name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1449.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2528 and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 298 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2528.

The Chair designates the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS) as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and requests the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) to assume the chair temporarily.

□ 1147

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with Mrs. BIGGERT (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH).

Mr. WALSH. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, today I am proud to represent the first Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies appropriations bill for consideration of the House.

This subcommittee was formed for the purpose of taking a more comprehensive look at the programs related to providing a suitable quality of life for our service men and women, from recruitment through retirement. I believe the bill before Members today does just that, and it does it in a fiscally responsible way.

Since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973, quality of life has come to play an increasingly important role. In the short time between the subcommittee's organization and today, I have met with many officials from the Department of Defense who are energized and excited with the makeup of this new subcommittee. Everyone we met said the same thing, you recruit the soldier, but you retain ''the family''; and this new bill structure will make a significant contribution to that goal.

I have also met with many people on the issues related to the Defense Health Program and the VA. Again, there is excitement about the synergies that currently exist and the ones that can be developed or enhanced between DOD and VA. This bill makes all that possible.

I salute the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS) for having the foresight and persistence to bring about this positive change.

The bill before us today totals $121.8 billion, of which $85.2 billion is discretionary spending and $36.6 billion is mandatory spending. On the discretionary side, the bill is $1.1 billion above the President's request and $5.9 billion above last year's bill. The bill funds the VA at $68.1 billion, $2.3 billion above fiscal year 2005, and $635 million above the budget request. Included in this amount is $21 billion for medical services, a $1.6 billion increase above the 2005 enacted level, and $1 billion above the budget request. This is an 8.5 percent increase over last year. I would also note that with the funding in this bill, the medical services account will grow by 18.2 percent over the past 2 years.

Also, this funding level does not assume adoption of any new fees, nor does it preclude the committee of jurisdiction from moving on such legislation. The VA funding level, among other things, restores funding for long-term care to the level it was in the fiscal year 2005 appropriation, and we direct the Secretary to work with the National Association of State Veterans Homes to come to some agreeable policy to make the program work better for veterans and the taxpayers.

The bill also includes language directing the Department to spend not less than $2.2 billion on specialty mental health care in fiscal year 2006, in direct concern to many Members of Congress that the VA needs to make this a priority. We have never specified funding for a category of care in this bill in the past.

We have also included report language directing the Department to more than double the funding available for mental health research. For the Department of Defense, the bill provides $53.5 billion. Within this total is funding for military construction, family housing construction and maintenance, costs associated with BRAC for the prior rounds and the current round, basic allowance for housing payments, facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization, and environmental restoration.

Regarding BRAC, let me just repeat what we have said in subcommittee. As of now, we consider the Secretary of Defense's recommendations just that, recommendations only. We will be following the commission process, but we see no need to make changes to the military construction budget at this time. Also included in this total is $20 billion for the Defense Health Program, an increase of $1.8 billion above fiscal year 2005 and $192 million above the budget request. This amount supports troop readiness by making sure we have an adequate funding level to prepare our soldiers, sailors, and airmen for training and deployments while caring for their families and dependents.

One last thing I wanted to mention is the joint DOD–VA incentives program which was authorized in fiscal year 2003 and has been appropriated since that time. This program creates a fund which creates the opportunity for the DOD and VA to explore joint ventures in research and information technology that establishes and enhances continuity between these two Departments and contributes to the synergies we all want.

We have a responsibility to make sure that the limited resources we have are spent efficiently and effectively and that programs achieve their mission. The structure of this bill provides us with an opportunity to take a bold look across programs and Departments and find synergies and efficiencies. Change is not always easy to go through, and it does not happen overnight; but we have taken the first step towards producing a more focused bill, and I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) for his vision and support.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), the ranking member of the subcommittee. We have developed a strong working relationship based upon trust. He has a wealth of experience with the military, given his long association with Fort Hood, Texas. He has been very generous with his time and his counsel as we assembled this bill, and it is much appreciated.

Thanks to my subcommittee members for their active participation in the hearing process and also for their advice, and also to our very professional staff led by the capable Carol Murphy, and to my personal staff for their help in preparing this work product. I am very grateful to all of them. This would not have been possible without their help.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE					
Military construction, Army	1,981,084	1,479,841	1,652,552	-328,532	+172,711
Rescissions	-18,976	---	---	+18,976	---
Total	1,962,108	1,479,841	1,652,552	-309,556	+172,711
Military construction, Navy and Marine Corps	1,069,947	1,029,249	1,109,177	+39,230	+79,928
Rescissions	-24,000	---	---	+24,000	---
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	138,800	---	---	-138,800	---
Additional appropriations (Div. J) (P.L. 108-447)	-4,350	---	---	+4,350	---
Total	1,180,397	1,029,249	1,109,177	-71,220	+79,928
Military construction, Air Force	866,331	1,069,640	1,171,338	+305,007	+101,698
Rescission	-21,800	---	---	+21,800	---
Total	844,531	1,069,640	1,171,338	+326,807	+101,698
Military construction, Defense-wide	686,055	1,042,730	976,664	+290,609	-66,066
Rescission	-22,737	---	---	+22,737	---
Total	663,318	1,042,730	976,664	+313,346	-66,066
Total, Active components	4,650,354	4,621,460	4,909,731	+259,377	+288,271
Military construction, Army National Guard	446,748	327,012	410,624	-36,124	+83,612
Military construction, Air National Guard	243,043	165,256	225,727	-17,316	+60,471
Rescission	-5,000	---	---	+5,000	---
Total	238,043	165,256	225,727	-12,316	+60,471
Military construction, Army Reserve	92,377	106,077	138,425	+46,048	+32,348
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	8,700	---	---	-8,700	---
Total	101,077	106,077	138,425	+37,348	+32,348
Military construction, Naval Reserve	44,246	45,226	45,226	+980	---
Additional appropriations (Div. J) (P.L. 108-447)	4,350	---	---	-4,350	---
Total	48,596	45,226	45,226	-3,370	---
Military construction, Air Force Reserve	123,977	79,260	110,847	-13,130	+31,587
Total, Reserve components	958,441	722,831	930,849	-27,592	+208,018
Total, Military construction	5,608,795	5,344,291	5,840,580	+231,785	+496,289
Appropriations	(5,553,808)	(5,344,291)	(5,840,580)	(+286,772)	(+496,289)
Emergency appropriations	(147,500)	---	---	(-147,500)	---
Rescissions	(-92,513)	---	---	(+92,513)	---
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program	165,800	206,858	206,858	+41,058	---
Rescission	-5,000	---	---	+5,000	---
Total	160,800	206,858	206,858	+46,058	---
Family housing construction, Army	636,099	549,636	549,636	-86,463	---
Rescission	-21,000	---	---	+21,000	---
Total	615,099	549,636	549,636	-65,463	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Army	926,507	812,993	803,993	-122,514	-9,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	1,200	---	---	-1,200	---
Total	927,707	812,993	803,993	-123,714	-9,000

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps	139,107	218,942	218,942	+79,835	---
Rescission	-12,301	---	---	+12,301	---
Total	126,806	218,942	218,942	+92,136	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps	696,304	593,660	588,660	-107,644	-5,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	9,100	---	---	-9,100	---
Total	705,404	593,660	588,660	-116,744	-5,000
Family housing construction, Air Force	846,959	1,251,108	1,236,220	+389,261	-14,888
Rescission	-45,171	---	---	+45,171	---
Total	801,788	1,251,108	1,236,220	+434,432	-14,888
Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force	853,384	766,939	755,319	-98,065	-11,620
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	11,400	---	---	-11,400	---
Total	864,784	766,939	755,319	-109,465	-11,620
Family housing construction, Defense-wide	49	---	---	-49	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-wide	49,575	46,391	46,391	-3,184	---
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund	2,500	2,500	2,500	---	---
Rescission	-19,109	---	---	+19,109	---
Total	-16,609	2,500	2,500	+19,109	---
Total, Family housing	4,074,603	4,242,169	4,201,661	+127,058	-40,508
Appropriations	(4,150,484)	(4,242,169)	(4,201,661)	(+51,177)	(-40,508)
Emergency appropriations	(21,700)	---	---	(-21,700)	---
Rescissions	(-97,581)	---	---	(+97,581)	---
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-wide	81,886	---	---	-81,886	---
Base realignment and closure:					
Base realignment and closure account, 1990	246,116	377,827	377,827	+131,711	---
Base realignment and closure account, 2005	---	1,880,466	1,570,466	+1,570,466	-310,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)	50	---	---	-50	---
Total, Base realignment and closure	246,166	2,258,293	1,948,293	+1,702,127	-310,000
Basic Allowance for Housing:					
Army	3,341,882	3,945,392	3,945,392	+603,510	---
Navy	3,471,251	3,592,905	3,592,905	+121,654	---
Marine Corps	1,053,573	1,179,071	1,179,071	+125,498	---
Air Force	3,010,770	3,240,113	3,240,113	+229,343	---
Army National Guard	434,073	453,690	453,690	+19,617	---
Air National Guard	214,151	248,317	248,317	+34,166	---
Army Reserve	290,117	310,566	310,566	+20,449	---
Naval Reserve	202,282	191,338	191,338	-10,944	---
Marine Corps Reserve	38,945	40,609	40,609	+1,664	---
Air Force Reserve	59,781	71,286	71,286	+11,505	---
Total, Basic Allowance for Housing	12,116,825	13,273,287	13,273,287	+1,156,462	---
Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization:					
Army	1,967,028	1,825,518	1,850,518	-116,510	+25,000
Navy	1,333,288	1,344,971	1,344,971	+11,683	---
Marine Corps	523,756	553,960	553,960	+30,204	---
Air Force	1,991,710	1,815,701	1,845,701	-146,009	+30,000
Defense-Wide	95,000	115,400	115,400	+20,400	---
Army National Guard	384,044	391,544	391,544	+7,500	---
Air National Guard	230,642	169,791	184,791	-45,851	+15,000
Army Reserve	201,141	204,370	204,370	+3,229	---
Naval Reserve	73,410	62,788	67,788	-5,622	+5,000
Marine Corps Reserve	12,126	10,105	10,105	-2,021	---

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Air Force Reserve	53,056	55,764	55,764	+2,708	---
Total, Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization	6,865,201	6,549,912	6,624,912	-240,289	+75,000
Environmental Restoration:					
Army	400,948	407,865	407,865	+6,917	---
Navy	266,820	305,275	305,275	+38,455	---
Air Force	397,368	406,461	406,461	+9,093	---
Defense-Wide	23,684	28,167	28,167	+4,483	---
Formerly used Defense sites	266,516	221,921	221,921	-44,595	---
Total, Environmental Restoration	1,355,336	1,369,689	1,369,689	+14,353	---
Defense Health Program:					
Operation and maintenance	17,297,419	19,247,137	19,184,537	+1,887,118	-62,600
Procurement	367,035	375,319	355,119	-11,916	-20,200
Research and development	506,982	169,156	444,256	-62,726	+275,100
Total, Defense Health Program	18,171,436	19,791,612	19,983,912	+1,812,476	+192,300
General provision (sec. 128)	---	65,000	65,000	+65,000	---
Total, title I:					
New budget (obligational) authority	48,681,048	53,101,111	53,514,192	+4,833,144	+413,081
Appropriations	(48,706,892)	(53,101,111)	(53,514,192)	(+4,807,300)	(+413,081)
Emergency appropriations	(169,250)	---	---	(-169,250)	---
Rescissions	(-195,094)	---	---	(+195,094)	---
TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS					
Veterans Benefits Administration					
Compensation and pensions	32,607,688	33,412,879	33,412,879	+805,191	---
Readjustment benefits	2,556,232	3,214,246	3,214,246	+658,014	---
Veterans insurance and indemnities	44,380	45,907	45,907	+1,527	---
Veterans housing benefit program fund program account (indefinite)	43,784	64,586	64,586	+20,802	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(500)	(500)	(500)	---	---
Credit subsidy	-144,000	-112,000	-112,000	+32,000	---
Administrative expenses	152,842	153,575	153,575	+733	---
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	47	53	53	+6	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(4,108)	(4,242)	(4,242)	(+134)	---
Administrative expenses	309	305	305	-4	---
Native American veteran housing loan program account	566	580	580	+14	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(50,000)	(30,000)	(30,000)	(-20,000)	---
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	35,261,848	36,780,131	36,780,131	+1,518,283	---
Veterans Health Administration					
Medical services	19,316,995	19,995,141	20,995,141	+1,678,146	+1,000,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	38,283	---	---	-38,283	---
Medical administration	4,667,360	4,517,874	4,134,874	-532,486	-383,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	1,940	---	---	-1,940	---
Medical facilities	3,715,040	3,297,669	3,297,669	-417,371	---
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	46,909	---	---	-46,909	---
Medical and prosthetic research	402,348	393,000	393,000	-9,348	---
Medical care cost recovery collections:					
Offsetting collections	-1,985,984	-2,170,000	-2,170,000	-184,016	---
Appropriations (indefinite)	1,985,984	2,170,000	2,170,000	+184,016	---
Total, Veterans Health Administration	28,188,875	28,203,684	28,820,684	+631,809	+617,000
Departmental Administration					
General operating expenses	1,314,155	1,418,827	1,411,827	+97,672	-7,000
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	545	---	---	-545	---
National Cemetery Administration	147,734	156,447	156,447	+8,713	---
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	50	---	---	-50	---
Office of Inspector General	69,153	70,174	70,174	+1,021	---

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Construction, major projects	455,130	607,100	607,100	+151,970	---
Construction, minor projects	228,933	208,937	208,937	-19,996	---
Emergency appropriations (P.L.108-324)	36,343	---	---	-36,343	---
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	104,322	---	25,000	-79,322	+25,000
Grants for the construction of State veterans cemeteries	31,744	32,000	32,000	+256	---
Total, Departmental Administration	2,388,109	2,493,485	2,511,485	+123,376	+18,000
Total, title II:					
New budget (obligational) authority	65,838,832	67,477,300	68,112,300	+2,273,468	+635,000
Appropriations	(65,714,762)	(67,477,300)	(68,112,300)	(+2,397,538)	(+635,000)
Emergency appropriations	(124,070)	---	---	(-124,070)	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(54,608)	(34,742)	(34,742)	(-19,866)	---
Discretionary	30,730,748	30,851,682	31,486,682	+755,934	+635,000
Mandatory	35,108,084	36,625,618	36,625,618	+1,517,534	---
TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES					
American Battle Monuments Commission					
Salaries and expenses	40,771	35,250	35,750	-5,021	+500
Foreign currency fluctuations	11,904	15,250	15,250	+3,346	---
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission	52,675	50,500	51,000	-1,675	+500
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims					
Salaries and expenses	17,112	18,295	18,295	+1,183	---
Department of Defense - Civil					
Cemeterial Expenses, Army					
Salaries and expenses	29,363	28,050	29,550	+187	+1,500
Armed Forces Retirement Home					
Operation and maintenance	57,163	57,033	57,033	-130	---
Capital program	3,968	1,248	1,248	-2,720	---
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home	61,131	58,281	58,281	-2,850	---
Total, title III:					
New budget (obligational) authority	160,281	155,126	157,126	-3,155	+2,000
Grand total, all titles:					
New budget (obligational) authority	114,680,161	120,733,537	121,783,618	+7,103,457	+1,050,081
Appropriations	(114,581,935)	(120,733,537)	(121,783,618)	(+7,201,683)	(+1,050,081)
Emergency appropriations	(293,320)	---	---	(-293,320)	---
Rescissions	(-195,094)	---	---	(+195,094)	---

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I first want to salute the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for his professional, thorough, and fair-minded leadership in crafting this bill, which I support.

