders saw fit to partner with local education agencies to build schools to accommodate children of the military, defense employees and contractors who worked on the military installations. Likewise, the Department supported the construction of schools as a result of the expansion and growth of the military's Kings ay installation.

Mr. Chair, in closing, the enormity and size of the challenges facing communities impacted by DOD personnel movements is overwhelming. This amendment is an important step in providing the Department with the authority to begin to work with these communities in addressing their infrastructure needs—needs which have been created by the Department's own actions.

I urge the House's support for this amendment.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chair, I have the honor of serving as the Chairman of the Air and Land Forces Subcommittee of our Armed Services Committee. I would like to thank our Chairman, IKE SKELTON, for his great leadership in bringing this outstanding bill to this point. I also welcome the new Ranking Member, BUCK MCKEON, and am confident that he and Chairman SKELTON will make a great team.

I would also like to thank ROSCOE BARTLETT, our subcommittee's ranking member, for all his support and advice in putting our bill together.

This bill is about balancing the capabilities and readiness of our current military forces with desired future required military capabilities.

Our military personnel are at risk each and every day. Our first priority is to make sure those men and women are properly supported by ensuring our military programs adequately support current military requirements.

We are doing everything possible to provide our personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan the equipment they need as well as provide for the equipment needs of our National Guard units here at home, to meet crisis response and potential natural disaster requirements. The subcommittee's jurisdiction includes $82 billion in Department of Defense procurement and research and development in Titles I and II and another $20 billion in Title XV, for overseas contingency operations.

We have made nearly $3 billion in reallocations within the Subcommittee, funding higher priority current requirements, using funds from programs with excessive unexpended balances, delayed execution, and excessive cost growth.

Our Subcommittee increased the unfunded requirements of the Army and Air Force by over $1 billion by reallocating funding from these lower priority projects. The mark also provides an additional $603 million for procurement and research and development of the F136 competitive engine for the F–35 aircraft program. This is largely offset by rebalancing within the F–35 program, by reducing procurement from 32 to 30 aircraft.

Nearly $2.7 billion is authorized for 176 Apache, Kiowa, Black Hawk, and Chinook helicopters and an additional $1.2 billion is provided for helicopter modifications. Our bill:

Fully funds elements of the Future Combat Systems program that will continue in some form, at $2.55 billion;

Provides $2.5 billion for new and upgraded Army ground combat vehicles;

Provides $263 million for research and development of future Army ground combat vehicle upgrades and improvements; and

Provides $600 million for National Guard and Reserve Equipment, above and beyond what is in the budget request.

The change by the National Guard to an operational reserve status, coincident with a reorganization of the Army, has greatly increased the amount of equipment Guard and Reserve units are required to have. While the Department is making improvements and progress in providing improved funding to equip the National Guard and Reserve to enhance its role as an operational reserve, there are a significant number of units that do not have their required equipment.

Given the operational reserve equipage model, a large percentage of nondeployed Army National Guard units are far below Army standards for equipment on hand. Without the right type and amounts of equipment, even the most dedicated and experienced soldier or airman cannot train for combat, or provide adequate assistance when there is a domestic emergency.

The committee continues to work on improving intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, known as ISR capabilities, as well as improving counter improvised explosive device technology, vehicle armor, body armor, and helmet protection. Like many other mission areas in the Department of Defense, there is no apparent nexus for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance joint strategy, requirements coordination, acquisition or deployment focus, where a single lead organization is responsible.

An example that can be cited is the unplanned and expensive proliferation of dissimilar ISR platforms all seeking to provide the same capability.

Coalition forces control the skies in both theaters and has the world's best ISR technology, but does not use this advantage to full advantage.

The Department still fails to provide joint ISR employment plans for both Iraq and Afghanistan. This bill directs the Department to assess the current use of ISR systems in Iraq and Afghanistan and make recommendations on how to more effectively coordinate and use all the systems we have deployed and plan to deploy.

The committee has in the past directed the Department to define joint ISR requirements and develop a long-term strategic plan to make informed acquisition decisions to meet ISR goals. That continues to be a work in progress.

BODY ARMOR

It is widely reported that our soldiers in Afghanistan routinely carry loads of 130 to 150 lbs for a 3-day mission. Personnel can only wear so much armor, beyond which their operational effectiveness is inhibited, which in turn increases their risk of being injured. Two provisions in our bill require the Secretary of Defense, beginning with the fiscal year 2011 budget request, to establish research and development program elements and procurement budget line items for the development and acquisition of body armor and personnel protection enhancements.

The language also strongly encourages the Secretary of Defense to consider establishing a DOD-wide Task Force on par with the MRAP Vehicle Task Force to promote weight reduction initiatives for body armor.

The bill fully funds the President's request of approximately $700 million for body armor.

MINE RESISTANT AMBUSH PROTECTED (MRAP) VEHICLES

With regard to the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle program, over 16,000 vehicles have been produced in just over two years. Approximately 15,000 vehicles have been fielded and these vehicles continue to save lives daily. Almost $26.0 billion has been provided by Congress for this program.

This bill fully funds the President's request of $5.45 billion for MRAP category vehicles. The request procures approximately 1,000 MRAP All-Terrain Vehicles, a lighter weight version of the current MRAP Vehicle, to be used in Afghanistan. The request also provides operation, maintenance, and sustainment funding as well as necessary funds to address home-station training requirements.

TACTICAL WHEELED VEHICLES

The bill provides $5.25 billion for light, medium, and heavy tactical wheeled vehicles or "Humvees" and "trucks." This funding keeps the industrial base operating at high levels of production and will help address shortfalls in the Guard and Reserve components. In closing, I again want to thank my distinguished chairman and ranking member of the full committee and our subcommittee.

H.R. 2647 is deserving of a "yes" vote from every Member of this body.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LUJÁN) having assumed the chair, Mr. ALTMIRE, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2647) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2010 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

HONORING JOHN CALLAWAY

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening the highly respected radio