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## **Larson: House Passes Authorization Bill that Supports Connecticut Troops**

***Includes Funding to Support New Aviation Readiness Center, Not For JSF Extra Engine***

Washington, DC- Today, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) voted for the passage of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act, critical legislation that will support our military and their families and further strengthen our national security. Congressman Larson applauded the legislation for authorizing \$41 million to support the construction of a new state of the art Aviation Readiness Center in Windsor Locks for the Connecticut Army National Guard and for not including an earmark to fund the Joint Strike Fighter Extra Engine.

**“This legislation will provide our troops with the necessary resources to ensure their safety and the security of our nation. I am proud that funding that both I and President**

**Obama supported for the Connecticut Army National Guard for a new advanced Aviation Readiness Center was included in this critical bill,” said Congressman Larson.**

The funding will be used to construct a new facility to house elements of the Connecticut Army National Guard’s Aviation units, including soldiers and pilots, at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks. Currently, existing support aviation facilities are located at two different locations, thus complicating mission readiness and overall training. President Obama recommended this funding in his budget proposal.

Congressman Larson has long opposed the Joint Strike Fighter Extra Engine program, a position that is shared by President Obama, who previously issued a veto threat of any legislation containing funding for the extra engine, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Recently, Congressman Larson was successful in ensuring that language was added to the House-passed Continuing Budget Resolution to provide the Secretary of Defense the “flexibility” to not fund the JSF Extra engine program.

***“The extra engine does nothing to improve our national security or troop readiness. It serves as a wasteful multi-billion dollar earmark that the President and Secretary Gates have opposed and the Marines, the Navy, and the Air Force have said they don’t want or need,”*** added Congressman Larson. ***“I am proud that funding for this unnecessary program was not authorized by this legislation. Today’s vote was a giant step to end this program once and for all.”***

The Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act continues Congress’ commitment to protecting our nation and ensuring the men and women of our armed forces have access to essential resources and benefits. Additionally, this year’s bill includes the most comprehensive approach to addressing sexual assault in the military.

Highlights of the legislation include:

- authorizing funds to protect our military from improvised explosive devices and prevent casualties;
- protecting military families from being hit with an increase in health care fees and allows military families to extend TRICARE coverage to their dependent children until age 26;
- providing a pay raise to our troops; and
- reforming the defense acquisition system to save billions of taxpayer dollars and expedite the process to get our military the tools they need.

Related Links: [Complete Overview of Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act](#)

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