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### Armed Services Bill Carries Akin Provisions:

Including Aid for Guard and Reserve Small Business Owners, Funding for Weapon Systems, and Guidelines for Chaplains

Washington, DC- Today, the House of Representatives voted 396 to 31 reauthorize the Department of Defense for Fiscal Year 2007. The bill carried provisions by Congressman Todd Akin (R-Mo), a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Congressman Akin provisions included aid for Guard and Reserve Small Business Owners, funding for important weapon systems and guidelines for Chaplains.

The reauthorization established language provided by Congressman Akin to aid in the coordination of DoD and SBA programs that aid National Guard and Reservists who own small businesses and are facing deployment abroad.

"The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that out of the 860,000 reservists in the Selected Reserves, nine percent are self-employed and small businesses employ approximately 18 percent of all reservists who hold civilian jobs," said Akin. "Due to the lack of predictability of activation, some business owners do not always have a business plan in place before the service member deploys."

A task force will issue recommendations to improve the coordination of the programs and activities relating to entrepreneurial service members (and those small businesses that employ them) conducted by the Department of Defense, Small Business Administration, and their private sector partners and affiliates. The task force will also provide input to the Secretary and the Administrator with respect to measures that would improve the programs and activities of the Department and the Administration that are designed to address the economic concerns, as well as the business challenges of entrepreneurial service members.

In response to recent restrictions placed on some Air Force Chaplains prohibiting them from praying according to their religious conviction, the authorization bill contains a provision sponsored by Congressman Akin which states, "Each Chaplain shall have the prerogative to pray according to the dictates of the chaplain's own conscience, except as must be limited by military necessity, with any such limitation being imposed in the least restrictive manner feasible."

Other provisions in the reauthorization bill championed by Congressman Akin included funding for important weapon systems. The following are produced by Boeing, with headquarters in St. Louis and St. Charles.

C-17	15 aircraft for \$3.6 billion
Future Combat Systems	\$3.4 billion
F-18	30 aircraft for \$2.36 billion
EA-18G	12 aircraft for \$891 million
T-45	12 aircraft for \$376 million
Small Diameter Bombs	1,343 for Air Force \$99 million
JDAM's	3,400 for Navy \$84 million
JDAM's	7,261 for Air Force \$175 million