

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Tom Davis, Ranking Member

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NEWS RELEASE

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Contacts:

Brian McNicoll (Davis) 202-225-5074

DOD's Failure to Implement Defense Authorization Provision Cripples
Guard's Domestic Mission

WASHINGTON - When it comes to war-fighting, the Department of Defense leans heavily on the National Guard. But when it comes to supporting the Guard's significant domestic mission, the Department of Defense has failed to keep the Guard ready and equipped, according to a Government Accountability Office report released today by Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Davis asked the GAO to examine the state of military assistance to civilian authorities' equipment and training requirements and to suggest alternative ways to fund the National Guard for homeland missions. GAO responded by comparing the current Guard funding structure with similar forces, such as the US Special Operation Command and the Coast Guard, that do not face the National Guard's funding challenges.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization (NDAA) Act directed DOD to request the funding needed to restore the Guard's civil capabilities. But that hasn't happened, said Davis.

"DOD is primarily concerned with the Guard as a war-fighting body," said Davis. "When it comes to homeland emergency military assistance and the front-line position of the National Guard, DOD slow rolls everything. The National Guard provides critical emergency response assistance daily and faithfully answered the call with only the equipment left over from the war fight. DOD holds up the process that would provide baseline funding by adding layers of bureaucracy that ignore and obfuscate the role of the Guard and state authorities. DOD has paid far too little attention to implementing the National Guard Empowerment Act provisions we passed in the defense authorization act last year. We created accounts for DOD to provide funds for these missions, and they've yet to fund them.

"Seven years after 9/11, DOD has yet to figure out that defense of the homeland is its No.1 mission and the National Guard its first military responder. This report shows why we need to give the Guard its own budget for this mission and the means to support its crucial domestic missions."