

## Tauscher Backs Plan to Strengthen Military and Support Our Troops

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CONTACT: Kevin Lawlor, 202/225-1880 January 16, 2008

Ellen Tauscher Backs Plan to Strengthen Military and Support Our Troops Despite delay caused by President Bush's veto, Congress ensures our troops will get the pay raise, bonuses, and other critical benefits they deserve DC - Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, today joined an overwhelming bipartisan majority and backed a plan to strengthen our military, support our troops and improve military readiness. The Defense Authorization Bill was approved by a vote of 369-46 and is expected to be passed by the Senate as soon as it returns next week. The Bush administration has said that the President will sign the bill. "This was a strong bill back in December and it is still a strong bill today," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher. "The President's political gamesmanship above the troops, their safety, and the readiness of our military by holding this bill up for over one month, but the Congress has once again delivered on behalf of the men and women of our Armed Forces who deserve these critical benefits.

A previous version of this bill had been originally passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 370 to 49 on December 12 and by the Senate, 90 to 3 on December 14. However, the President vetoed this urgently-needed bill on December 28 over the potential impact on the Iraqi government of a provision concerning Americans who sue state sponsors of terrorist acts against them. The veto was unnecessary because Congressional leaders had made clear that the President's concerns could be dealt with easily on separate legislation when Congress returned in January.

The bill passed today includes a revised provision developed on a bicameral and bipartisan basis which addresses the belated concerns raised by the Administration. The legislation also includes provisions ensuring that the military pay raise, as well as special pays and bonuses for the troops, are retroactive to January 1. The Defense Authorization bill authorizes new resources for additional Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs,) up-armored humvees and body armor. The legislation also includes resources for efforts to stop Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that are the leading threat to American troops in Iraq. The legislation also includes critical support for troops and their families by providing a 3.5% pay-raise for troops as well as vital survivor benefits. ###