
U.S. Congressman Jim Cooper

5th Congressional District of Tennessee

706 Church Street, Suite 101

Nashville, TN 37203



For Immediate Release:

May 13, 2004

Contact: Murfy Alexander

(615) 736-5295

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE VOTES TO END "WIDOW'S TAX" ON SURVIVING SPOUSES OF MILITARY RETIREES

—U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper applauds Congress
for acting to support troops and their families

WASHINGTON—U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper today praised the House Armed Services Committee for acting to end the so-called "Widow's Tax" on military retiree benefits. Cooper, a member of the Armed Services Committee, voted yesterday during debate over next year's defense authorization bill to extend these important new benefits.

"I am glad to see that Congress is working to provide our nation's servicemen and women with the benefits they deserve," Cooper said. "The 'widow's tax' was particularly unfair to the spouses of our military retirees and should have been ended long ago. The families of our soldiers make equally great sacrifices on behalf of our nation, and Congress has a duty to recognize those sacrifices fully and fairly."

As it currently stands, when a military widow reaches the age of 62, her spousal survivor benefits drop from 55% of her spouse's retired pay to 35%. Democrats in the House of Representatives have initiated several efforts in support of ending this tax, including a discharge petition that would have required the full House to vote on legislation expanding survivors' benefits. Cooper was one of the dozens of members of Congress who signed this petition.

The defense authorization bill now goes to the full House for a vote, where it is expected to be approved.

###