

Terry Continues Support of Vets, Military

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE) today voted in support of the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13 NDAA), HR 4310, which passed the House by a bipartisan veto-proof vote of 299-120. The legislation provides the pay, funding and authorities for American's men and women in uniform.

"Our military and veterans play a key role in our national security, both domestic and abroad, but more importantly, in Omaha, they are our relatives, friends and neighbors," Terry said. "Continuing funding and support for our military is crucial for our defense, and the NDAA not only authorizes billions in funding, it also addresses veterans' concerns with TRICARE, base closures and pay increases for our hard-working men and women in uniform."

The bill authorizes funding for National Defense at \$554.2 billion for the Base Budget, and \$88.5 billion for overseas contingency operations. This level of funding is consistent with the House-passed Budget. FY 13 NDAA authorizes a 1.7% pay increase and extends bonuses and special pay for our troops. Also, changes to TRICARE are limited to a modest increase in pharmacy co-pays in 2013 and a cap on pharmacy co-pays beginning in 2014 that would allow fees to rise by no more than the annual retiree COLA. This is offset by a 5-year pilot program that requires TRICARE for life recipients to obtain refills of maintenance drugs through the TRICARE mail-order program. These changes to TRICARE are minimal compared to the President's proposal to increase fees and establish new TRICARE fees.

The bill also included a Terry amendment which would authorize veterans and active-duty military not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

"My amendment is based on an idea brought to us by our local VFW that simply seeks to create parity for veterans in and out of uniform who are reciting the Pledge of Allegiance," Terry stated. "Veterans take deep pride in being able to express honor by rendering the military salute each time they reaffirm their fidelity to our great nation and its colors."

Current Flag Code authorizes veterans and active-military not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem and during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag.