

April 29, 2005

Congressman Akin Leads Congressional Effort Supporting Army's Future Combat Systems

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Sixty members of Congress signed a letter authored by U.S. Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO) to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and the Committee's ranking minority member, Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO) urging full funding for the Army's Future Combat Systems (FCS).

The letter advocates funding for the FCS at the level requested by President Bush in Fiscal Year 2006 budget.

Among the signatories are Missouri Democrats Russ Carnahan and Lacy Clay as well as Republicans Kenny Hulshof, Sam Graves and Jo Ann Emerson.

"To ensure that our fighting men and women maintain a meaningful and substantial technological advantage in the field, the Army's Future Combat Systems Program needs to be funded at a level that will keep it viable," said Akin. "America's military is the best in the world, in terms of both outstanding personnel and leading-edge combat technology. FCS will help keep it that way for decades to come."

The U.S. Department of the Army has defined FCS as a joint, advanced communication system that integrates 18 sub-systems and links it to the soldier in the field. FCS will enable service men and women to communicate more efficiently, fight more successfully and serve in combat situations more safely.

FCS is based at the Boeing facility in St. Louis. Various FCS components are being built in 29 states.

The letter states in part, "FCS will provide the needed capabilities to our Army and soldiers to improve situational awareness, networking, survivability and lethality years ahead of the previous plan. FCS is on track and executing cost, schedule and performance. The recent program modifications reduce the risk through four current force spirals, additional experimentation and technology maturation. Next year, Fiscal Year 2006, elements of FCS undergo major field experiments. By 2008, the first Spiral will bring the System of Systems Common Operating Environment, integrated computers, sensors, munitions and the Non-Line-Of-Sight Launch System into the Experimental Brigade Combat Team. FCS brings needed capabilities to the current force on an accelerated basis."