

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today hailed passage of the Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (H.R. 2638), which he authored as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security. The bill, which provides a total of \$36.254 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), passed in the House by a vote of 268 – 150.

Since he was appointed chairman of the subcommittee, Price has held 20 oversight hearings with DHS officials, outside experts and stakeholders from throughout the country. Price says the subcommittee's extensive investigation of Department activities helped produce a well-informed funding bill.

"The testimony we heard over the last several months helped us identify numerous security vulnerabilities and management problems to which our bill offers thoughtfully considered solutions," Price said.

Highlights from the bill include:

- A new emphasis on port security and on rail and transit systems;
- Increased funding to states and communities to confront not only the threat of terrorist activity, but also natural disasters and the emergency situations they must deal with every day;
- Management reforms and additional oversight to ensure investments of taxpayer money are made wisely and productively;
- Significant additional investments in explosive detection systems at airports and double the amount of cargo screened on passenger aircraft;

- Additional investments in northern and southern border security and increased emphasis on tracking and deporting criminal aliens; and,

- Additional privacy protections in DHS programs that collect personal data.

"The American people demand results from their government when it comes to homeland security," Price said. "Our subcommittee worked in a diligent, bipartisan way to produce a bill that will lead to better preparedness and enhanced response capabilities for the federal government and the states and localities we depend on."

After three days of debate, two of which were occupied by Republican delaying tactics, Price said he was glad the House was finally able to proceed with the important issues facing the country.

"Despite attempts from a small core of Republicans to delay consideration of the important items contained in this bill, the House finally passed this critical legislation. I only wish more Republican members would have voted to address the security needs of this country, rather than bowing to pressure from the White House," Price said. "Securing the homeland should never be about politics and partisanship; the threats posed to our communities from terrorism and natural disasters endanger all of us."

The Senate companion to the Price bill is working its way through that chamber. After both the House and Senate pass their versions of the funding bill, a conference committee will convene to arrive at a final bill to be passed in both chambers and sent to the President for his signature.