

WASHINGTON - The House today unanimously accepted an amendment written by Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) that will expedite commercial airport security clearance for members of the military traveling on official orders.

The Bachus amendment was added to the Transportation Security Administration Authorization Act, which remains under consideration on the House floor.

Congressman Bachus said, "While some airports and airlines have expedited screening policies in place for certain types of passengers, there is no group that deserves greater consideration than the dedicated men and women who serve in the U.S. military. The least we can do for our troops is to create a faster way for them to pass through screening while assuring all necessary security."

The legislation directs the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to establish an expedited screening process for members of the Armed Services. Soldiers would have to be traveling on official orders and be in uniform. TSA would create a more efficient screening procedure for heavy military gear. The legislation does not relax any existing security standards.

The expedited screening process would apply to all members of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, the respective reserve components, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard and family members with them.

Similar programs for select passengers already exist, such as Delta's Medallion Members, United Airlines' Premier Members, and Southwest Airlines' Fly By Priority Security Lane.

Bachus said there are large numbers of soldiers carrying official orders who use commercial flights for at least a portion of their trips. The U.S. has nearly 1.4 million servicemen and servicewomen on active duty and another 1.5 million personnel in the guard and reserve.

The proposal has drawn broad support. Bachus and Representative Dennis Moore (D-KS) are

lead cosponsors of the amendment.

The Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard, Major General Abner Blalock, said in a letter to Congressman Bachus that the amendment will "make a big difference for our military and their families."

Bachus said he will work with TSA and other parties to further perfect his amendment as the legislative process continues.