Throughout this entire process, every step of the way, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) focused on doing one thing: asking what is best for our service men and women and veterans, and for that he has my deep respect.

I would like to offer my observations on this important bill from the perspective of someone who had the privilege of representing over 40,000 Army soldiers who served our country in Iraq. For 14 years I represented Fort Hood, Texas, an Army installation which is now very ably represented by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

I have seen firsthand, like so many Members of Congress here, the sacrifices made by our troops and their families in time of war and peace: time away from children and loved ones, combat injuries, both mental and physical, and I have seen widows in their 20s holding babies in their arms that will never know their fathers because they gave the ultimate sacrifice to our Nation in combat.

I believe, as other Members do, that we have a solemn, moral obligation to support our troops, their families, military retirees, and veterans. They have kept their promise to our Nation, and now we should keep our promise to them. That is why I consider it a privilege to serve on the first Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs with the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH).

My respect for our service men and women and veterans is also why I voted against the House budget resolution earlier this year and against the 302(b) allocation that determined how many dollars our subcommittee would have today to allocate to spend on DOD health, military construction and VA programs, including VA health and research programs.

I believe, especially during a time of war, Congress should make greater investments in health care and military construction programs that are vital to the training and well-being of our troops and their families. I believe we should invest significantly more in VA health care for our veterans. And despite dollar increases, and they have been real and they have been significant over the last 5 years for VA health care, our VA hospitals are facing serious budget challenges due to two things: one, high health care inflation that is affecting all hospitals, whether they be VA or in the private sector; and secondly, because the average annual increase in the number of veterans needing VA health care has been about 250,000 to 300,000 veterans.

Having said that, our appropriations subcommittee did not have the power to determine how much money we had to spend on programs under our jurisdiction. That was largely decided by the budget resolution. I commend the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS). Given the FY 2006 budget resolution, the gentleman worked hard to get an increased allocation for this subcommittee.

Given what I consider to have been tough choices, I believe the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and our subcommittee worked hard and we have worked in good faith on a bipartisan basis to put limited dollars where they are most needed: veterans and DOD medical services and housing for military troops and their families. We went the extra mile, along with professional staff on both sides of the aisle, to scrub the budget to put dollars in the highest priority areas. That was our responsibility, and I think we did it well.

I believe there are a number of very important positive steps taken in this bill. First, VA medical services were increased by $1 billion over the President's request, a request which I thought, frankly, was inadequate. The bottom line is we are allocating $1.6 billion over last year's VA medical services. I believe the VA needs more to keep up with medical inflation and an expected increase of 300,000 veterans. But given our allocation, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), in particular, fought very hard to make VA medical services funding our top priority; and I stand with him in that priority. I think it is the right choice.

Second, it is positive that DOD health care was increased by 10 percent. During a time of war, that is important.

Third, base allowance for housing was increased by 9.5 percent. Our troops deserve improved housing.

□ 1200

Let me also add that this committee, under Chairman WALSH and its bipartisan committee membership, has continued the very important role in leading what I consider to be the most important family housing improvement program in our military history, that is, the public-private partnership that is building tens of thousands of new homes to deserving men and women and their families serving in our military.

I salute the subcommittee's leadership on that important program.

Fourth, the subcommittee rejected the Administration's request to more than double prescription copays for veterans and to add a new $250 annual enrollment fee for some veterans. In addition, in my viewpoint, the committee wisely rejected massive proposed cuts in veterans' nursing home care. The committee's work in this area will mean tens of thousands of veterans will get long-term nursing care that otherwise might have been deprived of that care.

A fifth good thing that this committee did in its work is, it directed the VA to focus more of its medical care and research dollars on mental health care, an essential priority given our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the mental health care needs of veterans from past wars. I particularly salute the gentleman from New York for his leadership in this much-needed initiative. I, for one, believe it will be one of the important legacies of his service in Congress.

The VA has underfunded mental health care services and research for too long and that is going to change because of the leadership of this committee.

While I wish we did not have to cut VA medical facilities operations by $400 million and VA health administration programs and DOD health care research and cut, $9 million out of VA health care research, I believe the committee put the limited dollars where they were most needed, in funding VA and DOD health care during a time of war.

I also wish we were not at the point where we were still funding military construction at levels below levels spent before the Iraqi war began, but this bill moves us in a positive direction, increasing military construction by 4 percent.

Given a smaller budget than I would have preferred, the bottom line is that I believe the subcommittee, led by its chairman, made solid decisions on a bipartisan basis to scour the budget and to fund our highest-priority needs. We stopped harmful cuts to VA nursing home care and took important new steps to ensure that mental health care services for our troops and our veterans will be improved. That is why I intend to support this bill and ask my colleagues, on a bipartisan basis, to do the same.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH. Madam Chairman, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2528—The Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations Act for Fiscal year 2006. Let me begin by commending the gentleman from New York, Mr. WALSH, for his work on this important bill.

I'd like to comment briefly on an issue that is important to me as the Chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee on the Veterans' Affairs Committee—the National Shrine Commitment. As you may know, pursuant to Public Law 106–117 the Department of Veterans Affairs entered into a contract to assess the state of VA's national cemeteries. That study identified

$279 million of needed repairs and maintenance. While the President requested $14.4 million to fund this initiative, the Veterans' Affairs Committee, in its views and estimates letter to the Budget Committee, recommended an additional $45.6 million in minor construction funding to begin a 5-year plan to fully fund needed repairs and maintenance.

It is necessary that Congress ensure our national cemeteries are maintained in a manner that pays proper tribute to our fallen veterans. Funding the National Shrine Commitment achieves that end. I look forward to working with Chairman WALSH to see if we can find the necessary resources to fund the National Shrine Commitment.

Mr. WALSH. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS).

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2528, a bill which will provide the essential funding that our Nation's heroes, our veterans, need. I applaud the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from the 25th District of New York (Mr. WALSH) for their vision and leadership on this important issue, and I also thank them for allowing me the time to speak on a bill that is so important to our country.

This bill increases overall veterans' benefits to $21 billion which is nearly $1.6 billion more than last year's funding level for our veterans.

Madam Chairman, over the last 2 years alone, this Congress has increased funding for veterans' medical care by 18 percent. In addition, H.R. 2528 doubles veterans' mental health research funding and requires a comprehensive study on post-traumatic stress disorder. As a veteran of our Armed Forces, I understand that this is an issue that our future veterans, who are currently fighting in the war on terror, will most certainly struggle with. I applaud the efforts that this bill makes to ensure America's veterans will receive the mental health care they need when they return home as our heroes.

Madam Chairman, I also support this bill because of the assistance it will provide to the veterans in my home State of Nevada. H.R. 2528 provides $199 million for a new veterans hospital in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is the fastest-growing metropolitan area in our Nation. Nevada's veteran population is simply exploding. This new hospital will ensure that those who have bravely served our country have access to all their health care needs. This is great news for Nevada's veterans.

The committee's report that accompanies H.R. 2528 also ensures that the vital per diem payments that the VA provides to our State veterans home in Boulder City will not be cut. This report language also requests Secretary Nicholson to engage in a dialogue with our State-operated veterans homes to come up with a solution to increasing the costs of providing quality health care to our veterans.

Madam Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this bill because it provides our Nation's veterans with the benefits that they have earned by protecting our great Nation.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN).

(Mr. ROTHMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, as a member of the Committee on Appropriations, I rise in support of the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) for their very hard work in drafting this well-balanced bill.

I also want to acknowledge the majority and minority staff for the diligence and dedication that they have demonstrated throughout this process. I can appreciate the tough choices that both the gentleman from New York and the gentleman from Texas had to make with this tight allocation. Admittedly, if there were a different majority in the House, there would have been more money allocated to these programs, but within the budget constraints imposed upon the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), I believe they have done a fine job, and I urge all of my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Chairman, as a member of the subcommittee, I want to commend both our chairman and ranking minority member for producing a bill which will dramatically improve the life and the experience of men and women joining the United States Navy and going for basic training and other schools in my district at Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

This bill funds two new barracks for the Great Lakes Naval Training Center and an infrastructure upgrade. It continues a $1 billion capitalization program which has transformed Great Lakes into the birthplace of the United States Navy.

But this bill does something even more important. Throughout the country, we know that we have several hospital facilities funded by the Department of Defense close to VA facilities also funded by the taxpayer in caring for our veterans. What this bill does is it accelerates plans to build a new joint VA-Navy hospital in North Chicago, Illinois. This new facility, with two reports required by the administration to accelerate the progress, will be the first ever Navy-VA joint facility. We are very proud that that will be located in North Chicago, Illinois. This $100 million facility will ensure veterans' health care in northern Illinois and provide cutting-edge, quality care for the recruits who are joining the United States Navy.

For these reasons and others, I really commend the chairman and the staff for what they have done to accelerate this, better health care for veterans, better health care for naval recruits and at lower cost to the taxpayer.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I, too, am pleased that we have the creation of a Military Quality of Life committee. It is hard to imagine more capable leadership than that that will be offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and there is tremendous potential to look holistically at the problems and opportunities dealing with military quality of life.

I am particularly pleased because it will give for the first time a true focus to look at what is a serious, hidden issue of military quality of life, and that is military cleanup. For too long, this Congress has been missing in action. It has never given priority to the vast stretches of the United States in every State of the Union, an area the size of the States of Maryland and Massachusetts combined, to deal with the cleanup of past military activities.

It impacts our troops and their families on the bases, their neighbors past and present, and it has significant financial impacts, although if we do this job right, we have the opportunity to dramatically reduce the cost. I am impressed over the last 7 years working on this issue that the military, the men and women in the ranks, want to do this job right. They have sensitivity to the environment and they know that they are in trouble if they are exposed unnecessarily to pollution and unexploded ordnance.

Cleanup gives the military many advantages. There are less hazards to fighting men and women. There will be more area to train. There are better relationships with the surrounding area. Most important, it will develop tools and techniques that will save American lives. It will give the military long-term security with these new techniques and technologies.

Every day people die unnecessarily from land mines and UXO around the world. I am going to offer some amendments because, frankly, as much respect as I have for the new subcommittee and the fact it is new, they are looking at a whole new range of areas.

We are looking at allocating over $1.5 billion to the 2005 base closure rounds, and we have not yet cleaned up after the very first round of military closures. That is unacceptable. It is time for Congress to no longer be missing in action. We need to step up, provide the guidance, and clean up these areas.

It is unacceptable after 17 years that we will tell the people in Sacramento that their base might be cleaned up in the year 2072. The money is available. The Congress just needs to find the will to allocate it and support the Military Quality of Life Subcommittee in its important work to make sure that we protect military families and the military environment.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), a very respected member of the subcommittee.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding me this time. I would like to congratulate the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) for a fine job, with limited resources, in producing, I think, a very good work product.

I know that the gentleman from New York shares my concern for our service men and women who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with the adverse psychological effects of combat. Many of the difficulties experienced by these brave men and women can be classified as post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. As you are aware, the GAO report on VA and defense health care dated September 2004 has highlighted the lack of services at the Department of Defense military treatment facilities and VA hospitals to address the needs of these former and active duty personnel. The report language and various initiatives that you have included in our bill address this problem, and I want to thank you for your leadership.

However, the lack of services available demands that we take immediate steps to increase psychological screening and treatment for our returning troops. PTSD cannot be just a Veterans' Administration problem. The needs of our active duty men and women have to be at the forefront of our agenda, meaning that it is wrong simply to discharge service men and women because we do not have the capacity to treat them while they are on active duty.

Since most of our military hospitals lack the expertise to deal with a large influx of such patients, I would like to urge the chairman, as the bill goes to conference, to consider allowing the creation of regional centers across our country located at private hospitals or available military clinics to help meet these increasing needs.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for raising this issue, and I share his concern.

The gentleman has correctly indicated that this bill works to address PTSD research so that we can better treat mental health symptoms of our active and retired military personnel.

□ 1215

As the gentleman is aware, in this difficult budget climate, we crafted a bill that uses our resources wisely. I commit to the gentleman that I will take his views with great respect as they relate to PTSD into consideration as we move forward toward the conference of this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the chairman for his consideration and for his leadership, and I thank him for yielding me the time.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ).

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from Texas for yielding me this time.

I rise in support of this bill because, as a member of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services, I can tell the Members that people are the most precious resource we have in our Armed Forces.

As we get closer to Memorial Day, many of us here in Congress will go home and talk about how important it is to support our troops and our veterans, and that is a fine sentiment, and I agree 100 percent. But what does Congress actually do to follow through? Our obligation to support our troops by no means ends when they separate from their branch of service. Yet in the age of spiraling deficits, some folks in Washington seem all too willing to forget the promises that we have made to our veterans.

The Veterans Administration is chronically underfunded every year, and it is struggling to provide the basic services and benefits that veterans have been promised.

The President's proposed VA budget, for example, would have significantly raised out-of-pocket health care expenses for many veterans. That was his so-called increase, by increasing fees to our veterans. And I am glad that this Committee on Appropriations saw to it that we would not raise the out-of-pocket costs for veterans. That is not the acceptable answer for the VA funding problems. The answer to the funding problem is to adequately fund the VA in the budget so that the veterans will receive the kind of care that they were promised when they signed up to defend our country.

While I am pleased that the Committee on Appropriations saw fit to increase VA funding from the wholly inadequate amount requested by the President, I am very disappointed that the efforts of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), our ranking member, to provide significant additional funding, $2.6 billion, for our Nation's veterans, financed by reducing the tax cut for the very richest Americans, that all of this was blocked by the Republican majority.

As a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, I readily advocate the importance of fiscal responsibility in government, but let us not do that on the backs of our veterans.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, the first order of business is to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), ranking member, for a very fine effort on behalf of the Nation's veterans.

We leave today and most Americans will join us on Memorial Day to honor the fallen heroes and, might I say, sheroes. The women of the United States Congress just came back from Arlington Cemetery honoring the fallen women who lost their lives in battle. Again, we restate our commitment for the opportunity for women to be able to serve on the front lines, as they have advocated for and as we have noted that they have offered their lives in battle without any suggestion of taking the back seat.

Today we attempt to pass legislation that speaks to the Nation's veterans; and many of them, all of them, will be joining us on Memorial Day as we honor those who have lost their lives, but we will be with the veterans who were willing to give the ultimate sacrifice.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) so very much and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for the work that they have done dealing with keeping veterans hospitals opened. I would have hoped, however, that we would have been able to debate the Obey amendment that would have given us $2.6 billion to really be able to honor and be with our veterans and mourn those who had lost their lives, because let me remind them, when soldiers fall, their families are left behind and we need a strong VA health system.

