

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3994, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act. This bill provides \$1.05 billion for reconstruction aid to Afghanistan over four years and focuses on creating a stable environment for Afghanistan. It addresses such issues as counternarcotics, terrorism and humanitarian and relief assistance. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) worked on the floor to bring attention and support to two proposals that would direct aid to Afghanistan's urban areas and compensate innocent victims of U.S. bombing in Afghanistan.

"Part of the reason we are in Afghanistan today is because the world turned our back on Afghanistan after the collapse of the former Soviet Union," said Blumenauer in a statement delivered on the House floor during debate. "The Taliban and other thugs, warlords and misfits filled the vacuum left after the country was devastated. The lesson from past efforts is that you cannot leave a shattered country to its own devices and the tender mercies of the most corrupt and violent."

Blumenauer's two proposals that were added to today's bill include:

- An agreement from leaders of the House International Relations Committee that they would support efforts to assist the unintended victims of the war in Afghanistan. This agreement was made during a colloquy that Blumenauer initiated on the House floor with the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Henry Hyde (R-IL), Ranking Member Thomas Lantos (D-CA), and Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA). Blumenauer secured the support of committee leaders for pursuing legislation to directly assist innocent Afghans who were injured or killed during U.S. military operations.
- An amendment, which the House adopted unanimously, encouraging the inclusion of Afghanistan's urban areas in aid programs. The amendment expresses the sense of Congress that funds authorized by the bill should be available for rebuilding urban infrastructure and basic urban services in Afghanistan, including transportation, water, sewer, utilities and sanitation services.