

WASHINGTON, DC— Today Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, released the following statement after voting in support of an amendment offered by Representative Jeff Flake (AZ-6) to the Department of Defense Appropriations Act (H.R. 2219) to reduce funding for the Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) account by one percent:

"At a time when we are cutting resources for our schools, health clinics, first responders, and environmental cleanup, we must also demand sacrifice and accountability from the defense contractors who profit off of taxpayer dollars.

RDT&E investments have reaped enormous benefits for our country and our economy—the invention of GPS technology, the microprocessor and the Internet are just a few examples. These investments in scientific research and development at our colleges and universities should be protected.

Yet, for every technological breakthrough there are too many examples of waste, fraud and abuse on the part of for-profit contractors who get away charging the taxpayer for their own cost overruns and over-budget expenses. A modest reduction in funding for these projects is only fair and reasonable if we are to ask our children to make do with larger class sizes and fewer afterschool programs."

Research and development has experienced more spending growth since 2001 than any other major Department of Defense appropriations category, currently standing at 33 percent above the Cold War peak in real terms. Budget requests in this category, which include classified spending, often lack vital tracking information and some have resulted in significant financial losses to the taxpayer, including:

- The V-22 Osprey program, which is currently running 150 percent over the original cost estimate, including procurement costs;
- The Marine Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, which is presently 14 years behind schedule and running 168 percent over the original cost estimate, including procurement costs.