In fact, I recently, in my representation, had the Veterans Hospital of Houston in my congressional district. I now share it with the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), but we are all still fighting for our veterans hospitals. And I thank both of them, and I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), for the great fight that they have had.

I see the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) on the floor, and I just want to note the great work done with the Fisher House in years past when we funded a place for veterans' families, families of veterans who are in the hospital, that their families may stay nearby.

We must realize that we have 1,500 dead in Iraq and Afghanistan, maybe

upwards of 2,000, and they are dying every day. But we also have the injured who are coming home who need to have a full open hospital system. Their families need to have it. So it is important, Mr. Chairman, that even as we look at the good work that this committee did, to see the opportunity to be able to debate the Obey amendment because the $2.6 billion is needed.

I would like to ask the distinguished gentleman from Texas about the concerns that I have raised. One, we know the trauma that many of these returning soldiers will face in mental health. That is one of the aspects of service of the veterans hospital. We know the fact that there is a need, even though the CARE Commission is now looking at closing eight hospitals, that we need to keep the hospitals open, and then, of course, we need to protect the families and give them good health care.

I would like to ask the distinguished gentleman that if we were able to add an extra $2.6 billion, a mere drop in the bucket, to this particular funding, and, by the way, that only gives the rich a $129,000 tax break versus $140,000, but would we be able to answer the concerns of America's veterans whom he has heard from around the Nation?

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, let me just say I am proud of the work the subcommittee did on a bipartisan basis to take limited dollars and use them wisely and focus them on high priorities. But, clearly, the reason I supported the Obey amendment and am sorry it was not allowed by the Committee on Rules is because it would allow a significant increase in resources and provide mental health care services and funding for the operations of our hospitals. And I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her great leadership over the years in standing up and fighting for our men and women who have served our country in uniform.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I will simply thank the gentleman for his comments and say I know that the hospitals are vital to our veterans and I hope that we can continue the fight for them and I look forward to working with him and the chairman.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, my good friend, someone who has worked very closely with us throughout this process.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for the quality of his work, and I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS). We have had the opportunity to work over the years in the Committee on Armed Services, and we continue to work with them.

I came down here to tell them I am proud of them. They put together a pretty good product. They are operating under new procedures. I am really pleased with regard to the leadership of taking the personnel and housing and coupling it with veterans. I want to work with the gentlemen and the gentlewoman on their committees and their staff because the only way we can get the seamless transition is through working together.

And we are going to end this procurement of I will buy my own systems and VA buys their own systems and then they are incompatible and we have got duplicity and multiplicity and, guess what, it is now up to us to end this.

And we are going to make this seamless transition work. We are going to give the right platforms with regard to IT. I want to thank them for making that cut in IT. A lot of people are going to say, Why did they do that? We are about to set the correct platform under the right form of leadership. And what I would like to work with the gentlemen on is that we are going to hopefully take the chief information officer within the VA and we are going to give them line and budget authority. We are going to end the stovepipes and the wasting of hundreds of millions of dollars, because we need to modernize this system. So I want to work with them as we proceed.

Despite this recent comment about $1 billion being a drop in the bucket, they plussed-up health care $1 billion. That is real money. One billion dollars in my congressional district, and I cannot speak for yours, but in my congressional district, I take all of the income tax receipts of my constituents and it is $990 million. So $1 billion represents the labor of every constituent who works in my congressional district.

So they work together and plus this up $1 billion over the President's mark; and as a matter of fact, they exceeded the mark that we gave to the budget views and estimates. So I stand here and congratulate the bipartisan work; 1.64 billion is meaningful, Mr. Chairman.

With regard to their focus on PTSD and following the President's recommendation of the $100 million, I thank them. We are going to be holding a hearing coming up; so to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) and his concerns, hopefully he can contact us and we can also address his ideas. I am pleased about the COLA adjustment. We are going to move in June to do the authorization on the COLA.

And I also want to pause for a moment and thank them with regard to the second pilot on revenue enhancement. This is boring stuff that a lot of people do not like to talk about, but it is the operations of these health systems. And we are not getting it right at the beginning, and we are not getting coding right. We are not getting the number right even on collections. So we have this project out in the visit in Ohio, and now we are opening up a second front, a competitive pilot. This is going to be the right thing as we move to improve revenue enhancement.

So I want to thank them, and I want to thank their staff for their fine work. I know I focused my entire remarks on the veterans side, but let me thank them also for what they do for the men and women and the families in taking care of their housing on these bases. It is extremely important and very valued. And they are doing some real grinding, and sometimes it does not get all of the attention, and I know what they are doing on the inside. So on behalf of the men and women in uniform, I thank them and God bless them.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

To respond to the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, my mentor and one of the real heroes in this world is former Congressman Olin E. Teague, who once held the position that the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BUYER) now holds. Mr. Teague was a distinguished combat veteran of World War II, served in Congress 32 years, played a leadership role on writing the modern G.I. bill. And I thank the chairman for his leadership on veterans issues, and I think his point regarding the importance of the Committee on Appropriations and authorizing committee regarding veterans working together is terribly important, and I thank him for bringing that point to the floor of the House.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Texas, my friend and colleague, for yielding me this time.

I would like to bring to the subcommittee's attention and to all of the Members of the House an issue that falls under the jurisdiction of the Military Quality of Life Subcommittee, and that is the Department of Defense's security standards for buildings. I do not think that these standards really meet the test of scrutiny when applied to cost effectiveness nor to mission accomplishment. The Department of Defense has issued standards without checking with the Congress, without having any hearings and I think without fully assessing what the cost and operational impact will be.

These building security standards preclude the Department of Defense from leasing any office space in a metropolitan area because they require a setback of anywhere from 82 feet to 148 feet from the street. Under these newly issued requirements, buildings cannot have underground or rooftop parking. They cannot have retail activity on the ground floor. They basically cannot be accessible to the public or have reasonable traffic and parking plans in operation.

We have been working in Northern Virginia in concert with the Pentagon for years to get the Department of Defense employees to their work in a

cost-efficient manner and to be able to meet the Pentagon's needs.

□ 1230

Now they say none of your buildings qualify. Well, I am not going to go into this just for my own self-serving purposes, but I do think that when DOD issues a mandatory requirement affecting tens of thousands of people that its consequences ought to be fully considered. In this case, it is a mandate that has been imposed unilaterally, resulting in the displacement of over 23,000 Defense Department personnel in Northern Virginia. It is going to affect additional thousands of people around the country.

But beyond that, it is going to require hundreds of millions of dollars to build new buildings with this enormous setback from the street, and no one else is going to want to use these buildings. The cost premium of building these buildings that meet the prescriptive DOD standards is so excessive that no other activity is going to be able to afford the cost of these buildings. So we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars spent excessively to build buildings that will soon become outmoded by technology and common sense.

The General Services Administration has come up with an alternative, what is called a performance-based standard, as opposed to DOD's prescriptive-based standard, that provides just as much security, but they use traffic management, they harden the building, make the windows shatterproof, and move the most sensitive activities to the interior space. They use technology, they use a lot of common sense and judgment, and they accomplish the same purpose and still they can locate buildings in metropolitan areas at much less expense. They just built a building in New York that meets all of the building security standards, much less expensive than DOD wants but just as secure from terrorist attack.

So what I am suggesting is that this subcommittee look at this matter, look at the cost implications, consider whether there may be better ways of accomplishing the same security objectives. This DOD requirement is based upon protecting ourselves from a truck bomb carrying an arbitrary figure of 200 pounds of TNT, whereas a truck can carry 1,000 pounds of TNT. Furthermore, there are so many other ways a building could be attacked that these security standards don't address.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I would be happy yield to my friend, to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for bringing this to us. This certainly would have an impact on all metropolitan areas where land values are high. So I would be happy to work with the gentleman as we go forward with this bill.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, would the gentleman consider some report language, requiring some feedback from the Defense Department on cost implications and alternative ways of accomplishing the same security objectives?

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will yield further, I certainly cannot commit to language I haven't seen, but as I said, I would be happy to continue to work with the gentleman as we go towards conference.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend very much and look forward to fixing this situation in a fiscally efficient and operationally effective manner.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member EDWARDS for including two provisions very important to me and so many Americans in this legislation.

This bill preserves the organization of our Defense Cancer Research Programs, which have served our Nation so well and have helped drive breakthroughs in breast, prostate and ovarian cancer research. Consolidation of these programs would have disrupted and delayed the granting of research awards, siphoned scarce resources away from research endeavors to support administrative functions. And I am pleased my colleagues, with the help of Mr. Murtha, were able to maintain the distinct nature of these cancer research programs.

I am especially pleased by the funding level for ovarian cancer research. Ovarian cancer is the fourth deadliest cancer for women. This year, approximately 22,220 women will be diagnosed and an estimated 16,210 will lose their lives to the disease. One in 57 women will get ovarian cancer, a disease with a 5-year survival rate of only 24 percent when caught in advanced stages. As an ovarian cancer survivor, I can tell you first-hand how important early detection is critical.

Despite progress made, we still do not fully understand the risks factors, symptoms and causes of ovarian cancer. Unlike other diseases and conditions, there is no screening test for ovarian cancer—there is no equivalent to the mammogram. And as such, more than 80 percent of women are diagnosed late stages when prognosis is the worst, and the overall rates of ovarian cancer mortality remain unchanged year after year.

Appropriately, the DOD Ovarian Cancer Research Program is focusing its efforts on developing science and scientists to help us achieve the breakthroughs desperately needed in the field of ovarian cancer. Sustaining the current structure of the program and providing sufficient resources will help speed the day that we have a valid and reliable early detection tool for ovarian cancer reducing and preventing suffering from ovarian cancer for our nation's wives, mothers, aunts, nieces, daughters, and friends.

Mr. Chairman, this bill also includes $2.2 billion in funding for veterans' mental health needs—and I want to thank my colleague, Mr. EDWARDS, for ensuring that it did. Many of us have long been concerned with the growing mental health needs of our returning soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen. That is why I offered an amendment to add additional funding to the Supplemental for veterans mental health needs.

Today, more than one-quarter of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans who seek care at the VA do so for mental health reasons. And according to the New England Journal of Medicine, 16 percent of surveyed Marines and 17 percent of Army soldiers meet screening criteria for major depression, generalized anxiety, or PTSD. These rates are similar to those of service men and women in the Vietnam and Gulf Wars. And I understand from some in the veterans community that these numbers may even understate the severity of the problem.

While this bill will help provide the VA with some of the tools to meet the needs of our brave servicemembers, I do believe we have a moral obligation to do more. In particular, I am concerned that the overall VA budget is not sufficient to meet the needs of troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The American Legion and other veterans groups have said that this bill falls short by as much as $2.5 billion in veterans health care funding. Indeed, in my own district, veterans tell me that they are waiting up to 9 months for some surgical procedures. And our veterans deserve better than that.

Mr. Chairman, ensuring that we are funding cancer research and providing services to our veterans are two of the most important responsibilities we have with this bill. And I am pleased the House was able to come together in a bipartisan way to see that we did. That is why I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in favor of this appropriations bill, although with some reservations. I am pleased that the reorganization of the appropriations bills has brought about a more logical and supportable Veterans Affairs appropriations product.

I do retain strong concerns over some of the funds appropriated under the Military Construction and North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program sections of this bill.

Although I recognize the need for legitimate funds for military construction, I do remain concerned that the funds appropriated herein will be used to fund the construction of U.S. military installations overseas. At a time when we are closing dozens of military installations in the United States—installations that actually contribute to the defense of the United States—under the auspices of saving money, it is unconscionable to be spending money for the defense of foreign countries.

I also strongly object to the appropriation of U.S.taxpayer funds for, as the bill states, "the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area." NATO is a relic of the Cold War and most certainly has no purpose some fifteen years after the fall of the Soviet Union. As we saw in the NATO invasion of Yugoslavia, having outlived its usefulness as a defensive alliance, the Organization has become an arm of aggressive militarism and interventionism. NATO deserves not a dime of American taxpayer's money, nor should the United States remain a member.

In conclusion, though I support this appropriations bill, I remain concerned about the construction of military bases overseas and the dangerous interventionist foreign policy that drives this construction.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to speak on H.R. 2528 the

Military Quality of Life-Veterans Affairs Appropriations. Unfortunately, in rising to speak on this spending legislation, I have to tell our Nation' s veterans that they can not expect the level of medical care that they deserve from this appropriation's measure. The sad truth is that our veteran's have been getting the short end of the stick, and unfortunately they will receive no relief from H.R. 2528.

Being from the City of Houston, which is the home to the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center where more than 137,000 veterans are provided their primary healthcare, I know how vitally important it is to provide our veterans with the care they were promised. Now is the time for the U.S. government to again fulfill our moral obligation to those who have fought for freedom and democracy. However, as outrageous as it may seem, this body will not be considering the Obey Amendment that would have increased this bill's appropriation for veterans' medical care by a total of $2.6 billion. The Obey Amendment would have paid for this vitally important medical care by simply reducing the size of the tax cut for those making over one million dollars, those millionaires would have received a tax cut of $129,000 this year, instead of $140,000. Is this what our Nation has come to? Where we chose to give millionaires a few thousand dollars more in tax cuts instead of funding proper medical care for our veterans, who left their families and risked their lives abroad to keep our Nation free, does this seem just in any way? Its truly a shame that the Appropriations Committee in a completely partisan vote decided to reject the Obey Amendment and its truly disgraceful that the Rules Committee did not allow this pertinent Amendment to come before this body for full consideration.

The sad secret of Veterans Affairs and medical care for our veterans is that with the rising cost of health care these days, the modest increases in funding for veterans' medical care in this legislation are not even enough to maintain the current level of care, which in itself is insufficient. Our veterans need and deserve proper VA benefits because they depend so heavily upon them. According to the Veteran's Administration, 28 million veterans are currently using VA benefits. Another 70 million Americans are potential candidates for such programs. This amounts to a quarter of the country's population. Veterans and their families will sadly begin finding that they have no place to turn for their medical treatment as V.A. hospitals across the country face closing their doors. With the budget shrinking, staff will be let go. This could mean the loss of over 19,000 nurses. Without these nurses, this leads to the loss of over 6.6 million outpatient visits. Approximately one out of every two veterans could lose their only source of medical care. This is a shameful situation and one that again is not properly addressed in this appropriation bill.

While I am greatly disappointed that this legislation does not fully address the crisis in veterans medical care, I am pleased to find that the Appropriations Committee rejected the administration's proposal to restrict payments to State veterans' homes for long-term care, and provides sufficient funding within this account to continue the current policy. I am also pleased the Appropriations Committee directed the VA to work with the National Association of State Veterans Homes and other stakeholders to develop and implement solutions that will give veterans the best options for quality long-term care at the most reasonable cost to the taxpayer. I can only hope that this legislation offers our veterans more options in getting quality long-term care instead of less.

