

BOND: WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SACRIFICE NATIONAL SECURITY

Senator Discusses the Negative Implications of Obama's Defense Budget on Our National Security & St. Louis Workforce

April 6, 2009

ST. LOUIS, MO – U.S. Senator Kit Bond today joined Chris Chadwick and other employees of The Boeing Company of St. Louis to discuss the negative implications of Secretary Defense Gates' budget announcement on our national security and Missouri jobs.

“In these tough economic times, we all need to make sacrifices, but we cannot afford to sacrifice our nation’s long-term security,” said Bond. “Our nation needs more St. Louis-made fighter planes so our military can continue to meet current and emerging threats.”

Today, Defense Secretary Gates previewed the fiscal year 2010 defense budget. During the budget preview, the Obama Administration announced that procurement of the C-17 will be discontinued. They also recommended that 31 F/A-18s be built, which represents one-third less of what is needed to address Navy short-falls.

Bond stressed that reducing the C-17 and F/A-18 projects in St. Louis will have a severe impact on the St. Louis workforce. Currently, there are 4,000 employees working on the final assembly of the F/A-18 in St. Louis. There are 1,800 employees working on the C-17 in St. Louis and thousands of supplier-related jobs in the state. Bond noted that the C-17 project is on-schedule and on-budget, while the Boeing F/A-18 project is ahead of schedule and under budget.

Bond pointed out that the U.S. Department of Defense Air Mobility Capabilities study, which is due in June, will indicate how many C-17s the U.S. will need to meet future requirements and missions. Bond questioned Obama's decision to make cuts before the study is finalized.

Bond said, “The decision to end production of the C-17 before the Air Force's study comes out later this summer is premature and an example of ready, fire, aim.”

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