



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

For Immediate Release

May 15, 2007

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Rep. Shuler Joins Armed Forces Chair Ike Skelton and Blue Dogs to Discuss Fiscal Accountability in Defense Authorization

Washington, D.C. – Representative Heath Shuler joined with other members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition and House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton to discuss the upcoming Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization bill and the need for fiscal accountability in Iraq.

The Blue Dog Coalition applauded Chairman Skelton for including key provisions of H.Res.97 in the Defense Authorization bill. Rep. Shuler is an original cosponsor of H.Res.97 which calls for transparency in how Iraq war funds are spent.

The Defense Authorization bill will address the lack of oversight and accountability in the war by requiring that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report every six months on the handling of contracts in Iraq. Rep. Shuler and other Blue Dogs also applauded the inclusion of measures in the Defense Authorization bill which establish essential management goals for the Department of Defense and expand the authority of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction to include all reconstruction funding regardless of source or fiscal year.

“The inclusion of these common sense Blue Dog proposals in the FY 08 Defense Authorization is another strong step toward accountability and transparency in the funding of the war in Iraq,” said Rep. Shuler. “This Congress owes it to the brave men and women serving in our Armed Forces to make certain that the funds we appropriate are being used properly, and we owe it to the American people to make sure their tax dollars are being spent wisely.”

The action taken by Chairman Skelton and members of the Blue Dog Coalition comes on the heels of a damaging report issued by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction detailing continued and egregious abuses in the government's funding of the war in Iraq. Inadequate facilities and non-functioning equipment built by highly paid contractors, insufficient monitoring of government contracts, and billions of dollars unaccounted for due to inefficiencies and bad management are just a few of the examples of waste, fraud and abuse detailed in the report.

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