We must protect the rights of our veterans because they went abroad and protected our Nation when they were called to duty. I find it unfortunate that this legislation only goes halfway towards solving the veterans medical care crisis that exists, the sad fact is that it could do so much more. I can only pray that all members of Congress will give the same effort in fighting for our veterans that they did fighting for us.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Chairman, as a Senior Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I oppose this appropriations bill because the amount included for veterans' healthcare is woefully inadequate. An additional $2.6 billion, the amount called for in the Obey amendment which was not accepted, is desperately needed for the coming fiscal year because the number of veterans is growing and the quantity of health care per veteran is growing.

As many of our servicemembers return from Iraq and Afghanistan without legs and arms and with many and varied physical and mental heath care needs, as many of our veterans live longer and need long-term care, a grateful nation should be prepared to provide for them. Shamefully, this appropriations bill does not keep that promise, and I cannot support it.

Finally, the new appropriations structure irresponsibly pits active military needs against veterans needs. Our great Nation can support both!

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Obey Amendment. This amendment provides badly needed funding for veterans health care, and represents the minimum necessary to maintain the current level of services.

While the increase in veterans health care funding in the underlying Military Quality of Life and Veterans Appropriations bill is welcome, it is also inadequate. The underlying bill fails to maintain the level of health care provided to our veterans at time when demand for those services is on the rise. The Obey Amendment corrects this by providing an additional $2.6 billion to ensure that all our veterans receive the health care they have earned and that they deserve.

I am disappointed that the President has failed to provide leadership on this issue. His request for less than a 1 percent increase for VA health care services was completely inadequate to meet the needs of our veterans. Furthermore, for the third straight year, the President proposed doubling prescription drug co-pays to $15 and charging a $250 enrollment fee to many of our veterans. Fortunately, the Appropriations Committee has rejected placing this unfair burden on our Nation's veterans and did not impose these new fees.

I urge the Majority to allow a vote on the Obey Amendment and let the House complete the work of writing a bill that honors our veterans by providing the necessary health care resources. This is the very least we can do for the men and women who have given so much in the service of our country.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill and would like to commend the gentleman from New York—Mr. WALSH—and the gentleman from Texas Mr. EDWARDS—(and their very able staff) for their good work on this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, many of us will spend this weekend doing exactly what we should be doing—returning home to our communities to pay solemn tribute to those brave men and women who have paid the ultimate price in service of our Nation.

We are painfully mindful that we are a Nation at war. Our young fighting men and women are in action around the world, serving with distinction and dedication. To honor them, we should pass this legislation which provides important assistance to our American heroes—past and present—our veterans and our current warfighters.

This legislation: Significantly increases funding devoted to military housing and health care. Increases total funding for the VA by 3.5 percent; Boosts Veterans Medical Services $1 billion above the budget request and $1.64 billion over last year's levels: (Over the last 2 years, funding for Veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent.)

Appropriates $20 billion for the Defense Health Program—a 9.9 percent increase over fiscal 2005. Proposes a 10-percent increase in the basic allowance for military housing; Hikes total military construction 4.2 increase above last year's levels.

Mr. Chairman, our troops—active, reserve and Guard—are enduring extraordinary mental and physical stress during long tours of duty battling an insurgency engaged in intense guerilla warfare. Clearly, these troops will have special needs, including mental health needs, when they rotate from the combat zone. I am proud that this bill goes to extraordinary lengths to fund treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and doubles funding for mental health research.

We know from experience that the mental health and physical health of our troops are closely linked, and mental health disorders can exacerbate or even induce physical disorders. Returning service men and women need to be treated for both through integrated physical and mental health care and this bill recognizes that fact on many important levels.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to point out what is NOT in this bill, namely higher copays at veterans health care facilities and new annual surcharges for certain categories of veterans.

Mr. Chairman, we are a Nation at war. And our young fighting men and women have real needs. Our veterans have real needs.

I want to thank the Appropriations Committee for providing for those needs and urge support for the bill.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Chairman, when the Appropriations Committee realigned its subcommittees earlier this year, one of the larger challenges fell to the measure we are considering today—the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. The bill provides benefits, housing, and health care for our military troops and their families; and ensures that our veterans—who have given so much for our Nation—continue to receive pensions, readjustment benefits, loans, and medical care. I am pleased to rise in full support of the bill the appropriators have crafted.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

In structure, H.R. 2528 adds considerably to the previous Military Construction bill by including the Department of Veterans Affairs; the Defense Health Program; the military personnel base allowance and housing accounts; the military facilities, sustainment, restoration, and modernization accounts; the military environmental restoration accounts; and a number of small related agencies.

The bill is consistent with the levels established in H. Con. Res. 95, the House concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006, which Congress adopted as its fiscal blueprint on April 28th. It stays within the 302(b) allocation to the subcommittee, as provided by the full Appropriations Committee pursuant to the budget resolution. Consequently, it does not violate section 302(f) of the Budget Act, which prohibits consideration of bills in excess of the 302(b)s.

[I should note that the Congressional Budget Office [CBO] has recast the 2005 enacted levels into the new subcommittee structure for this year's appropriations bills, so we can make year-to-year comparisons. Also, please be aware that CBO's figures, which I am using, employ base figures and categories that may differ slightly from those published by the Appropriations Committee.]

H.R. 2528 provides $53.5 billion to the Department of Defense [DoD]. Of that amount, $20 billion is for the Defense Health Program, which provides top-notch medical care to our service members and their families at little or no cost to them. This amount represents a slight increase over the President's request and an increase of $1.8 billion over the 2005 enacted level. This bill also funds the military construction and family housing accounts used by DoD to provide our service members and their families quality housing. The funds made available in this bill for base allowance and housing—$13.3 billion—also ensure that those serving our country are able to afford to live in quality housing whether on or offbase. This represent an increase of $1.2 billion over the 2005 enacted level.

H.R. 2528 provides $31.5 billion in discretionary funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs [VA]. Most of this amount—$28.8 billion of it—is for the Veterans Health Administration, which provides medical care to our Nation's veterans, medical research, medical facilities, and medical administration. The largest component is medical care, which is funded at $21.0 billion, an increase of $745 million over the President's request and an increase of $1.1 billion, or 6 percent, over the 2005 enacted level. The bill does not include a medical care enrollment fee or an increase in prescription drug copayments. H.R. 2528 provides total discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs of $33.7 billion, an increase of $637 million above the President's request and an increase of $2.9 billion, or 9.5 percent, above the 2005 enacted level.

H.R. 2528 does not contain any emergency-designated BA, which is exempt from budget limits. The bill contains no rescission of previously enacted discretionary BA.

IOWA

I would also like to acknowledge a specific provision that benefits the National Guard in my State. The measure includes $431,000 for planning and design of a field maintenance shop at Readiness Center in Iowa City.

THE BUDGET RESOLUTION/CONCLUSION

As I have noted before, the budget resolution provides a total allocation for discretionary appropriations of $843 billion in fiscal year 2006. This relatively tight spending level requires significant effort by the Appropriations Committee to set priorities and make choices. As we continue the appropriations season, I commend Chairman Lewis and our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for meeting the needs of the American public within the framework established by the budget resolution.

In conclusion, I express my support for H.R. 2528.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I have no other speakers on this side, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment that he has printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2528

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, $1,602,552,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $168,804,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MELANCON

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. MELANCON:

Page 2, line 15, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(reduced by $1) (increased by $1)''.

Page 10, line 6, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(reduced by $169,000,000)''.

Page 31, line 1, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $23,000,000)''.

Page 34, line 21, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $8,000,000)''.

Page 36, line 9, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $6,000,000)''.

Page 37, line 8, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $9,000,000)''.

Page 37, line 20, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $7,000,000)''.

Mr. MELANCON (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Chairman, as I begin my remarks, let me say that in my first 2 days as a newly sworn-in Congressman, I had the unfortunate experience of attending seven funerals for young men within a 20-mile radius of my home.

I bring this war-related veterans service amendment to you today. This amendment provides an additional $53 million in urgently needed funding for items critical for veterans returning from the war. The increased money for vets is paid for by cutting back this year's funding for the next round of the BRAC by 9 percent.

The amendment will provide $8 million for combat-related trauma care. The VA is currently operating four polytrauma centers for research, education and clinical activities on complex multitrauma associated with combat injuries. The important work of these centers needs to be expanded and demands dedicated funding.

Six million dollars is provided for hardware and software to support telemedicine initiatives to allow the polytrauma centers to support wounded troops once they return to their homes. Long-term follow-up is particularly problematic for Reservists and National Guardsmen who return to their communities without the support of nearby military bases.

Nine million dollars is added for medical and prosthetic research, which is needed to support current spending levels for VA research. Last year, this was funded at $402, but the bill only includes $393, a $9 million cut. Unlike NIH, VA research is uniquely focused on veterans' health issues. It investigates new prosthetic devices, infectious disease, the effects of various environmental hazards, postdeployment mental health and war-related illnesses. Veterans returning from the global war on terrorism will all benefit from this research. It should not be cut.

Provide retroactively $23 million for war orphans: Surviving spouses with minor children are eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to assist the families with immediate and transitional needs after the death of a spouse. Right now, only servicemember families whose spouses die after November 30, 2004, receive this $250 per

month benefit for 2 years. This amendment will help approximately 4,100 spouses with children whose servicemember spouse died during the war on terrorism between September 11, 2001, and November 30, 2004.

This will also provide $7 million for 100 additional staff who process claims for compensation and pension benefits. Veterans coming home from the war deserve quick response to their claims, but as of May 21, 2005, over half a million claims for compensation and pension benefits were pending at VA regional offices. This includes 342,811 claims by veterans who are seeking a disability rating.

I propose a BRAC offset. The administration requested $1.88 billion for fiscal year 2006 for the new round of BRAC. While the administration was formulating this request, the DOD consistently was stating that there was about a 20 to 24 percent excess capacity in military installations. Then, on May 12, just 2 weeks ago, Secretary Rumsfeld reported at a press conference that the new BRAC list would only cut between 5 and 11 percent of excess capacity.

The 2005 BRAC round will actually require less than half of the closure and realignment activities originally projected. The administration's budget request reflects much more money than will be needed to be spent for BRAC activities in fiscal year 2006.

The bill already cuts $310 million from the BRAC request, and the program would not suffer with an additional $169 million cut. This is well under the $180 million in additional cuts that was approved by the Committee on Armed Services.

While it is important to begin funding the implementation of the new BRAC round, this money is the first installment in a process that will take several years. By contrast, money for veterans' health is urgently needed, especially in the critical areas funded in this amendment. We need to take care of our servicemen and -women returning from the war as they come home.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome the gentleman to the Congress. We are very proud and happy that he is here, and I hate to oppose the very first amendment that he is offering, but I think it is the responsible thing to do.

We believe this bill is a balanced bill that addresses all of the needs of the Nation in a fair manner. This amendment would cut $169 million from the funding required to carry out the BRAC recommendation. This cut would slow down the cleanup and disposal of closed bases for this round, and also the realignment of bases, and will therefore negatively impact the economies of those communities by stalling the reuse and development of that land.

Now, the gentleman is from Louisiana. As we are all aware, there were a number of closures and realignments in the State of Louisiana, particularly around Baton Rouge and New Orleans, if this amendment were to pass, the redevelopment of those bases and properties, and I am sure land values are quite high in New Orleans and people would like to redevelop those properties, that would stall. It would be delayed. It would cause confusion. And I suspect that others Members of the Louisiana delegation may not want to support this because it will definitely affect their communities.

I would also offer that at this point we are talking about a list of proposed closures. We do not know exactly which bases will be closed or realigned until the process is over.

We do know one thing, though, that this $169 million that the gentleman would like to take out of BRAC will not get you, dollar for dollar, the money that you would like to see spent in veterans' health care.

Because of our budget rules, this money that is in the BRAC fund, the $169 million that the gentleman would like to cut from BRAC, will only get $30 million. It would only free up $30 million in 2006 for the purposes that the gentleman has described.

The reason is because, again, under our budget rules, this money in BRAC spends out or outlays at a rate of only 15 percent. So, in effect, this is penny wise and pound foolish, because you lose almost $170 million in the BRAC funding to get $30 million in veterans' health. That money would be much better spent in BRAC, because you will get the full benefit of $170 million.

The bill that we presented does much to improve VA health care by adding $1 billion to the budget request. This results in an 8.5 percent increase over last year and over a 40 percent increase since the year 2001. So as I have said before to Members who appeared before the hearing, members of the veterans community, the House has the power of the purse. We establish our priorities by how we allocate funds, how we appropriate funds. And other than Defense health, no area, no budget within the Federal budget, has increased the way veterans' health care has. This would be an 18.2 percent increase in 2 years in veterans' health care.

So this would do great harm to the BRAC and it would do little to impact on veterans' health care. This comes at a high cost to BRAC, especially when one considers the large increases that we have already provided in veterans' health care programs.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge that the Members oppose this amendment.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON).

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), and I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for the welcome to the floor of the House, to the Chamber. It is an honor to be here.

I, too, regret that the gentleman has to oppose my amendment.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I simply want to say that I congratulate the gentleman for offering this amendment. I would say that I greatly respect the chairman of the subcommittee, but I disagree with the implication of one thing that he said. He is evidently suggesting that because of a difference in outlay rates between these two accounts, that we would not get the full amount in the amendment, or that the full amount in the amendment would not be immediately made available for the purposes of the amendment.

I would simply point out that whether it is $79 million being redirected or $53 million being redirected, it is still better than nothing.

□ 1245

I would also say that BRAC is going to go on for a long, long time. We have no idea how much money we are going to need for BRAC, and this Congress will be adjusting what it provides for BRAC many times over, the next 7 or 8 or 9 years. But the fact is that the troops coming home now need these services now. I do not think that anyone believes that either the budget amount or the amount in the committee is fully sufficient, given the needs of the troops.

So I would urge a ''yes'' vote on the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) will be postponed.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

In addition, $50,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007, for overhead cover systems to support force protection activities in Iraq: *Provided,* That notwithstanding any other provision of law, such funds may be obligated or expended to carry out planning and design and military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, $1,109,177,000, to remain available

until September 30, 2010: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $36,029,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, $1,171,338,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $91,733,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, $976,664,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010: *Provided*, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $107,285,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $410,624,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $225,727,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $138,425,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVAL RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $45,226,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $110,847,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $206,858,000, to remain available until expended.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $549,636,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $803,993,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $218,942,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $588,660,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $1,236,220,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $755,319,000.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into a colloquy with the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations.

First of all, I want to take a moment to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the committee for bringing this important pending bill to the floor and providing resources to our military and those who serve in our military. I thank him for his leadership in the United States House of Representatives and for his service to our Nation.

I had intended to offer an amendment to add $1.3 million to the Army National Guard construction account in order to complete the design of a joint National Guard Reserve Center in Daytona Beach, Florida. Last year, through the good work of this appropriations subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Military Construction appropriated $789,000 in fiscal year 2005 funding to begin the design, and that funding is now being depleted.

Mr. Chairman, this project is the Florida National Guard's number one priority in the 2012 to 2013, 5-year plan and will be included in the President's budget for the 2007 budget.

