



Congressman Bud Cramer

May 2006
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Since 1868, Memorial Day is held annually to remember the men and women in our armed services that have died while defending our nation. Our country would not be what it is today without the service of these brave soldiers. This year, our nation remains at war and there are soldiers from North Alabama and across the country currently in harms way. Please join me in keeping them in our thoughts and prayers both today and in the future.

Bud Cramer

Washington Update

This month, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Bill. During House consideration of the bill, Representative Cramer spoke on the House floor against an amendment that would have cut the Missile Defense Agency's (MDA) budget by nearly fifty percent. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 124 to 301. Cramer said, "Now is not the time the time to reduce MDA's budget. Doing so would devastate or stop several key missile defense programs we need to defend against the ballistic missile threat. We need to allow MDA to continue its work."

Also this month, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the Federal Energy Price Protection Act, which would prohibit price gouging in the sale of crude oil, gasoline, diesel, home heating oil, or biofuels. "Gasoline prices are at an all-time high and are a tremendous burden on all of us in North Alabama," said Cramer. "This legislation protects consumers, strengthens penalties, and seeks to ensure that some people do not take advantage of one of our nation's most valuable commodities."

APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE:

Approved by the House of Representatives:

Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs – Cramer, a member of this Appropriations Subcommittee, announced that this bill provides \$4.25 million for specific projects at Redstone Arsenal.

In addition, \$5.3 billion was included for military costs related to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

Cramer also announced that Veterans Medical Services will receive a 12.7 percent increase over the current year's funding for a total of \$25.4 billion.

Energy and Water – Cramer secured \$1.3 million for flood control and debris removal projects in Huntsville.

Agriculture – Cramer included \$599,000 for Precision Agriculture at the Tennessee Valley Research Center at Belle Mina in Limestone County. This is the third year Representative Cramer has included funding for this center. Previously, Representative Cramer secured \$593,000 in FY 2006 and \$604,000 in FY 2005.

Interior – Cramer secured \$242,000 in this bill for the installation of utilities, including water distribution mains and fire hydrants, and wastewater collection lines at the Jackson County Industrial Park.



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Washington Update Continued

Representative Cramer, Alabama's Senior Senator Richard Shelby, Arkansas Senator Blanche Lincoln, and Florida Congressman Mark Foley hosted a bipartisan, bicameral, briefing on missing and exploited children. The briefing titled, "How Do We Protect Our Children" focused on increasing awareness about the dangers that exist for children and the programs being utilized to protect them.

Representative Cramer announced that NASA will assign its Lunar Precursor and Robotic Program (LPRP) office and its Lunar Lander Project Office to the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC). The LPRP office will be responsible for landing robotic missions on the lunar surface prior to the agency's manned flights. The new Lunar Lander Project Office is responsible for performing early trade studies and developing requirements for the Lunar Surface Access Module (LSAM). Cramer said, "I pleased that Marshall was awarded this project. Senator Shelby and I have always believed that Marshall is fully capable of coordinating these efforts for NASA. I am proud to work with him in fighting for North Alabama's space community."

The U.S. House of Representatives also approved bipartisan legislation that would expedite the safe placement of foster and adoptive children into homes across state lines. Representative Cramer, a cosponsor of the bill, said the legislation would establish a sixty day federal deadline to determine whether a home is appropriate for a child and would authorize a \$1,500 incentive payment to the receiving state for each interstate home study completed within thirty days. The bill would also encourage identification and consideration of interstate placement options as part of currently required permanency planning activities for children who will not be reunified with their parents.

District Update

Representative Cramer met with economic development leaders from across North Alabama this month to discuss ongoing economic development activities. Representatives from the Alabama Development Office, Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Tennessee Valley Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Committee were also on hand to update leaders on their current projects. Cramer said, "Meetings like this are an opportunity for us to ensure that all of our economic developers are on the same page and putting the best foot forward for our region."

Representative Cramer held a news conference to announce the introduction of legislation he wrote to improve opportunities for small businesses to develop innovative new technologies for the federal government. Representative Cramer discussed his legislation following a round table discussion with high-tech small business leaders from North Alabama. Cramer's legislation, H.R. 4684, increases the amount of money available under the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. The SBIR program sets aside money from federal research and development budgets and awards small businesses competitive grants for innovation research projects.