

Washington - The House of Representatives unanimously approved an amendment today offered by Congressman Lee Terry supporting U.S. non-governmental organizations aiding the revitalization of Afghanistan.

Terry's amendment encourages the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to give priority in awarding grants to revitalize Afghanistan to those U.S.-based organizations with strong records of success. It was inspired by the work of the Center for Afghanistan Studies (CAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, but applies equally to all U.S.-based non-governmental organizations.

"Afghanistan's history contains tremendous sadness with terrorists using that nation for launching attacks against America and our allies, and the terrorists' grip of death on the lives of innocent Afghans for so many years," Terry said. "While terrorists want to continue their violence in that country, the Afghan people have hope to rebuild and U.S. organizations that work to kindle that hope are instrumental.

"The aim of my amendment is to encourage USAID to give priority to organizations based in the United States that have extensive and successful experience aiding war-torn and impoverished countries," Terry said.

One example is CAS, which has a commendable record of programs supporting economic development and education programs in Afghanistan.

Terry offered his amendment during the debate on the Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act (H.R. 2446), which the House approved 406 to 10. Terry said he was pleased that Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) both supported his amendment.

