

## **G. V. Sonny Montgomery Weekly Radio Show**

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*Audio begins at 0:19*

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. With the change in leadership in the House and Senate, there is talk that defense spending could be increased over the next couple of years. What is your reaction to that idea?

Montgomery: I certainly hope so, that we can increase defense spending. And I look forward to another two years of serving you in the Congress. And we've cut the military too much, for the last five years we've been reducing the size of our military, reducing the amount of money we go to, to have strong defense. We've got too many missions overseas; we've got more troops overseas now than we had since World War II. And that costs a lot of money. So, if we're going to continue to deal from military strength we've got to slow down and stop reducing defense spending. And I hope the Republicans can do this, I hope that they will offer the leadership to quit closing these military bases, and quit closing these National Guard armories, and Reserve armories. That these are service to the people, these are jobs. So, we need to deal from a position of strength and not weakness. And I hope this leadership in both the House and the Senate can come and give us a strong defense, give us more money for the military.

Interviewer: With the changes in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, you will no longer be chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. Will you seek to become the ranking member of that committee and how will that affect veteran's care in Mississippi?

Montgomery: Yeah, I will seek to be the ranking minority member on the Veterans Affairs Committee. And I've learned this week, that the fellow that ran against me two years ago to take the chairmanship away from me, will not challenge me this time to be the ranking minority member. On the Democratic side, on the veterans committee. So, it looks like that I will win that position. It won't affect veterans' programs that much. Bob Stump, who will be the new chairman of the Veterans Committee. In effect, we'll just be swapping positions. He'll be the chairman, and I'll be the ranking minority member. And I don't think you need tell any difference, instead of it being now Sonny and Bob, it'll be now Bob and Sonny. So, we'll get along really well, it makes sense for me to stay on the Democratic side. I'll be the ranking member of the minority. If you go to the other side, then I would go to the bottom of the ladder. Right now, we'll have some control on veterans' programs, and I'm looking forward to working with Bob Stump.

Interviewer: The same situation applies on the Armed Services Committee. Will you retain your seniority and ranking position on the Personnel and Military Construction subcommittees?

Montgomery: I will be, I've been the ranking member now, Dellums who's been the chairman of the committee will be the ranking minority and I'll be the second ranking member. But I will still be the ranking minority member, if I want these two subcommittees on personnel and on military construction. And I think I will take both of those subcommittees, especially under military construction. We have been able, over the years, to get certain building projects for the Columbus Air Force Base, as well as for Meridian Naval Air Station, as well as for National Guard units in our Congressional District. We've been able to get funding because I've been on the subcommittee of military construction. So, I know I will stay on that subcommittee. It's paid off for us in getting good building projects as I said earlier for the Columbus Air Force Base, Meridian Naval Air Station, and for our National Guard units. And on personnel, I think I can help there too. We need to be very careful that we don't continue to reduce the personnel numbers. That we have enough fighting forces, out there, that do the job. We're cutting the full-time manning of the National Guard forces too much. Those are the fellas' that work in the armories, and work at the Air-Guard units. Every day we keep cutting those numbers back, we need to stop that. We need to have a strong National Guard, to have a strong National Guard you have to have more full-time people. So, we need to work on that, and being on personnel subcommittee, maybe I can have some effect.

Interviewer: Thank you Congressman, this has been Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington.

*Audio ends at 5:06*