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### Akin Calls Rescission of Military Regulation a Victory for Chaplains and Freedom of Religion

Washington- Congressman Todd Akin today said that a conference committee report on the National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 was a victory for chaplains and the freedom of religion. The House and the Senate agreed to strike current restrictive regulations in the Air Force and Navy which prevent chaplains from praying according to their own faith and conscience in public venues.

Congressman Akin had added language to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 explicitly guaranteeing the right of chaplains to pray according to their conscience. The language faced strong opposition from some Senate conferees who tried to change the language to require religious tolerance and sensitivity rather than guarantee the First Amendment rights of chaplains.

"I am happy that we have taken a step towards restoring the freedom that our military chaplains ought to enjoy," said Akin. "The Navy and Air Force regulations that we are striking prevented chaplains from praying according to their faith and conscience, whether they were Muslim, Christian, Jewish or of any other faith."

"While I would have liked stronger language protecting the religious freedom of chaplains, this legislation is a first step forward in protecting the First Amendment rights of chaplains and all the men and women serving our country in the military," said Akin.

Congressman Akin intends to again introduce language which explicitly guarantees a chaplain's right to pray according to his conscience next year.