

For Immediate Release: *February 10, 2011*

Washington D.C. – U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, today introduced the Fairness for Military Recruiters Act. The legislation clarifies and strengthens existing federal law, ensuring that military recruiters are provided the same access to high schools and basic student contact information that is provided to colleges, universities and other recruiters.

“America’s national security and the future success of our military hinges on the interest and willingness of individuals to step forward and serve in the armed forces,” said Congressman Hunter, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. “Our nation’s all-volunteer force is made up of patriotic and talented young Americans, all of whom understand the risks involved. For many of these Americans, military service is about protecting freedom and our nation’s interests. Others are equally committed to these causes, but also join the military to take full advantage of the career and educational opportunities that are available. Either way, Americans should not be discouraged from exploring these benefits or joining the armed forces.

“Military recruiters deserve the same respect as any other recruiter invited into America’s classrooms. The Fairness for Military Recruiters Act guarantees equal access to high school campuses and student directors, and puts the decision to withhold contact information squarely in the hands of parents.”

Recently, the San Diego Unified School District imposed new regulations limiting all recruiters – military and private – to only two visits a year, needlessly complicating recruiter-student interaction. In response to this decision, Congressman Hunter said, “While this action appears consistent with federal law, given that military recruiters are provided the same access as private recruiters, the reality is that private recruiters interface with students far less regularly than military recruiters. Often times, private recruiter interactions are limited to college or career fairs, instead relying on other forms of advertising and outreach. Military recruiters on the other hand have a steadier presence in high schools and, while it’s absolutely necessary that these recruiters follow school guidelines and not interfere with individual learning, decisions like this, whether intended or not, represent a step toward shutting the door on the military. And we cannot allow this decision to serve as a trigger for additional efforts to even further restrict military recruiters in San Diego schools.”

Although current law, enacted under the No Child Left Behind Act, provides parents and students the right to request that contact information be withheld, some school boards and anti-military activists have attempted to limit and creatively interpret the provision to deny military recruiter access.

Specifically, the Fairness for Military Recruiters Act:

- Ensures that military recruiters continue to have access to student information, similar to colleges, universities and other organizations recruiting students;
- Places decisions regarding a student's personal information and future career opportunities firmly in control of his or her parents, unless a student is 18 years of age;
- Makes clear that no process other than that of a written parental request shall be used to authorize the withholding of basic student contact information;
- Prevents the implementation of an "opt-in" process, whereby all student information would be withheld from military recruiters.

The Fairness for Military Recruiters Act has been referred to the House Education and Workforce Committee for further consideration.