

## Rep. Bilirakis Introduces Measures Aimed at Troops and Military Families

WASHINGTON (26 Feb.) — U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee Veterans' Affairs Task Force, recently introduced two legislative measures aimed at improving active duty military pay and recognizing military families for the support of their loved ones serving in the Armed Forces.

For the second consecutive year, Congressman Bilirakis has introduced legislation, which would provide a 0.5 percent military pay increase above the President's request. On Monday, he introduced H.R. 5481, which would guarantee a minimum pay raise of 3.9 percent in FY09. In 2007, Bilirakis introduced H.R. 2027, which provided for a 0.5 percent raise above the President's request. The FY08 Defense Authorization bill signed into law earlier this year contained language similar to Bilirakis's bill.

"It is critical for the continued growth and morale of our Armed Forces that we work towards improving the existing military and private sector pay gap," said Bilirakis. "While I applaud the Administration's efforts to boost military pay, I believe we can and should do better. This legislation will move us closer to achieving parity between private and military pay rates and help our Armed Forces continue to attract quality men and women."

Last week, Congressman Bilirakis also introduced H. Con. Res. 295, which expresses deep appreciation to military families for their unwavering support of their loved ones as they answer the call to serve their country and keep the United States safe.

"Support from loved ones of those in our military, is vital to helping our warfighters successfully complete their mission to protect our nation," said Bilirakis. "These dedicated and strong individuals play an important role in helping our soldiers deal with the stresses of life while stationed on foreign shores, out at sea or on the battlefield. These individuals are also there, committed to helping our uniformed men and women as they transition back to civilian life, and in some cases, recuperate from their injuries."