

Schilling, Loeb sack Partner with Senators in Authoring Legislation Supporting RIA's Workload

Written by Andie Pivarunas
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Washington, DC – Even as they successfully added language that would help protect arsenal workload to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) yesterday, Congressmen Bobby Schilling (IL-17) and Dave Loebsack (IA-02) yesterday introduced H.R. 5706, The Army Arsenal Strategic Workload Enhancement Act. This legislation builds upon their historic wins in the FY 2012 NDAA and their success in including a Rock Island Arsenal (RIA)-boosting provision in this year's NDAA committee report.

"We've made significant progress over the last year and a half in paving the way for more public-private partnerships at the Rock Island Arsenal, but our work preserving the Arsenal as an economic engine and national treasure is far from over," Schilling said. "I will continue fighting however I can to protect the Arsenal and promote its highly-skilled workforce for the economic well-being of our region, the benefit of our warfighters, and the security of our nation."

"The men and women who work at the Rock Island Arsenal have a proven track record that is second to none and this initiative ensures they will continue to be able to rapidly get our troops the equipment they need, when they need it," said Loebsack. "I have worked in a bipartisan, bi-state and bicameral fashion to expand the public private partnerships. This is the next step in strengthening Rock Island Arsenal, supporting the good job it provides, and ensuring it continues to be a key component of our national security and our region's economy."

The bipartisan and bicameral Army Arsenal Strategic Workload Enhancement Act, which was also authored by area senators, would help to keep arsenals like Rock Island warm and employees' skills sharp by requiring that the Army produce a plan to ensure they are properly workloaded. Though the Army creates such plans for some of its divisions, it currently does not for arsenals. Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by other members of the Illinois and Iowa Congressional Delegation representing the Quad Cities – Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Mark Kirk (R-IL).

The Illinois and Iowa Delegation supported Schilling and Loebsack's efforts on the House

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Armed Services Committee to include in last year's defense bill the landmark provision lifting the cap on the number of public-private partnerships arsenals are able to enter into, maximizing the possibility for private-sector job growth at installations like the Rock Island Arsenal. Schilling and Loeb sack also included in last year's bill the provision designating the Rock Island Arsenal as a Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence, further improving its ability to enter into public-private partnerships, provide for our men and women in combat, and strengthen the Arsenal's core skills and manufacturing abilities. These provisions were included in last year's comprehensive defense bill and signed into law by the President.

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