Washington, DC – Today Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO), the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Seapower & Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee, joined with Chairman Gene Taylor (D-MS) to support the passage of legislation to ensure that the Navy can enter into a multiyear procurement contract for F/A-18E/F/G aircraft, which would save the Navy and taxpayers almost $600 million. The legislation, H.R. 6102, was co-authored by Taylor and Akin and amends the original multiyear language to allow for the Navy's delays in submitting required reports to Congress. The Department of Defense was slow to embrace the F/A-18 multiyear contract, but eventually saw the wisdom in entering into this four year contract for 124 of the Navy fighter planes. After passing the House, Congressman Akin released the following statement:

"The Navy needs aircraft for its aircraft carriers, and this legislation will allow them to get the best possible price for the best naval fighter aircraft in the world today. This bill will save over half a billion dollars in taxpayer money while providing vital stability to the fine Americans who build these planes in St. Louis and across the country. I want to thank Congressman Taylor for his leadership and support on this issue, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill quickly. Of course, this bill would not have been necessary had Secretary Gates embraced this cost-savings measure from the outset."

"Unfortunately, this is just the first step toward addressing the Navy's fighter shortfall. After the Navy has received every plane in this contract, they will still face a fighter gap of somewhere between 100 and 300 planes. As we prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of naval aviation, the Department of Defense must get serious about protecting the future of naval aviation."

Congressman Akin has been championing an F/A-18 multiyear contract for over two years as

something that benefits taxpayers, the Navy and the St. Louis region. In 2008, Akin inserted language into the defense authorization act requiring the Department of Defense to report to Congress on the potential cost savings of a multiyear contract for F/A-18's. In 2009, Congressman Akin successfully added an amendment to the defense authorization act giving the Navy the authority to enter into a multiyear contract for F/A-18's. In 2010, Congressman Akin added an amendment to the House-passed defense authorization act adding eight additional F/A-18's to help address the Navy's looming fighter shortfall.

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