

# CONGRESSMAN SAM FARR

□ 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of California □



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**<http://farr.house.gov>**

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### **NEW DEFENSE LAW INCLUDES FARR LANGUAGE FOR DISABLED VETS AND MILITARY**

Washington, DC -- Today, President Bush signed into law the conference report on H.R. 5122, FY 2007 Defense Authorization. The measure includes a number of key priorities that Democrats have been fighting for over the last three years to improve military readiness and to provide for the troops. Key Democratic priorities contained in the conference report include: improving military readiness, providing health care for reservists, improving military pay for senior enlisted personnel and warrant officers, and blocking the President's proposed increase in TRICARE pharmacy copayments.

But local Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) is especially proud that in the massive bill is language he originated that will make golf more accessible to disabled veterans and military personnel. As wounded soldiers and other military return from Iraq or other combat theaters, they are provided prosthetics and given intense physical therapy designed to bring them up to athletic competency. One of the key therapies employed is golf. But Farr discovered an irony in that once these newly rehabilitated persons are released from the hospital, they are unable to continue their physical conditioning because not many golf courses – including those owned by the Department of Defense – provide specialty golf carts that allow them the necessary mobility to swing even if they can't use their legs.

“The technology is there,” said Farr. “There are carts that can carry the disabled right up to the tee box and not crunch a blade of grass. But the military is not providing these carts even though they have an obligation to do so under federal law. I just wanted to make sure all the investment we make in rehabilitating the men and women who sacrificed for our nation is not squandered because military golf courses haven't provided the appropriate equipment.”

The language in the bill signed by the President today directs the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study regarding access by disabled persons to military golf courses and report back to Congress in 180 days.

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There are approximately 150 golf courses on military bases. They are operated and funded by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs and employ over 100,000 persons and carry more than \$1 billion in equity.

DOD golf courses are popular and profitable—over 4 million rounds of golf per year and over \$20 million in cash flow. All the courses have a fleet of standard golf carts. Almost none have adaptive golf carts with a swivel seat and hand controls that can be used by disabled golfers who can't walk. These adaptive golf carts are commercially available and could be added to the existing golf car fleets at little or no cost.

With regard to legal requirements, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires the Department of Defense, and other federal agencies, to make their programs and activities accessible to disabled persons. As Farr explains it the golf courses on military bases are a program or activity of the Defense Department and adaptive golf carts should be provided to make the courses accessible to disabled persons in order to comply with Section 504.

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