I am concerned that possibly cutting the funding or not providing the funding for this project now may negatively impact on the Florida National Guard's ability to move forward with this important project that is now some nearly 8 years behind schedule.

I would ask the gentleman from New York whether he can commit to working with me during the conference on this bill to ensure that funding or adequate attention and language is in the final bill.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MICA. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I congratulate the gentleman from Florida for his hard work and his dedication to getting this base back on track, and I will be happy to work with the gentleman from Florida as we go forward.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word for the purpose of entering into a colloquy with the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH).

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into a colloquy to discuss a funding matter concerning the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program.

I rise today, Mr. Chairman, to bring attention to a significant funding problem that, if it is not solved, could halt the destruction of dangerous chemical weapons stockpiles in Richmond, Kentucky and Pueblo, Colorado.

Within the last 2 months, there have been significant changes in the status of what is known as the ACWA program which manages the Blue Grass Ammunition Demilitarization Facility at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky and at the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Pueblo, Colorado.

Due to recent Department of Defense decisions, the President's fiscal year 2006 budget no longer reflects the funding requirements needed for the Blue Grass site.

If the United States is to meet the 100 percent extended destruction deadline of April 2012 set by the Chemical Weapons Convention, a total of $31 million in funding needs to be allocated to the Military Quality of Life Chemical Demilitarization Construction account.

This $31 million would come in the form of a zero-sum adjustment to the President's budget, as he had included a $33 million request for ACWA under the RDT&E account.

I recognize that this bill does not have jurisdiction over the RDT&E account, which complicates the transfer of these funds. However, I request that when the House and Senate conferees meet to reconcile the two versions of this bill, that they consider adding these vital military construction funds to the ACWA program.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CHANDLER. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

I am aware that the Department of Defense wants to revise the budget request for this program. I am also aware that the Department does not want to submit a budget amendment. The gentleman from Kentucky is correct, the jurisdiction complicates the transfer of funds from RDT&E to the Chemical Demilitarization Construction account, and the timing of this request is also a complicating factor. However, I assure the gentleman from Kentucky that this issue will be kept in mind during the conference consideration of this bill.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from New York for his recognition of both the funding needs of the ACWA program and the need to dispose of these dangerous weapons that threaten the safety of communities in Richmond, Kentucky and Pueblo, Colorado.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, $46,391,000.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word to engage in a colloquy with the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH).

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will yield, I would be pleased to engage in a colloquy with my friend, from the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN).

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, as the gentleman from New York is aware, over 75 million Americans suffer serious pain, and over 50 million of these endure serious pain with a duration of 6 months or more. Many of these Americans are being treated in facilities within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently, available treatment mechanisms do not cure the pain and usually involve medications that are hardly more effective than a placebo, while introducing the risk of serious side effects. Recent clinical findings are causing widespread concern that pain killers available through prescription and over the counter are placing users at additional risk.

As the chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that must find funding to pay for these medications, the gentleman from New York has an important role in directing the Department of Veterans Affairs to use their medical dollars wisely.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEHAN. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I am aware of those facts and of the significant cost to society in the form of dollars and the quality of life.

I am also recently aware that research being done in the gentleman's district may lead to significant changes in how we treat pain and offers the promise of reducing the side effects. This research in the area of photon mediated treatment for pain, in effect using light and its associated heat, offers enough hope that I would suggest it as an area of further research within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his remarks and look forward to working with him as he moves this bill forward and into conference. I would hope that the conference statement of managers would include a suggestion to the Department of Veterans Affairs that they consider doing research in this area.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I thank the gentleman and pledge to do all I can to work with the other body to put some language on this subject in the statement of managers when we get to conference.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New York.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to engage with the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) in a brief colloquy, if he would be so kind, on the subject of cleanup at closed bases.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will yield, I am happy to enter into a colloquy with my friend, the gentleman from California.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I rise to bring to the attention of the House a problem that desperately needs attention, which is cleanup at our closed military bases. I realize that in today's tight budget situation, we have difficult choices to make, but I think it is critical that the Members of this body realize that the issue of cleanup at military bases, both the active bases and the closed bases, but especially at those that are closed, is literally a time bomb.

Mr. Chairman, I know the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) has tried to accommodate the cleanup needs of closed bases. Through the gentleman's efforts, this bill provides $377 million in BRAC money for previous rounds of closed bases. Most of this will go to cleanup, but that is far from enough to complete the cleanup and transfer this land to others so that economic growth can occur.

To my colleagues I say, if we are serious about BRAC, we have to get serious about cleanup. DOD officials claim that earlier rounds of BRAC have saved about $7 billion a year, but that is false savings when the Defense Science Board Task Force on UXO, unexploded ordnances, in February of 2004, put the cost of unexploded ordnance cleanup between $26 billion and $52 billion.

Just this past January, the GAO reported that $3.6 billion remains to be cleaned up at closed bases, and identified the base in my district, closed base Fort Ord, as having yet another $322 million in cleanup costs before the land can be transferred. This is on top of the $327 million that has already been spent on the cleanup at Fort Ord.

□ 1300

The scope of this problem is large, and Fort Ord is not the only problem. The same GAO report shows that Kelly Air Force Base in Texas still has about $209 million in cleanup costs outstanding. Seneca Army Depot in New York has $72 million in cleanup costs remaining. Savanna Depot in Illinois has $55 million, and the naval air station in South Weymouth, Massachusetts, has $39 million. The five bases cited carry a $697 million cleanup price tag, yet the bill is only able to provide $377 million for that purpose, less than half.

If, 10 years after the last BRAC round, we are still struggling to remove these bases from the Pentagon's inventory, but cannot because of cleanup problems, how are we going to cope with a round that was just announced a week ago?

BRAC has become all about disposal of military property. We have forgotten about the part of BRAC that is supposed to be about conversion of military property.

Disposal must contain a more aggressive component of cleanup so that conversion and, therefore, economic recovery can take place more quickly and more effectively.

I would suggest one option for us to consider is to rescind the MILCON money in this bill currently slated for bases that are on the closure list, and reallocate it to the BRAC cleanup. Closing bases do not need new construction, but they will need cleanup.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), who is a respected and active member of the subcommittee and knows these issues very well. Certainly, the gentleman has made us all more sensitive to the problems of unexploded ordnance and hazardous wastes at closed bases, and I commend the gentleman for that.

While I do not dispute the gentleman's logic, I cannot endorse his suggestion at this time.

As we all know, the Secretary of Defense released his BRAC recommendations to the BRAC Commission on May 13. At this time, they are just that, recommendations to the Commission. It is the Commission who will present the final report to the President later this year.

However, I will commit to my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), that we will be following this process closely, and as we move to conference on this bill, I will work with him to adjust the funding available for cleanup of bases closed in previous BRAC rounds.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. I appreciate his commitment to address this matter in conference and eagerly look forward to working with the gentleman on it.

I thank the chairman for engaging in this colloquy.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, $2,500,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACCOUNT 1990

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account 1990, established by section 2906(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), $377,827,000, to remain available until expended.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER:

Page 9, line 22, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $351,000,000)''.

Page 10, line 6, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(reduced by $351,000,000)''.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciated what we just heard a moment ago from the chairman and my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR). And I appreciate the gentleman's long involvement with this issue and sensitizing us to it.

I am deeply concerned that the parameters that the gentleman from California outlined are such that we are going to have to take a serious step back and do something this Congress. I mentioned earlier, I know that the new subcommittee's configuration gave it broad scope with lots to do. But it is time for us to take a step back and give proper focus to the problem of military cleanup on bases that have been realigned and closed.

My amendment would simply say, before we start the fifth round of base closure, the fifth round, that we ought to take some of that money that has been designated for the fifth round and instead keep faith with the 17 communities that are waiting, now since 1988, to have their problems solved.

We are all aware of the trauma that can take place in communities when bases close, how they lose jobs. They are upset. But to compound it by leaving people with a toxic white elephant is absolutely unacceptable.

I have before me here a list of the 1988 BRAC installations and the estimated date of the cleanup. At the top of the list, in no particular order, in Sacramento, California. They are going to have to wait till the year 2072 to be able to fully clean this up.

As we go down the list, it is absolutely unacceptable. It is one of the reasons that we find such apprehension regarding the BRAC process, although there is the promise of redevelopment. There are opportunities that we have seen, for example, in Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. Where it is done right, bases can be cleaned up, it can add economic vitality to communities. The sorry fact is that we have not kept faith with the communities that have suffered base closure.

I strongly urge that each and every Member of Congress take a step back. To the best of my knowledge, we have not voted specifically to put money in the cleanup process in at least the 9 years that I have been in Congress, and I have not been able to identify a specific vote before that.

The fact is that Congress is missing in action. There are people in the Department of Defense who are skilled, eager and interested to go. There is a significant private sector range of activities, businesses that are ready to do their job in base cleanup.

What is missing is that Congress has never made it a funding priority. And at the top, at the Pentagon, despite having some great people through the last two administrations who understand this problem, it has never been a top priority of the Pentagon, until we come around again talking about base closures.

I am strongly suggesting that we step forward, that we allocate this $351 million, put it here, so that we are keeping faith with these people. The fact is that if we were to approve this amendment, it would still be only a third of what is necessary, less than a third of what is necessary to deal with prior base closures. And frankly, that is just the tip of the iceberg because there are 2,307 formerly used defense sites in every State of the Union that are littered with unexploded ordnance and military toxins.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to bring this amendment forward. I appreciate the opportunity of working with this subcommittee in the future, but I want to make clear that it is time for Congress to no longer be missing in action and to take this small step to keep faith with these people who have been waiting for 17 years for the Pentagon and Congress to do the cleanup job that faces them.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER's) amendment.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by saying that I know the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) brings a tremendous amount of history to this issue and expresses the concerns that all of us feel for communities that have this long-term problem. So I accept his genuineness and his attention to this. And pressure is a good thing.

Let me state that we have just discussed this with my colleague on the subcommittee, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), and we intend to work on this when we get to conference with the Senate.

I would just point out that the Navy recently sold the former Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro in California for $650 million, which was a much higher price than was anticipated. Since all land sale revenues must come back into the priority BRAC account, there will be some additional funds available in fiscal year 2006 for environmental cleanup.

This amendment is probably not necessary. DOD has indicated that by the year 2008 it will have either completed the cleanup or put into place all the remedial systems it needs for cleanup at all but two installations. Once in place, the cleanup will take time, and more funds will not necessarily speed up the process.

These are areas, for example, where you have a range, firing range, where mortars or small arms or other weaponry was fired and remains unexploded in the ground. It will take time to find that. It is a very dangerous process. I am sure it is a very tedious, stressful process, but it has to be done right, so it does take time.

I would also note that by taking money out of the 2005 BRAC account, the gentleman would actually compound the very problem he is trying to correct for the upcoming BRAC. It will slow down the cleanup and disposal of closed bases for this round and will, therefore, negatively impact the economies of those communities by stalling reuse development.

We do intend to deal with this issue in conference. And we will look at what funds may reasonably be added to the prior BRAC account to accelerate environmental cleanup. We need to make

sure that more funds will actually translate into more effect. Since I do not know, at this time, what that plus-up could be, I am afraid that I must oppose the gentleman's amendment.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to rise and associate myself with the remarks of the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) and strongly support his amendment. Let me also add and thank the very thoughtful colloquy that was conducted by the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) and the distinguished chairman from New York (Mr. WALSH). Clearly, his involvement and assistance is much needed and greatly appreciated.

But as a State and, I daresay, for the Northeast as an entire region that has been targeted, when you look at statistically what is going on here in the 17 communities, as the gentleman noted, that are in dire shape, and you look at the length of time as we project out, you now understand why communities have such enormous apprehension about this. Or as Peter Finley Dunne would say, ''Trust everyone, but cut the cards.'' And in the case of the BRAC hearings, we feel that we need a new deal.

I further would just say in listening to the distinguished Chair, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), and again, I applaud him personally for his efforts, while there will be more money available for cleanup from the sale of the El Toro Marine Air Station, the amount needed is over $3.6 billion. Even with these new funds, we are less than one-third of the way there in terms of the funding. One-third of the way there, and we are adding on all these new communities.

And in looking at what the BRAC findings initially have projected, and especially looking at the State of Connecticut in terms of the cleanup, how drastically underestimated they have been in those areas as well. So these are very disturbing, and that is why I again thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for raising this very important and thoughtful amendment, a common-sense approach, that before we proceed to a fifth round, that we make sure that we address these very important issues that impact all of our communities.

If we are going to have trust in this process, as the gentleman has appropriately pointed out, then Congress cannot abrogate its responsibility. It has to assume that responsibility and assure these communities that are going to be impacted, if we are to proceed in a strategic and very important, common-sense approach to this issue.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment to discuss it in a broad sense. I am also very supportive of our chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH). I am on the committee. But this is an opportunity for us to focus in on the need for base cleanup.

And it is an easy expression to say base ''cleanup,'' the word, but the process is elaborate because there are all kinds of cleanup. Essentially, the cleanup that most people know that would be in any city where you had a motor pool, where you had garages and fuel spent, all bases have that. Those are common kinds of industrial types of cleanup.

You have areas that most communities do not have, which are firing ranges. Most of that is lead cleanup. Those are not necessarily unexploded ordnances because you fire in for targets. You have cleanup because big bases have their own places that they dumped, in many cases, the old days they just dumped the fuel, poured it on the ground, but they also had solid waste sites. And as the rains came the leachates through the solid waste site get into the groundwater. So we have now ground water contamination. That is another cleanup.

And lastly and most elaborately, you have one cleanup that only the Federal Government does and only people that have been trained by the Federal Government, even though they may be in the private sector, are authorized to do. We do all the unexploded ordnance cleanup; nobody else in the world does that. And that cleanup is very specific because, as the chairman said, it is dangerous. It is unexploded ordnances that are in the ground and oftentimes buried. And it is slow.

But the fact of the matter is that if these were private lands, the private sector would have to clean it up. That is the law. And we know about Superfund law and things like that. When it is the government they can take more time and do it at their own pace, and particularly the military, because their mission is to go fight military battles.

□ 1315

The last thing that you want to do is spend a lot of money just trying to clean up the ground which is left behind. And on that ground, are some buildings that, I might add, are old buildings that have lead paint and asbestos in them which have to have certain protocols for getting rid of the lead paint and asbestos.

So unless this attention is given, what people do is they put this stuff on the back burner and say, that is expensive. Let us go at it slowly. We will not have to appropriate enough money to it. You have communities now coming and begging to the military saying, why do you not just give us the money. This is called a buy-out. I am working on this in my own district to see if you can buy a buy-out so that the government can put up the money and the community will accept the responsibility for getting it done. They may be able to get it done faster. They think they can.

So these are the kinds of issues that I think it is important that we focus on. I really applaud the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for not only bringing this amendment to the floor, but he has been doing this for years by trying to tweak the conscience of Congress to say these things are about cleanup. It is a responsibility that the private sector knows they have to do, and we in the public sector ought to be doing the same and particularly the military.

