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Runyan Announces Passage of Important Defense Priorities In House Armed Services Committee

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For Immediate Release

Washington, DC - Today, Congressman Jon Runyan, advanced several key priorities for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL) in the Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among the provisions successfully included in the legislation are pay parity for wage grade civilian employees at Joint Bases – such as the workforce at JB MDL – and \$49 million in military construction funding for a New Jersey National Guard Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF).

Before the 2005 BRAC decision, the current Joint Base MDL was three separate bases, with then Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base on one locality pay and Lakehurst on another. When the installations were made into one joint base, the wage grade pay parity issue was an inadvertent consequence. Runyan's amendment would correct the disparity that exists for DoD wage grade employees at all installations that were designated as "joint" as part of the 2005 BRAC, including affected wage grade employees at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL). Reports indicate that this could impact over 600 employees at JB MDL.

The \$49 million that Congressman Runyan worked to secure for the Army Aviation Support facility will provide critical new military construction funding for JB MDL. The complex will house New Jersey Army National Guard aviation units, their aircraft, and personnel, and a consolidated place from which to conduct their mission. With the Mercer Airport and Picatinny Arsenal Army Aviation Support Facility being closed, the AASF will house the consolidation of New Jersey National Guard Army aviation activities in one central location at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

"Today, the House Armed Services Committee took strong and responsible steps to ensure that the U.S. military remains the best in the world and that our servicemen and women have the resources they need to successfully execute their missions," said Runyan. "It was particularly essential that the Committee recognize the need to take steps to correct the issue of pay for DoD civilian wage grade employees - especially those at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst - who deserve the same pay for performing the same work. Additionally, I'm pleased that the Committee included military construction funding to build an Army Aviation Support Facility.

This funding will ensure that our men and women in the New Jersey National Guard are provided the resources they need to fulfill their essential mission.”

Congressman Runyan also worked to secure support for the following key programs which would benefit Lockheed Moorestown, the largest private employer in New Jersey’s Third Congressional District. Runyan supported the FY12 Budget request levels for programs carried out by this facility including:

- \$ 286.8M Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Research Development and Testing
- \$1.082 B Littoral Combat Ship Procurement to procure four ships
- \$960.02 M for the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) for Aegis
- \$307 M for Aegis Ashore
- \$227.4 M for Advanced Above Water Sensors for Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR)
- \$227.6 M for Counterfire Radar in support of EQ-36/AN TPQ-36 Radar
- \$273.7 M for the Space Fence Program
- \$70.5 M for the Navy Energy Program for ENERGY Ocean Thermal Conversion (OTEC)

Other priorities for the Congressman, which will be awarded on a merit-based selection process, include the following funding programs:

- \$3 M for Airborne Reconnaissance Systems for the Navy, which will improve communications for our warfighters by allowing more information to be managed more quickly and accurately
- \$5 M for Enhanced Survivability and Lethality System (ESLS) Development will provide lighter-weight ballistic protection against Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) for military vehicles, while lowering overall vehicle weight

The NDAA included additional elements that Congressman Runyan believed critical, such as honoring our nation’s military servicemembers with an increase in pay of 1.6 % as well as prohibiting any funds to be used for housing, or transferring or releasing any Guantanamo detainees in the United States.

The National Defense Authorization Act now moves to the floor for possible action in late May.