

May 11, 2006 - R's Leadership Prevents Consideration of Critical Amendments

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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R's LEADERSHIP PREVENTS CONSIDERATION OF CRITICAL AMENDMENTS

Republicans Vote to Prevent Accountability in Iraq, Continue Our Dependence on Foreign Oil, and Raise Health Care Costs for Military Families
Democrats to Conduct Protest Votes Today

Washington, DC - Late last night, Rules Committee Republicans killed a number of important Democratic amendments during the Rules Committee meeting on the Department of Defense Authorization bill.

Because the Republican Rules Committee has consistently blocked both Democratic and Republican amendments from full consideration-including those of Ranking Members and Democratic Leadership, such as those by Ranking Member Skelton and Democratic Whip Hoyer described below-Democrats will be conducting protest votes throughout the day.

Rep. Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the Rules Committee, said,

"A select few in the Republican Leadership have, once again, made a decision for all of us in this Congress, and in this country, without our consent.

They have decided how we will address serious issues which face this nation, without proper debate or consideration. The Republican Leadership's campaign to exercise complete control over the people's House must end.

They regularly prevent any dissention, democracy and debate on the House floor. This constitutes a sustained and serious abuse of power and violates the core values of our government...and is fundamentally undemocratic."

On behalf of the Republican Leadership, Rules Chairman David Dreier and Reps. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Doc Hastings, Pete Sessions, Adam Putnam, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cole, Rob Bishop, and Phil Gingrey voted:

- To keep pharmaceutical costs high for military families.
- To continue throwing money down the bottomless pit of Iraq contracts without any oversight.
- To transfer US prisoners to countries where they are likely to be tortured.
- To allow military chaplains to be intolerant to soldiers of other religions.
- To keep part of a national park accessible only to trophy hunters for much of the year.
- To continue America's dependence on foreign oil.
- To prevent women from having access to emergency contraception at military health care facilities.
- To ignore possible weapons of mass destruction and the problem of nuclear proliferation.

And perhaps more importantly, their votes prevented the full House from considering these critical amendments.

Among the Democratic amendments that Republicans voted to kill last night were:

-An amendment by Armed Services Ranking Member Skelton that would have reduced co-pays on pharmaceuticals for military families, providing much-needed relief to countless families struggling to make ends meet. Defeated on a 4-7 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Reps. Tierney and Leach that would have established a Truman Commission-style committee to investigate contract abuse in Iraq, which is wasting billions of taxpayer dollars. Defeated on a 4-8 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Rep. Markey that simply would have prohibited taxpayer dollars, authorized by this bill, from being used to transfer US prisoners to countries where those prisoners are likely to be tortured. Defeated on a 4-8 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Rep. Israel that would have restored a longstanding condition in the military code that this bill removed, which required chaplains to exhibit a level of tolerance, compassion, and understanding towards the religious diversity of the soldiers to whom they administer counsel. Defeated on a 4-7 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Reps. Capps and Snyder that would have prevented this bill from overruling a court order to shut down a private trophy-hunting operation on Santa Rosa Island in the Channel Islands National Park. The hunting operation restricts public access to the National Park for up to five months every year. Defeated on a 4-8 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Reps. Hoyer, Udall of CO, and Gordon that would have greatly boosted alternative energy and advanced power technology programs at the Department of Defense and Department of Energy, reducing our reliance on foreign oil from increasingly unstable regions of the world, and keeping the US on the cutting edge of alternative energy technology. Defeated on a 4-7 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Reps. Michaud and Ryan that would have ensured that emergency contraception is available at all military health care facilities. Defeated on a 4-7 party-line vote.

-An amendment by Reps. Andrews, Meehan, Leach, Schiff, and Nadler that would have added \$30 million to US nonproliferation efforts.

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