

Paul Votes to Strengthen Port Security

Legislation Authorizes \$8.9 Billion for U.S. Ports over 5 Years

May 9, 2006

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul voted last week to strengthen port security, as the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the SAFE Port Act. The SAFE Port Act authorizes nearly \$9 billion between 2007 and 2011 for port grant programs, Coast Guard equipment and officer retention programs, new port inspectors and cargo scanning technology, and radiation monitoring.

"I'm pleased Congress finally decided to spend money securing America's ports, which is a proper constitutional function of government," Paul stated. "We need to focus on securing our own borders and coastlines instead of spending so much money overseas guarding other nations. Just a tiny fraction of our overseas military budget could provide tremendous help at our borders and ports. If we're serious about combating terrorism, port security in Galveston and Freeport must be a higher priority than nation building abroad."

Specific authorizations contained in the SAFE Port Act include the following: -\$1.9 billion for the Coast Guard's Deepwater Program to replace aging ships and aircraft; -\$400 million in dedicated grant programs for state and local port authorities; -200 new federal port-of-entry inspectors; -more stringent identification requirements for port workers; -new scanning technology to detect nuclear material or radiation in cargo containers; -new standards for inspecting a greater percentage of cargo containers; and -expanded Coast Guard officer training programs.