

MOBILE - U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, R-Alabama, today voted in favor of legislation which authorized the covering of all meal expenses of certain members of the military while hospitalized due to injuries received while in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan. H.R. 2998, the "Hospitalized Armed Services Subsistence Exemption Act" sponsored by Representative Bill Young, R-Florida, overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 399-0.

"I am extremely proud of my support of this measure and am pleased it passed the House by such a wide margin. It is very important that members of Congress show their support for members of the military in every way possible," Bonner said. "This legislation rectifies a serious problem that has come to light in recent months regarding an undue financial obligation placed on our wounded soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. It is wrong to ask brave men and women who have been injured in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay for the food they receive while recuperating from their wounds.

Bonner continued, "I recently learned of one example of the problems this current process can cause. Sergeant William L. Murwin, a Marine reservist, spent 26 days in a military hospital recovering from the partial amputation of his foot that resulted from wounds received in a grenade attack. Following his release from the hospital, he received a bill totaling \$210.60 for the food and 'subsistence' costs incurred during his recovery period. Now this may not seem like a tremendous amount of money, but it is far too much to ask from men and women who have put their own lives on hold to fight for freedom and liberty. In many cases, these military members are reservists who take a severe cut in pay when their units are mobilized and cannot afford any additional expense.

"I commend the leadership of Representative Young on this measure and applaud all my colleagues in the House who voted to support this important legislation. I am hopeful my colleagues in the Senate will take prompt action on this bill and the president will be able to review a final version in the very near future."