I might add, it is not all criticism of the military. Recently, since the environmental laws have come along, I found that the military has been a very good steward of these laws. In fact, now on all our ranges and all the things that the military does, they have reports of where every shell goes. They keep those reports. They know where the contamination is. They try to do cleanup as they go along, and they try to minimize any kind of adverse impacts on the environment. I applaud the military for that.

We have to be good stewards and good citizens of our communities where our military bases are and take the responsibility for cleaning up these extraordinary amounts of messes, particularly at a time when you want to use that land for economic recovery. And you cannot even get on the land; you cannot walk on it. They put a fence around it. That is the worst thing that can ever happen to a community and to closed bases.

I applaud this effort to bring attention to all of the Members of Congress that we have got a real problem here, and that we have got to focus some attention and figure out the resources that we need to get the job done. I applaud the chairman for his work and conscientiousness in trying to see that we might be able to go some money in conference to address this problem.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support of the Blumenauer amendment that would shift funding for the 2005 BRAC round into accounts that would be used to finish the cleanup of all the installations closed in previous rounds, all of which, by the way, occurred over 10 years ago.

The Department of Defense is currently conducting a review of the military's overseas facility structure as well as the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review, the QDR. These are important and very telling studies that have not yet been completed that will give us in Congress a much clearer picture of our military's future landscape and needs; and meanwhile, we should take the time to finish the job we started in the late 80s.

Mr. Chairman, yesterday morning I flew home to Marietta, Georgia, in my district, where I had the pleasure of meeting one of the nine BRAC commissioners as he toured Naval Air Station Atlanta in the 11th district. While we

were there, a comment was made that the commander of the facility would like to have rolled the 40-plus planes, Humvees, and Cobra helicopters out on the tarmac for review, but they were all deployed in the war on terror.

Mr. Chairman, the DOD has recommended that these assets be realigned elsewhere; yet I am concerned that proper due diligence has not been paid to consider the overall force structure needs of the military, the very purpose of the QDR that will not be completed for months.

If BRAC is to occur, I believe that it can be carried out in a much more effective manner once we have a better idea about what the future holds. So for that reason, I believe that we should allocate our scarce resources to completing the cleanup necessary for those communities already impacted by BRAC to reclaim the land and put it to good use.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, I fully support the Blumenauer amendment.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Chairman, on June 22, 2004, I came to the floor of this house in support of the gentleman from Oregon's (Mr. BLUMENAUER) amendment to the Fiscal Year 2005 Defense Appropriations bill relative to unexploded ordnance (UXO). I rise again today in support of my colleague's UXO amendment.

My home state of Hawaii is the perfect example of how and why funds for the cleanup of UXO are very much needed. Several years ago, the Department of Defense (DOD) identified over fifty DOD-registered locations in my state that have not been cleaned up. These sites continue to present significant and ongoing public safety risks.

One of these locations is the Waikoloa/Waimea Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) on my Island of Hawaii. The site includes over 137,000 acres and all or parts of the communities of Waikoloa and Waimea (Kamuela). The U.S. Navy acquired the area in 1943 through licensing agreements for use as a military training camp and artillery range. U.S. Marine Corps maneuvers and intensive live-fire training included hand grenades, 4.2-inch mortar, and 37 millimeter (mm), 75mm, 105mm, and 155mm high explosive shells.

The first ordnance cleanup activity occurred in 1946. In 1954, military ordnance disposal units began to identify and dispose of thousands of munitions. The United States Army Corps of Engineers determined the site was eligible for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program Formerly Used Defense Site in 1992.

An engineering evaluation/cost analysis, completed in January 2002, designated the entire property as a potential ordnance health and safety risk. Eleven areas within property (48,000 acres) were determined to have the highest risk, including all of the Waikoloa Village and the developing urban area from Kawaihae to Waimea. In that analysis, the United States Army Corps of Engineers estimated that the cost to complete the cleanup for the entire site is $653 million.

Mr. Chairman, our military plays a vital role in our society and throughout the world. My state of Hawaii is the location for the regional headquarters of each of the service branches as well as the Pacific Command. Hawaii proudly continues to play a vital role in America's military, commercial, and diplomatic relations with countries in the Pacific Rim and beyond.

However, I strongly believe that the military must also follow practices espoused by parents, teachers, and camp counselors alike: Leave any place you have visited cleaner than when you arrived. Along these lines, the United States Army Corps of Engineers is ready and willing to be better engaged in the cleanup process. Congress must now take the first step of appropriating sufficient funds for this important action.

I again wish to commend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for his continued diligent work on this important issue. I look forward to working with him in the future and urge my colleagues to support this important, vital amendment for communities throughout our country.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER:

Page 9, line 22, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $55,000,000)''.

Page 10, line 6, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(reduced by $55,000,000)''.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, it is my intention not to unduly delay this effort. I will withdraw this amendment at the end, but I want to finish the thought because I deeply appreciate what my colleagues have mentioned referencing the unexploded ordnance issue.

I want to agree with what the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) said, the Department of Defense is making tremendous progress dealing with cleanup of unexploded ordnance.

This is a representative sample of the problem. I will tell you that this picture could have been taken at any of dozens of sites around the country. What is most distressing is that we do not know the full extent of all of the unexploded ordnance that is our responsibility.

A couple of years ago, I led a tour with my colleague, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), to the campus of American University where the toxic residue of World War I was still being cleaned up after three efforts. The child care center was closed down. An athletic field was denied access to athletes, and over the fence, the back yard of the $10 million little bungalow of the Korean ambassador was all dug up because they were trying to complete what they hoped might be the final cleanup of this site within the boundaries of the District of Columbia. There are 2,307 sites around the country were formally used sites.

It is true that these amendments, as the chairman says, may take a little money away from the fifth round. It may slow it. I would be prepared to argue that in good faith that it is not going to slow it, but frankly, if we cannot keep faith with the people 18 years ago, maybe we should slow it down before we go to the districts in Georgia and Connecticut and elsewhere around the country. But, in fact, I do not think that will be the case.

This program has been plagued by an on-again off-again effort. We have not geared it up. We have not turned loose the expertise in the military and in the private sector, people who could solve these problems if we had a guaranteed stream of funding.

If we did the research, we would find that more people would be in the business, the cost of the bids would go down, we would develop the technology, and not only would we remove unexploded ordnance that is in every State of the Union, but we would develop technology that would make our fighting men and women safer in Iraq and Afghanistan. It would make civilians safer in Southeast Asia and in Africa and the Balkans.

This is our responsibility, and we have been missing in action too long as a Congress.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) talks about the complexity of being able to survey large areas. It takes time. But there is new technology that can speed it up. I have been working with another subcommittee to get funding for what is called Wide Area Assessment. The Defense Science Board says if we would spend a billion dollars over the next 5 years, we could probably identify 8 million acres or more that was not contaminated. We could return it to be wildlife or redeveloped, or it could even be used for other military purposes. It is an example of where, if we do our job, we will save money, we will save lives, we will advance technology, and it will move forward.

I deeply appreciate the time that has been taken this afternoon for this discussion. I appreciate the chairman and ranking member for their engagement in this, for providing feedback to me and my staff and others, for the assurances that in conference we will try to move some of this money around, that the El Toro money that could be used for additional naval cleanup. All this is great, but it is a drop in the bucket of the overall problem. It is less than half of our obligation just for things that we have already closed.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I am going to withdraw this amendment. I appreciate being able to make the point. I look forward to working with the gentleman, but I would hope that our colleagues will take this seriously because it can have vast implications for military readiness, for the environment, and keeping faith with our communities who expect that we will do our job. Today I hope we will take a step in doing just that.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACCOUNT 2005

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure Account 2005, established by section 2906A(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), $1,570,466,000, to remain available until expended.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Army on active duty, $3,945,392,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, NAVY

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Navy on active duty, $3,592,905,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, MARINE CORPS

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Marine Corps on active duty, $1,179,071,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, AIR FORCE

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Air Force on active duty, $3,240,113,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Army National Guard on active duty, $453,690,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Air National Guard on active duty, $248,317,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY RESERVE

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Army Reserve on active duty, $310,566,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, NAVAL RESERVE

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Naval Reserve on active duty, $191,338,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, MARINE CORPS RESERVE

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Marine Corps Reserve on active duty, $40,609,000.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Air Force Reserve on active duty, $71,286,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, ARMY

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Army, $1,850,518,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, NAVY

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Navy, $1,344,971,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, MARINE CORPS

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Marine Corps, $553,960,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, AIR FORCE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Air Force, $1,845,701,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Department of Defense, $115,400,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Army National Guard, $391,544,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Air National Guard, $184,791,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, ARMY RESERVE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Army Reserve, $204,370,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, NAVAL RESERVE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Naval Reserve, $67,788,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, MARINE CORPS RESERVE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Marine Corps Reserve, $10,105,000.

FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For expenses for facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization of the Air Force Reserve, $55,764,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, ARMY

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the Department of the Army, $407,865,000, to remain available until transferred: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Army shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris of the Department of the Army, or for similar purposes, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of the Army, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, NAVY

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the Department of the Navy, $305,275,000, to remain available until transferred: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Navy shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris of the Department of the Navy, or for similar purposes, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of the Navy, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, AIR FORCE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the Department of the Air Force, $406,461,000, to remain available until transferred: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Air Force shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris of the Department of the Air Force, or for similar purposes, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of the Air Force, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the Department of Defense, $28,167,000, to remain available until transferred: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Defense shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris of the Department of Defense, or for similar purposes, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of Defense, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the Department of the Army, $221,921,000, to remain available until transferred: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Army shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris at sites formerly used by the Department of Defense, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of the Army, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM

For expenses, not otherwise provided for, for medical and health care programs of the Department of Defense, as authorized by law, $19,983,912,000, of which $19,184,537,000 shall be

for operation and maintenance, of which not to exceed 2 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2007, and of which up to $10,212,427,000 may be available for contracts entered into under the TRICARE program; of which $355,119,000, to remain available for obligation until September 30, 2008, shall be for procurement; and of which $444,256,000, to remain available for obligation until September 30, 2007, shall be for research, development, test and evaluation: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, of the amount made available under this heading for research, development, test and evaluation, not less than $7,500,000 shall be available for HIV prevention educational activities undertaken in connection with U.S. military training, exercises, and humanitarian assistance activities conducted primarily in African nations.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed $25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds appropriated in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds appropriated in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than $25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed $500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any NATO member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Sea, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Sea, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed $1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: *Provided*, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: *Provided further*, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense is to inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of the plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed $100,000.

SEC. 114. Not more than 20 percent of the funds made available in this title which are limited for obligation during the current fiscal year shall be obligated during the last 2 months of the fiscal year.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 115. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 116. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 117. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds appropriated to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were appropriated if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

SEC. 118. The Secretary of Defense is to provide the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress with an annual report by February 15, containing details of the specific actions proposed to be taken by the Department of Defense during the current fiscal year to encourage other member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Japan, Korea, and United States allies bordering the Arabian Sea to assume a greater share of the common defense burden of such nations and the United States.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, proceeds deposited to the Department of Defense Base Closure Account established by section 207(a)(1) of the Defense Authorization Amendments and Base Closure and Realignment Act (10 U.S.C. 2687 note) pursuant to section 207(a)(2)(C) of such Act, may be transferred to the account established by section 2906(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to be merged with, and to be available for the same purposes and the same time period as that account.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 120. Subject to 30 days prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in ''Family Housing'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in ''Military Construction'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: *Provided*, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

SEC. 121. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for Partnership for Peace Programs in the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union.

SEC. 122. (a) Not later than 60 days before issuing any solicitation for a contract with the private sector for military family housing the Secretary of the military department concerned shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the notice described in subsection (b).

(b)(1) A notice referred to in subsection (a) is a notice of any guarantee (including the making of mortgage or rental payments) proposed to be made by the Secretary to the private party under the contract involved in the event of—

(A) the closure or realignment of the installation for which housing is provided under the contract;

(B) a reduction in force of units stationed at such installation; or

(C) the extended deployment overseas of units stationed at such installation.

(2) Each notice under this subsection shall specify the nature of the guarantee involved and assess the extent and likelihood, if any, of the liability of the Federal Government with respect to the guarantee.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 123. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the account established by section 2906(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for

expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program. Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 124. Notwithstanding this or any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: *Provided*, That not more than $35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: *Provided further*, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

SEC. 125. None of the funds made available in this title under the heading ''North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program'', and no funds appropriated for any fiscal year before fiscal year 2006 for that program that remain available for obligation, may be obligated or expended for the conduct of studies of missile defense.

SEC. 126. Whenever the Secretary of Defense or any other official of the Department of Defense is requested by the subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives or the subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate to respond to a question or inquiry submitted by the chairman or another member of that subcommittee pursuant to a subcommittee hearing or other activity, the Secretary (or other official) shall respond to the request, in writing, within 21 days of the date on which the request is transmitted to the Secretary (or other official).

SEC. 127. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 128. During the 5-year period after appropriations available to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation, ''Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense,'' to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 129. None of the funds appropriated in this title available for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) or TRICARE shall be available for the reimbursement of any health care provider for inpatient mental health service for care received when a patient is referred to a provider of inpatient mental health care or residential treatment care by a medical or health care professional having an economic interest in the facility to which the patient is referred: *Provided*, That this limitation does not apply in the case of inpatient mental health services provided under the program for persons with disabilities under subsection (d) of section 1079 of title 10, United States Code, provided as partial hospital care, or provided pursuant to a waiver authorized by the Secretary of Defense because of medical or psychological circumstances of the patient that are confirmed by a health professional who is not a Federal employee after a review, pursuant to rules prescribed by the Secretary, which takes into account the appropriate level of care for the patient, the intensity of services required by the patient, and the availability of that care.

SEC. 130. The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, may carry out a program to distribute surplus dental and medical equipment of the Department of Defense, at no cost to the Department of Defense, to Indian Health Service facilities and to federally-qualified health centers (within the meaning of section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))).

SEC. 131. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to carry out a military construction project, land acquisition, or family housing project for a military installation approved for closure in 2005 under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (part A of title XXIX of Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note), and the Secretary of Defense may not transfer funds appropriated for such a military construction project, land acquisition, or family housing project to another account or use such funds for another purpose or project without the approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 132. None of the funds in this title for operation, maintenance, or repair of housing for general officers and flag officers in the National Capital Region may be used until the Department of Defense submits the report required by section 2802(c) of the Military Construction Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of title I be considered as read, printed in the RECORD, and open to amendment at any point.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61); pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 92 Stat. 2508); and burial benefits, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 540 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 43 Stat. 122, 123; 45 Stat. 735; 76 Stat. 1198), $33,412,879,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That not to exceed $23,491,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be reimbursed to ''General operating expenses'' and ''Medical services'' for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code), the funding source for which is specifically provided as the ''Compensation and pensions'' appropriation: *Provided further*, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to ''Medical facilities revolving fund'' to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. OBEY:

Page 31, line 1, relating to VA compensation and pensions, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $26,000,000)''.

Page 34, line 21, relating to VA medical services, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $1,500,000,000)''.

Page 36, line 9, relating to VA medical administration, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $500,000,000)''.

