



**Rodney Alexander** / Louisiana's 5th District  
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN

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**Contact: Jenni Terry**  
202/225-8490

## **Congress Must Take a Stand Against Measures that Weaken Military, National Defense**

If the swipe the City Council of Berkeley, Calif. took at the few and the proud when it kicked the U.S. Marine Corps out of its downtown recruiting office this month was not enough to get one's patriotic blood boiling, Congressional leadership's allowing an important anti-terrorist bill to expire might do the trick.

Shortly after the City Council of Berkeley's vote, Congress did take a stand against this injustice. U.S. Rep. John Campbell (CA-48) introduced the Semper Fi Act of 2008 to rescind over \$2 million in earmarks for Berkeley, Calif., in the 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill, and to transfer the funds to the Marine Corps.

U.S. Senator Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

Currently, the House bill has over 80 cosponsors – and I am proud to be one of them.

Like me, millions of Americans were probably shaking their heads at this news from Berkeley and asking themselves how our nation has reached a point where the ones who raised the American flag on Iwo Jima and fought in all of our nation's wars are being banned from seeking more men and women to carry on their tradition of bravery and service.

Unfortunately, this disintegration of respect for our U.S. Military may be a symptom of a much larger problem.

This week, House leadership refused to bring the bipartisan Protect America Act to the floor for a vote, which means the critical anti-terror law that closes loopholes in our intelligence laws will expire on midnight Saturday, February 17.

The bill previously passed the Senate on Wednesday by a vote of 68-29, and the House minority party pledged to stay in Washington during President's Day recess to complete the work on this important bill, but House majority leadership refused.

I don't understand this decision any more than I understand the council vote in Berkeley. In a post-Sept. 11 world, our nation must remain vigilant in the fight

against terrorism, and allowing an important bill to expire sends a message to the international community that the United States is easing up.

This is not the direction our country needs to go; we have to keep our national security policy aggressive and our military strong.

Doing so is not just for the sake of patriotism; it's for the safety and security our nation and its people.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, represents the 5th Congressional District and serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Budget Committee. He can be reached at the Monroe District Office (318-322-3500), the Alexandria District Office (318-445-0818) or Washington, D.C. (202-225-8490.) Visit Alexander's Web site at [www.house.gov/alexander](http://www.house.gov/alexander) or write him at 316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.**

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