

BIRMINGHAM – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) announced that the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) will receive one million dollars to help speed the development of lighter body armor and better vehicle protection for U.S. troops.

The funds are contained in the House version of the FY08 Defense Appropriations bill.

The Materials Application and Research Center at UAB will use the funds to study new high-tech new materials that can be incorporated into military gear and equipment. The center specializes in the review and development of innovative technologies for military and civilian uses.

"The research and development being done in Birmingham will ensure that our troops have the best and safest gear. When there is new technology that can protect our soldiers, we need to get it into the field as soon as possible. The laboratory facilities at the Materials Applications Research Center are ideal for rapidly moving promising ideas from development to the production stage. Our troops will benefit from the technological expertise that has been built up at UAB," Bachus said.

Dr. Richard Marchase, Vice President for Research and Economic Development at UAB, said, "We are grateful to Congressman Bachus for securing these funds, which will be used for our research into thermocomposite materials that are lighter and more resistant to damage. The military uses range from lighter, more durable body armor for troops to materials that protect vehicles against attacks. There are also a number of civilian uses for lighter and stronger materials in the vehicle industry and others."

The defense spending bill will be voted on by the House on Friday. Appropriations measures must be approved by the House and Senate and signed by the President before becoming law.