Page 37, line 1, relating to VA medical facilities, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $300,000,000)''.

Page 37, line 8, relating to VA medical and prosthetic research, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $67,000,000)''.

Page 37, line 20, relating to VA general operating expense, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $11,000,000)''.

Page 39, line 16, relating to major construction projects, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $150,000,000)''.

Page 41, line 11, relating to minor construction projects, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $51,000,000)''.

At the end of the bill (before the short title) add the following new section:

SEC. 409. In the case of taxpayers with an adjusted gross income in excess of $1,000,000 for taxable year 2006, the amount of tax reduction resulting from the enactment of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–16) and the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–27) shall be reduced by 8.125 percent.

Mr. OBEY (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. A point of order is reserved.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, let me simply explain the amendment.

As I discussed earlier, under existing law given the tax cuts that the Congress has passed this year, persons making a million dollars or more will on average get a tax cuts of $140,000. Meanwhile, we have a significant squeeze on veterans funding.

Very briefly, my amendment would simply scale back the size of those tax cuts from $140,000 to $129,000. It would use the $2.6 billion saved by that action to add funding to a number of accounts for veterans health care. It would add $1.5 billion more for medical services for returning veterans. It would add $500 million more for increased medical administrative costs. It would add $300 million to keep the VA medical facilities up and running by refurbishing them. It would add $67 million for VA medical and prosthetic research; $201 million to build medical clinics and long-term care facilities; and $37 million for general administrative costs to assist veterans in receiving the prompt attention they deserve.

As has been indicated, the rule that was adopted precludes this amendment from being, or I should put it this way, the rule that is offered makes this amendment subject to a point of order. That means that it cannot be considered unless a point of order is not lodged against it.

I would hope that the majority would not lodge a point of order against it so that we might adjust so very slightly the tax cut for those who are already the most fortunate people in our society economically, and allow this money to be added for veterans health care.

I do not want to take any more of the House's time. I would simply urge an ''aye'' vote in the event that a point of order is not lodged against the amendment.

□ 1330

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I make a point of order against the amendment because it proposes to change existing law and constitutes legislation on an appropriations bill and, therefore, violates clause 2 of rule XXI. The rule states in pertinent part: An amendment to a general appropriation bill shall not be in order if changing existing law. The amendment does indeed change the application of existing law.

The gentleman from Wisconsin has served for many, many years with distinction on the Committee on Appropriations. He knows full well the powers of the Committee on Appropriations. This is not one of them. The ability to manipulate and change the Tax Code is not within our jurisdiction.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that, I insist on the point of order and I ask for a ruling from the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Does anyone else wish to be heard on the point of order?

Mr. OBEY. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the Budget Act, when it was passed several decades ago, was to force Congress to make trade-offs between different spending programs and between revenues and spending. The problem is that the way the Budget Act is being used these days, instead of forcing the Congress to face those trade-offs, the process is being segmented, thereby enabling the House to avoid facing those trade-offs.

I think that is unfortunate because it prevents the House from making value judgments that would put veterans' health care, for instance, higher in our value structure than a $140,000 tax cut for somebody making $1 million.

I cannot deny that under the rules of the House, as they are being pursued under the Budget Act, this amendment is not in order. And so, Mr. Chairman, I regretfully concede the point of order.

The CHAIRMAN. The point of order is conceded and sustained. The amendment is not in order.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 51, 53, 55, and 61), $3,214,246,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided,* That expenses for rehabilitiation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, other than under subsection (a)(1), (2), (5), and (11) of that section, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 19; 70 Stat. 887; 72 Stat. 487, $45,907,000, to remain available until expended.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be neccessary to carry out the program, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 37: *Provided,* That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further,* That during fiscal year 2005, within the resources available, not to exceed $500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carrry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $153,575,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''General operating expenses''.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct loans, $53,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided,* That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further,* That these funds under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed $4,242,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, $305,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''General operating expenses''.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, $580,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''General operating expenses'': *Provided,* That no new loans in excess of $30,000,000 may be made in fiscal year 2006.

GUARANTEED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING LOANS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the administrative expenses to carry out the guaranteed transitional housing loan program authorized by subchapter VI of chapter 37, of title 38, United States Code, not to exceed $750,000 of the amounts appropriated by this Act for ''General operating expenses'' and ''Medical administration'' may be expended.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment and salaries and expenses of health-care employees hired under title 38, United States Code, and aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code; $20,995,141,000, plus reimbursements, of which not less than $2,200,000,000 shall be expended for specialty mental health care: *Provided,* That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $1,100,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007: *Provided further,* That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for treatment for veterans who are service-connected disabled, lower income, or have special needs: *Provided further,* That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: *Provided further,* That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: *Provided further,* That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: *Provided further,* That for the Department of Defense/Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 721 of Public Law 107–314, a minimum of $15,000,000, to remain available until expended, for the purposes authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; information technology hardware and software; uniforms or allowances therefor, as authorized by sections 5901–5902 of title 5, United States Code; administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.); $4,134,874,000, plus reimbursements, of which $250,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing

homes, and domiciliary facilities and other necessary facilities for the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry and food services, $3,297,669,000, plus reimbursements, of which $250,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until September 30, 2007, $393,000,000, plus reimbursements.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms or allowances therefor; not to exceed $25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, $1,411,827,000: *Provided*, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: *Provided further*, That the Veterans Benefits Administration shall be funded at not less than $1,086,938,000: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $70,000,000 shall be available for obligation until September 30, 2007: *Provided further*, That from the funds made available under this heading, the Veterans Benefits Administration may purchase up to two passenger motor vehicles for use in operations of that Administration in Manila, Philippines.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; and hire of passenger motor vehicles, $156,447,000: *Provided*, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $7,800,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978, $70,174,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending and improving any of the facilities including parking projects under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, 8102, 8103, 8106, 8108, 8109, 8110, and 8122 of title 38, United States Code, including planning, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, $607,100,000, to remain available until expended, of which $532,010,000 shall be for Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) activities; and of which $8,091,000 shall be to make reimbursements as provided in section 13 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 612) for claims paid for contract disputes: *Provided*, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, such as portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund and CARES funds, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, none of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: *Provided further*, That funds provided in this appropriation for fiscal year 2006, for each approved project (except those for CARES activities referenced above) shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2006; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2007: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly report in writing to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate any approved major construction project in which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities including parking projects under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, 8102, 8103, 8106, 8108, 8109, 8110, 8122, and 8162 of title 38, United States Code, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, $208,937,000, to remain available until expended, along with unobligated balances of previous ''Construction, minor projects'' appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section, of which $160,000,000 shall be for Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) activities: *Provided*, That funds in this account shall be available for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify or alter existing hospital, nursing home and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131–8137 of title 38, United States Code, $25,000,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to aid States in establishing, expanding, or improving State veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, $32,000,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2006 for ''Compensation and pensions'', ''Readjustment benefits'', and ''Veterans insurance and indemnities'' may be transferred to any other of the mentioned appropriations.

SEC. 202. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901–5902 of such title.

SEC. 203. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for ''Construction, major projects'', and ''Construction, minor projects'') shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled under the laws bestowing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901–7904 of title 5, United States Code or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of cost is made to the ''Medical services'' account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 205. Appropriations available in this title for ''Compensation and pensions'', ''Readjustment benefits'', and ''Veterans insurance and indemnities'' shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2005.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable from ''Compensation and pensions''.

SEC. 207. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1920), the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1923), and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1955), reimburse the ''General operating expenses'' account for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: *Provided*, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in an insurance program in fiscal year 2006 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: *Provided*

further, That if the cost of administration of an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2006 which is properly allocable to the provision of each insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in such insurance program.

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall continue the Franchise Fund pilot program authorized to be established by section 403 of Public Law 103–356 until October 1, 2006: *Provided*, That the Franchise Fund, established by title I of Public Law 104–204 to finance the operations of the Franchise Fund pilot program, shall continue until October 1, 2006.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not exceed $29,758,000 for the Office of Resolution Management and $3,059,000 for the Office of Employment and Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: *Provided*, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: *Provided further*, That amounts received shall be credited to ''General operating expenses'' for use by the office that provided the service.

SEC. 211. No appropriations in this title shall be available to enter into any new lease of real property if the estimated annual rental is more than $300,000 unless the Secretary submits a report which the Committees on Appropriations of the Congress approve within 30 days following the date on which the report is received.

SEC. 212. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: *Provided*, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: *Provided further*, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

SEC. 213. None of the funds made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act, or any other Act, may be used to implement sections 2 and 5 of Public Law 107–287 and section 303 of Public Law 108–422.

SEC. 214. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, at the discretion of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the ''Construction, major projects'' and ''Construction, minor projects'' accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in ''Construction, major projects'' and ''Construction, minor projects''.

SEC. 215. Amounts made available under ''Medical services'' are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

SEC. 216. That such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to ''Medical services'', to remain available until expended for the purposes of this account.

SEC. 217. Amounts made available for fiscal year 2006 under the ''Medical services'', ''Medical administration'', and ''Medical facilities'' accounts may be transferred between the accounts to the extent necessary to implement the restructuring of the Veterans Health Administration accounts after notice of the amount and purpose of the transfer is provided to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives and a period of 30 days has elapsed: *Provided*, That the limitation on transfers is 20 percent in fiscal year 2006.

SEC. 218. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2006 for the Veterans Benefits Administration made available under the heading ''General operating expenses'' may be transferred to the ''Veterans Housing Benefit Program Fund Program Account'' for the purpose of providing funds for the nationwide property management contract if the administrative costs of such contract exceed $8,800,000 in the budget year.

SEC. 219. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) shall allow veterans eligible under existing VA Medical Care requirements and who reside in Alaska to obtain medical care services from medical facilities supported by the Indian Health Services or tribal organizations. The Secretary shall: (1) limit the application of this provision to rural Alaskan veterans in areas where an existing VA facility or VA-contracted service is unavailable; (2) require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary; (3) require this provision to be consistent with CARES; and (4) result in no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Indian Health Service.

SEC. 220. That such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the ''Construction, major projects'' and ''Construction, minor projects'' accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 221. None of the funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act, or any other Act, may be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement a national standardized contract for diabetes monitoring systems.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one for replacement only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed $7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, $35,750,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, $15,250,000, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251–7298 of title 38, United States Code, $18,295,000, of which $1,260,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102–229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, as authorized by law, for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase of two passenger motor vehicles for replacement only, and not to exceed $1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, $29,550,000, to remain available until expended. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $58,281,000, of which $1,248,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport.

TITLE IV

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds provided in this Act may be used, directly or through grants, to pay or to provide reimbursement for payment of the salary of a consultant (whether retained by the Federal Government or a grantee) at more than the daily equivalent of the rate paid for level IV of the Executive Schedule, unless specifically authorized by law.

SEC. 403. Such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006 pay raises for programs funded by this Act shall be absorbed within the levels appropriated in this Act.

SEC. 404. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program,

project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 405. No part of any funds appropriated in this Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, and for the preparation, distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress, except in presentation to Congress itself.

SEC. 406. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of ''E-Commerce'' technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 407. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this Act or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 408. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

Mr. WALSH (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of the bill through page 54, line 13, be considered as read, printed in the RECORD and open to any amendment at this point.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MRS. JONES OF OHIO

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mrs. JONES of Ohio:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following new section:

SEC. 4____. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to implement the results of the 2005 round of base closures and realignments until the completion of all environmental remediation associated with the closure of military installations approved for closure in the 1995 round of base closures and realignments.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the gentlewoman's amendment.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I intend to withdraw this amendment, but what I wanted to have in the RECORD before I do the withdrawal is the fact that in many of the prior base closures there are still environmental issues that have not been addressed, that have not been remedied; and we really need to take a look at that as we go through the next round to make sure that the dollars we have allocated and the closures we have put in place under BRAC have been taken care of.

Mr. Chairman, in order to ensure the movement of this legislation through the house, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the amendment is considered withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MRS. JONES OF OHIO

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mrs. JONES of Ohio:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 4____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to close or realign any military installation approved for closure or realignment in 2005 before the Secretary of Defense makes the information available upon which the Secretary's closure and realignment recommendations were based, as required by section 2903(c)(4) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (title XXIX of Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note).

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order against the gentlewoman's amendment.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment to the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations, which would require that all information used by the Secretary of Defense to implement its current base closing recommendations be released to Congress, the public, and the BRAC Commission before any actions on base closings can take place.

Mr. Chairman, first things first. Why are we proposing base closures during a time of war? This BRAC round should be delayed until the following actions can be completed: recommendations of the review of overseas military structures are implemented by the Secretary of Defense, a substantial number of American troops returned from Iraq, the House and the Senate Committee on Armed Services receive the Quadrennial Defense Review, the National Maritime Security Strategy is implemented, and the Homeland Defense and Civil Support Directive is implemented.

In addition, all information used by the Secretary to determine base closings should be released to the Congress and the American public. It is important these be addressed before implementing the BRAC process because once a base is closed, it can never be reopened.

Mr. Chairman, in the 11th Congressional District and in northeast Ohio, over 1,100 jobs will be lost due to the BRAC process. These job losses will have a tremendous economic impact on the City of Cleveland, which has been named the most impoverished city in the country. Now is simply not the time for BRAC, in Cleveland or around the country.

Mr. Chairman, I realize the importance of the BRAC process; however, I feel that all information should be released in order for communities to prepare adequate defense tactics for future hearings. Now is simply not the time for BRAC.

I commend my colleagues, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) and Senator THUNE for introducing legislation to address this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I support this amendment.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, the gentlewoman from Ohio has changed the language to comply with the existing legislation, so I have no objection to it, and I withdraw my reservation of the point of order.

□ 1345

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs JONES of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to rise in support of the Jones amendment. I think the gentlewoman is right on point here. I know for my base, in this case Fort Monmouth, we have not received a lot of the data, most of the data upon which the Pentagon's recommendations were made. I think that was quite clear if you listen to the hearings that were held last week by the BRAC. Many of the commissioners at that time indicated they did not have the background data upon which the Pentagon's recommendations were made.

I think this is just another indication of the fact that we have not been able to proceed with this BRAC round in the way we have in the past. I have actually been through three other BRAC rounds since I have been in the Congress; and just from the questioning that occurred last week at the BRAC hearings from the commissioners, it was clear this is not the time to have a BRAC round.

We are in the middle of a war, both in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Many of the commissioners asked questions about the war and the military value because they frankly felt that in a general sense questions had not been answered by the Pentagon, and the Pentagon was not able to answer the questions properly about how this BRAC round was supposed to proceed in the context of an ongoing war.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, in closing, I am so pleased that Senator SNOWE is offering a similar piece of legislation in the Senate with regard to data information on specific projects. I thank all of my colleagues for coming to the floor to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time in the name of the people of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Jones amendment today because it gives this House another opportunity to slow the process down. We did not take that opportunity last night in

support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY), despite the compelling testimony offered by a number of Members about the fact that we still have a lot of information outlying that should come to us within the upcoming months, within the year, including the Quadrennial Defense Review, that would actually help the BRAC commissioners to evaluate the DOD's recommendations for those installations that they have submitted on a list for recommendations of closure and realignment.

