

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, May 7th, 2012 Press Contact: Ryan Nickel (202) 225-3481

WASHINGTON- House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Rep. Norm Dicks made the following comments after release of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs FY2013 bill text:

"Today House Republicans released their bill text for the FY13 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. This bill has a strong reputation for common ground as members traditionally work together to fund construction of military facilities and the quality of life of veterans and military families. Thankfully, that tradition continues as this bill provides funding levels that members on both sides agree are appropriate, while avoiding contentious legislative riders that complicate passage.

"This bill is funded at last year's level and well within range of what would have been expected if Republicans had stuck to the discretionary number agreed to in the Budget Control Act. In this year's first full committee markup, Republicans approved subcommittee allocations based on the Ryan budget which confirm that Republican leadership intends to reserve the worst cuts for domestic discretionary bills that they have postponed until later in the appropriations process.

"So, while I am glad to see this subcommittee has been protected from Ryan budget austerity, I know it comes at the expense of domestic investments that I believe are critical to avoiding the fate of some European economies that are now in double-dip recessions.

"That is why I am adamant that we get back to the balanced approach we agreed to in the bipartisan Budget Control Act. I am encouraged that the President, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, and House Democrats have agreed that the BCA allocation of \$1.047 trillion is the real level of spending for FY13 and where we will eventually end up.

"I want to commend Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Bishop on their good work on this bill. Bipartisanship is very much alive and well on the Appropriations Committee. As I mentioned, this bill does not contain any contentious riders and sufficiently funds military construction accounts, the VA, cemetery expenses and the battle monuments commission."

Below is a brief summary of funding levels in the FY2013 Military Construction, VA bill:

Total Allocation: \$71.7 billion | *equal* to the FY2012 enacted level | *-\$700 million below* the President's FY2013 request.

Military Construction: Funded at \$10.6 billion, *-\$2.4 billion below* the FY2012 enacted level and *-\$573 million below* the President's Request. The decrease over last year reflects the end of "Grow the Force" requirements and an overall strategy to reprioritize resources. Although the request is low, this funding level will not hamper construction programs.

Veterans Affairs: Funded at \$60.7 billion, *\$2.2 billion above* the FY2012 enacted level and *-\$258 million below* the President's Request. Most of this funding is for veteran's medical services. The recommendation provides \$74.6 billion for the mandatory VA programs providing compensation and pensions, educational benefits, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance and housing loan programs.

Cemetery Expenses: Funded at \$173.7 million with full funding for construction of the Arlington Millennium Project.

American Battle Monuments Commission: Funded at \$74.4 million, *-\$2.6 million below* the FY2012 enacted level and *\$890,000 above* the President's Request, and Includes \$5 million for the commission's Interpretation program. This funding will help the ABMC tell the stories of those we honor, and to share the stories with the public through improved visitor services and interpretive products.

Guantanamo: Includes a provision from previous years that prohibits funds from being used on facilities that would house detainees from Guantanamo.

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