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PENCE APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF DEFENSE BILL

Washington, May 22, 2003 - Washington, D.C.-- U.S. Congressman Mike Pence said today that the bill authorizing \$400.5 billion in military spending for the 2004 fiscal year will help ensure a robust national defense by modernizing our existing forces and investing in so-called transformational capabilities. The bill passed the House 361-68 early this morning.

"I am pleased that this bill provides \$17 billion more than the House passed last year," said Pence. "It will help ensure our troops, when called upon, are equipped to fight and win quickly and decisively with few casualties.

"It is important to provide the military assistance in traditional areas such as heavy armor, precision guided munitions, deep strike capability, air lift, aerial refueling and missile defense and this bill does just that," said Pence. "At the same time, it is also important to develop transformational technologies, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and this bill does that as well.

"In addition, the bill makes our military families a priority and recognizes their service to the country by providing them a significant pay raise," said Pence. "I am also pleased that this bill provides retention and recruitment incentives, housing allowances and strengthened programs for National Guard and Reserve personnel."

Summary of Defense Department Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2004

· Increasing Our Combat Capabilities:

Critical Readiness: Provides \$114 billion for readiness accounts critical to the day-to-day operations of the military.

Procurement: Provides \$72.6 billion to purchase military equipment and weapons.

Research and Development: Provides \$61.8 billion to research and develop next generation technologies.

· Supporting Our Military Personnel

Pay Raise: Provides a 4.1 percent average military pay raise (effective January 1, 2004.)

Housing Costs: Reduces out-of-pocket housing costs for military personnel by increasing allowances to cover 96.5 percent of all housing costs - and 100 percent by 2005.

Meeting Infrastructure Requirements: Provides \$500 million for military construction and family housing needs.

· Making the Homeland Safe

Counterterrorism Programs: \$7.3 billion for Department of Defense and Department of Energy programs to combat terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Ballistic Missile Defense: \$9.1 billion for continued development of ballistic missile defenses.

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