But the Jones amendment says, okay, if we are not going to do that, if we are not going to postpone the BRAC rounds to get all of the information from the overseas base closures, from the QDR, getting troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, dealing with the maritime issues, dealing with homeland defense and civil support directives, then let us at least say in fairness and for a process that should be open and transparent as opposed to emulating litigation discovery processes here, give us the information as Members of Congress, the task force and the communities, the commissioners now that are supposed to be evaluating these recommendations.

How can we expect them to do that in a process that is supposed to be open and transparent, when piecemeal by piecemeal the Department of Defense is releasing this information as opposed to releasing it in a more comprehensive way, as was done in the last BRAC round in 1995?

Let me give an example. Last night right before we voted on the Bradley amendment, we received word, the offices for South Dakota here and over in the Senate and in the community of Rapid City, that the Department of Defense had just released some additional information.

Here we thought we have what we need to start assessing and evaluating these recommendations. Most of this information had already been released. We have less than 10 percent of what we need. Less than 10 percent of what we need, just a couple of weeks out from our regional hearing to begin evaluating what drove the Department of Defense's evaluation to rank Ellsworth Air Force Base the way they did, and how they applied the criteria.

We cannot make our case, and there are people in Rapid City, South Dakota, with the task force in support of Ellsworth Air Force Base that have been working for years in anticipation of this day, and we are not willing to slow this process down enough to get adequate and comprehensive information from the Department of Defense?

It is clear that either they were so under the gun to meet the deadline of May 13 that they did not adequately plan or have enough time to determine what it was that was going to have to be classified or declassified before releasing the information, either in the aggregate or installation by installation.

If the reason for that is primarily for national security reasons because we are at war, that justifies slowing this process down at least a little bit so the Department of Defense is forced to release this information that we have had in past BRAC rounds so it is in fairness to the communities and really faithful to the BRAC process which is to be open and transparent and allow communities to make their best case before the commissioners prior to the site reviews, prior to the regional hearings.

I encourage my colleagues, while Members may have had reservations last night, to postpone the BRAC round awaiting all of the other information. Can we not at least slow it down enough to ensure that the Department of Defense is accountable to each and every one of us and our constituents and our military installations to get that information to ensure a fair, open, and transparent process? I hope Members will agree and support the Jones amendment.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

I just wanted to comment on what the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) said. In the last BRAC round in 1995, we had all of the information to back up the Pentagon's recommendations within a few days. It is almost 2 weeks now since the base closure list came out. I think it was the Friday before last.

As the gentlewoman mentioned, we are still lacking most of the background information for these recommendations.

For example, in the case of Fort Monmouth, which is represented by me and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), the recommendation says that to close Fort Monmouth and move it would cost $822 million and that over the next 6 years, annually, there would be a savings of about $143 million.

We do not have the background information that the Pentagon used to make those kinds of number-crunching decisions. The number-crunchers have not given us that kind of information. How are we supposed to prepare for a site visit next week, or regional hearings in early July, without having that information?

It is simply inappropriate, and it certainly has not been the case in the past. I have been through three previous BRAC rounds, and that was never the case. That is why the Jones amendment is so important. And particularly when the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) references military value, this is all about military value.

In the case of Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, we are an electronics and communications command for the Army. We basically back up the soldier in the field with equipment that is electronic or related communications. Our point that we have been trying to make is if you close Fort Monmouth over the next few years, that commander in the field who might need some communications or electronics equipment in the next few days or the next few weeks will not have access to it because Fort Monmouth is in the process of moving and people will not be available to do what is necessary for the soldier in the field.

How can the Pentagon make recommendations and not take that into mind? We have no indication of how they address that issue because we do not have the backup data. That is why this amendment is important. I urge my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to support it.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to elaborate very briefly on the preceding remarks. We are talking about a time when men and women are risking their lives in the field, facing roadside bombs and mortar fire from insurgents. They need help and support from back here in the United States, from our bases, from places such as, as my colleague from New Jersey was talking about, Fort Monmouth, for example.

We are not looking so much for the data on what is the implication of base closing and realignment on local economies. We are looking for the data on how the Pentagon intends to provide for the needs of the men and women in the field today, tomorrow and next year, how they will make up for any loss of capability that results from realignment and transfer of personnel.

In order to have a conscientious evaluation of what is being proposed here, we need the data. It is as simple as that. I applaud the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for offering this amendment and demanding that we get the information that we need to do our job.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TIAHRT

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. TIAHRT:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to promulgate regulations without consideration of the effect of such regulations on the competitiveness of American businesses.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order against the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) reserves a point of order.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, in this legislation, the Military Quality of Life and VA appropriations, much of the work, especially for construction and maintenance, are governed by rules and regulations. A good example of the problem this can create occurred in Wichita, Kansas, not too long ago

when OSHA targeted the Wichita area building and construction industry.

Through the threat of citations and fines, they literally shut down all of the work going on in the area of home building. What I did was go back to the Wichita area and I met with OSHA and the area home builders, and I found out they both had the same goal. That goal was to see that the workplace was safe. So by bringing them together, they worked out an agreement that they would work together, instead of assessing fines and citations, and create a better work environment, a safe work environment, and they were successful.

Only recently have I found that the OSHA department here in Washington wants to renege on that agreement and can no longer sustain the concept of working together to have a safe workplace. Instead, they are going to continue on an adversarial relationship. That brings me to the point that I want to stress with this amendment, and that is if we would work together, the Federal Government and the private sector, we could be much more successful in achieving the goals that both want.

Mr. Chairman, less regulation and working together means granting the freedom to allow Americans to pursue their dreams. It also provides the space for businesses to thrive and create more jobs. Regulations promulgated by the Federal Government often become a creeping ivy of regulations that strangle enterprise. The unrealistic and impractical environment that OSHA mandates create are literally driving our industries and small businesses and our health care system to a grinding halt.

How can we expect our economy to develop and grow when bureaucracy prevents businesses from starting and expanding. It is estimated today that the total regulatory burden is about $850 billion a year. That is $850 billion that could go toward creating more jobs instead of stifling growth.

As we approve spending allocations on this bill and other bills, we need to remind regulators about the importance of their actions with that funding.

Regulations can help create jobs or strangle them. Each and every Federal agency should take into consideration the effect of proposed policies on competitiveness of United States business. Each agency should be held accountable for those effects.

Other countries are preparing for tomorrow's economy. Countries like Ireland are reducing regulations, working hand in hand with businesses. They have lowered their taxes, and they have changed their educational system to prepare their workers to be part of a technical economy.

□ 1400

We are working in the opposite direction.

My concern, Mr. Chairman, is that we are going to be a third-rate economy within 10 to 20 years if we do not change the environment that helps us keep and create jobs. That means having some common-sense regulations that work with our industries instead of against them.

Mr. Chairman, I have complete confidence that Chairman WALSH is going to be working together with us to make a better America, a more competitive America and to prepare us for the economy, because we all know that if we do not, we are going to have a third-rate economy.

With that hope in mind, I am going to respectfully withdraw my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word. This is my last opportunity to express some remarks on the Military Quality of Life Appropriations bill.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my disappointment with the amount of funding in this bill for our Nation's veterans. As we enter the Memorial Day weekend, I am concerned that the funding levels for veterans' health will not allow us to keep up with the current demand for services, let alone meet the needs of the thousands of new veterans who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Eighteen young soldiers have been killed in south Texas, which is where I was born and raised and that I represent, and many, many more have been injured. One of my constituents, Sergeant Nieves Rodriguez, Jr., is lying in a bed at Walter Reed Hospital right now. He has lost an arm and the doctors are fighting to save his leg. He is going to need months of therapy, expensive prosthetics and years of follow-up care. He is only one of thousands in similar situations.

Proponents of this legislation claim it increases veterans' health funding by $1 billion, but in fact, funds are just being shifted from other veterans' accounts. The real increase is a mere $700 million, not enough to meet inflation and mandated salary increases. I would have supported the Obey amendment that would add $2.6 billion for veterans' health care, but the amendment was not made in order.

Mr. Chairman, this funding would have allowed us to care for our returning veterans and meet current shortfalls. Although I will support the final bill, I urge the committee to find a way to increase funding for veterans' health.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, as we draw to a close, I again want to take this time to congratulate, salute and thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for his leadership in this, the first product of the new Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Appropriations. It has been a professional process, a thorough process, a respectful one and a bipartisan one, exactly the manner in which I think the people of this country would want us to deal with the important business of providing quality of life, training and other programs and facilities for our servicemen and -women, military retirees and veterans.

I want to thank the minority staff, Bob Bonner and Tom Forhan, for their leadership. I want to thank the professional staff on the majority side, led by the very able Carol Murphy, with a tremendous staff, for their great work. All of this would not have been possible today and the good work that is in this bill would not have been possible today without the genuine cooperation and great leadership of the chairman, and I thank him.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

I would like to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Texas regarding our staff. They have done a remarkable job. This is a brand-new structure. The leadership of the committee, the chairman, Chief Clerk Frank Cushing, helped us to organize the staff and they gave us the best people they could give us. I am very proud of the work product that they have provided us with and the support that they have given us along the way.

Again, I credit the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), who has been a pleasure to work with. His knowledge of the military has helped me a great deal to get up to speed on these issues. I have a lot more to learn, but I look forward to working with him as we complete this bill after House passage and the conference with the Senate.

SEQUENTIAL VOTES POSTPONED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed in the following order: amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON), amendment No. 2 offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MELANCON

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The Clerk designated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 213, noes 214, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 224]

AYES—213

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Ford
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Reichert
Reyes
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOES—214

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Cantor
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cox
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Cunningham
Davis (KY)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Gutknecht
Harris
Hart
Hastert
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Keller
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pombo
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Regula
Rehberg
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—7

Doyle
Emerson
Filner
Hastings (WA)
Johnson, E. B.
Menendez
Millender-McDonald

□ 1432

Messrs. BILIRAKIS, GINGREY, TOM DAVIS of Virginia, and SIMMONS, and Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. WYNN, FRANK of Massachusetts, PETERSON of Minnesota, DICKS, HALL, REYES, PASTOR, BISHOP of Georgia, SABO, DOGGETT, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 224, on the Melancon Amendment, I was in my Congressional District on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 2 offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The CHAIRMAN. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 171, noes 254, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 225]

AYES—171

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (IL)
Davis, Jo Ann
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dingell
Doggett
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Ford
Gingrey
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (IL)
Jones (OH)
Kaptur
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larson (CT)
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Manzullo
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Serrano
Simmons
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Sodrel
Solis
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Walden (OR)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOES—254

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cunningham
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeLay
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney

Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Gene
Gutknecht
Harris
Hart
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kanjorski
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Larsen (WA)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Marchant
Marshall
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Pastor
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Visclosky
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Cox
Doyle
Emerson
Filner
Hastings (WA)
Johnson, E. B.
Menendez
Millender-McDonald

□ 1441

Mr. HALL and Mr. SCHIFF changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 225, on the Blumenauer Amendment, I was in my Congressional District on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read the last two lines of the bill.

The Clerk read as follows:

This Act may be cited as the ''Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2006''.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise and report the bill back to the House with an amendment with the recommendation that the amendment be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR) having assumed the chair, Mr. BASS, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, had directed him to report the bill back to the House with an amendment, with the recommendation that the amendment be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 298, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

Under clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 425, nays 1, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 226]

YEAS—425

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cox
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Cunningham
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
DeLay
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—1

Stark

NOT VOTING—7

Doyle	Hastings (WA)	Millender-McDonald
Emerson	Johnson, E. B.	
Filner	Menendez	

□ 1501

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 226 on H.R. 2528, I was in my Congressional District on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, JUNE 3, 2005 TO FILE PRIVILEGED REPORT ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION ACT, 2006

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations have until midnight, June 3, 2005, to file a privileged report on a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

PERMISSION FOR THE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, JUNE 3, 2005 TO FILE PRIVILEGED REPORT ON H.R. 2475, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence may have until midnight, June 3, 2005 to file a privileged report on the bill, H.R. 2475, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR REDACTION OF MISSTATEMENT FROM CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, today I made a factual statement about Secretary Rumsfeld. I later corrected myself. But to ensure against the possibility that the initial misstatement might be viewed out of context with the correction, I ask unanimous consent to redact my initial reference to Secretary Rumsfeld and the statement of correction from the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING H.R. 2475, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

(Mr. HOEKSTRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce to all Members of the House that the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has ordered the bill, H.R. 2475, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, reported favorably to the House with an amendment. The committee's report will be filed next week under the unanimous consent just agreed to.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to announce that the classified Schedule of Authorizations and the classified Annex accompanying the bill will be available for review by Members at the offices of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in Room H–405 of the Capitol beginning any time after the report is filed. The committee office will be open during regular business hours for the convenience of any Member who wishes to review this material prior to its consideration by the House. I anticipate that H.R. 2475 will be considered on the floor of the House the first week after the recess.

I recommend that Members wishing to review the classified Annex contact the committee's Director of Security to arrange a time and date for that viewing. This will assure the availability of committee staff to assist Members who desire assistance during their review of these classified materials.

I urge interested Members to review these materials in order to better understand the committee's recommendation. The classified Annex to the committee's report contains the committee's recommendations on the intelligence budget for Fiscal Year 2006 and related classified information that cannot be disclosed publicly.

It is important that Members keep in mind the requirements of clause 13 of House rule XXIII, which only permits access to classified information by those Members of the House who have signed the oath provided for in the rule. Members are advised that it will be necessary to bring a copy of the rule XXIII oath signed by them when they come to the committee offices to review the material.

If a Member has not yet signed the oath, but wishes to review the classified Annex and Schedule of Authorizations, the committee staff can administer the oath and see to it that the executed form is sent to the Clerk's office.

In addition, the committee's rules require that Members agree in writing to a nondisclosure agreement. The agreement indicates that the Member has been granted access to the classified Annex and that they are familiar with the rules of the House and the committee with respect to the classified nature of that information and the limitations on the disclosure of that information.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 3, TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OBERSTAR

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Oberstar moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill (H.R. 3) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes, be instructed to insist on a level of funding for highway, transit, and highway and motor carrier safety programs equal to: (1) the level of funding provided in H.R. 3 ($283.9 billion); plus (2) the additional resources necessary to increase the guaranteed rate of return for States to not less than 92 percent while ensuring that each State receives no less than it is provided under H.R. 3.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when we passed the legislation to extend highway programs for another 30 days, I said that the most hopeful sign for the upcoming conference was the apparent agreement that the chairman of our committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) would chair the conference. That assures that this conference will move expeditiously, on time, with attention to detail and with a deliberate spirit of achieving all that we need to do in policy and financing to get a bill back, a conference report back to the House, to the other body and downtown to be signed.

I know how hard the chairman has worked, how much time and effort and commitment he has made personally to that initiative, and I am proud to work alongside with him.

The motion to instruct that I offer directs House conferees to do two things: Insist in the conference on a level of funding for highway transit