

March 15, 2007 "Emergency Supplemental Bill Focuses on Military Readiness and Troop Wellness"

For Immediate Release

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CONGRESSMAN JOHN P. MURTHA:

"Emergency supplemental bill focuses on military readiness and troop wellness"

(Washington D.C.)- General Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently reported that because of the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a significant risk that the U.S. military won't be able to quickly and fully respond to yet another crisis.

At the beginning of the Iraq war, 80% of all Army units and almost 100% of active combat units were rated at the highest levels of readiness. Just the opposite exists today. Virtually all of our active-duty combat units at home and all of our guard units are at the lowest level of readiness.

"Our nation is threatened because our forces at home lack the readiness to effectively respond to future threats to our national security. We must make it a national priority to re-strengthen our military and to repair readiness," stated Murtha.

The emergency supplemental appropriations bill provides more than was requested by the President for our troops and veterans. Significant increases are added to address military readiness and force protection equipment shortfalls, and service members' health and housing needs. The bill provides an additional \$1.2 billion to re-focus our efforts in Afghanistan, where al Qaeda and the Taliban are regrouping.

The bill also includes money that the President did not request for the health and well-being of our war fighter. This includes: \$450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Counseling; \$450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research; \$730 million to offset the Administration's insurance premium increase to our troops and their families; \$62 million for amputee care for our returning war fighters; \$14.8 million for burn care; and provides funding for the creation of a new program that will provide support for those who are taking care of our severely wounded in military hospitals around the world.

"As Americans, we have a responsibility to ensure that our men and women in uniform, who have sacrificed so much in this time of war, receive the care they rightfully deserve," added Murtha.

The emergency supplemental bill will be discussed in the Appropriations Committee on Thursday, March 15, 2007.