

Tauscher, House Passes Defense Bill

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Tauscher defends cuts to missile defense, secures \$10 million for plutonium removal from Livermore Lab, & sponsors language to better train Iraqi Police Personnel

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"We have the finest military in world, but over the last eight years Bush administration policies have left us woefully unprepared to meet many of today's challenges, not to mention future challenges, and have put a crippling strain on our service men and women and their families," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. "What this bill does is identify threats and then determine how to prioritize our resources so that we are best prepared to meet current and future challenges. We were able to create a bill that does this while honoring our commitment to those who serve and their families to provide for their safety, health, and education."

Despite continued attempts by Republicans to undercut many of the priorities established by Rep. Tauscher's Strategic Forces Subcommittee, the overall commitment to fund programs that protect us from current threats to our national security, allies and troops serving abroad remained. The final legislation reflects the \$372 million cut made by her Strategic Forces Subcommittee to the Pentagon's \$712 million request for a missile defense site in Europe.

"Republicans talk about slashing programs and failing to look over the horizon but these are misleading characterizations," said Rep. Tauscher. "We authorize \$100 million in the bill above what Congress authorized last year to represent our commitment to testing all systems that have the ability to protect us from new and emerging threats. Congress will no longer write blank checks for untested systems."

Rep. Tauscher also fought for authorization to be included in the final bill to earmark \$10 million for the removal of plutonium from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, CA. The removal of these materials is aimed at meeting the national security goal of consolidation of nuclear materials throughout the NNSA complex.

"Recent security failures at Livermore have made it clear to me that accelerating the removal of plutonium from Livermore to a safe location away from population centers as soon as possible is a moral imperative," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher. The funding now must pass through the House Appropriations Committee and be approved by the Senate and the President

Also included in the final bill was an amendment authored by Rep. Tauscher that provides for a study and report by the Secretary of Defense on the appropriate number of police training team personnel necessary to train the Iraqi police forces, the funding necessary to accomplish this, and the feasibility of moving this function from the Department of Defense to the State Department as recommended by General James Jones' Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq.

This provision is part of broader legislation the congresswoman drafted to implement the recommendations of the Jones Commission to reform and improve the Iraq police forces.

"This study will ensure that the most qualified people are training the Iraqi Police Force and ensuring that they have the tools and resources to bring order and stability to their country. The ability of this force to stand up will take the strain off our Armed Forces and allow them to return home sooner and safer."