

January 22, 2009

Statement Regarding Proposal to Close Guantanamo Bay Detention Center

Washington, DC – Congressman Todd Akin, the Republican Ranking Member on the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee released the following statement regarding the prospect of closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay by executive order:

"The decision to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay must be carefully considered, and Congress should have adequate time to analyze the issue.

"We must have a firm plan for what the Administration intends to do with the detainees currently held at Guantanamo Bay. The approximately 250 prisoners still at Guantanamo are accused terrorists, and include people like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks. These prisoners can not be moved into just any jail domestically. We need to carefully consider where it would be best to detain them.

"Further, these detainees deserve justice. If they are found guilty, they deserve severe punishment. If they are found innocent, they should be released. We currently have a system of justice in place, under the Military Commissions Act, which is proceeding with the trials of these accused terrorists. If we move these detainees, we will likely affect their legal status, thus delaying justice. Before moving the prisoners or closing Guantanamo, we must have a thorough analysis of the legal implications of moving the detainees and estimates of how long this will delay the delivery of justice to these individuals."