tribute to the foresight and ingenuity of those that made the investments in these structures.

Ports are our gateways to international trade, and their channels must be enhanced and maintained to accommodate the new generations of ships sailing to our shores.

Our flood damage reduction program saves lives and prevents almost $8 in damages for each dollar spent.

Corps hydropower facilities supply 24 percent the hydropower generated in the United States.

Shore protection projects provide safety from hurricanes and other storm events for transportation, petroleum and agriculture infrastructure around our coastal waterways and deltas as well as recreational benefits, returning $4 in benefits for each dollar invested.

Projects for water supply, irrigation, recreation and wildlife habitat provide innumerable benefits.

Investing in water resources sustains economic growth and the American worker, directly eases growing congestion on our Nation's roads and railroads and provides a finer quality of life.

Recently, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the Nation's water a ''D−''—their lowest grade—because of their steadily deteriorating condition and reliability.

Our Nation simply cannot afford for this trend to continue. The administration, whether Republican or Democrat, has consistently refused to provide the resources necessary to reverse the decline in our infrastructure.

For fiscal year 2006, the Senate has asserted leadership in reversing this trend. The Senate Bill provides $5.3 billion for the Corps of Engineers.

The Senate has included $180 million for the Corps' general investigations program. This account funds nearly all studies that the Corps undertakes to determine the technical adequacy, environmental sustainability and economic viability of water resource solutions. The funding will provide the Corps with a robust national program as opposed to the paltry $95 million proposed in the administration's fiscal year 2006 budget request.

The Senate bill includes $2.087 billion for the Corps' construction account. This account provides funding for construction of the water resource solutions authorized by the Congress. The Senate has provided nearly $450 million more than the administration's fiscal year 2006 request. These additional funds will allow the Corps to make substantial progress on projects recommended by the budget as well as all of the ongoing projects that the administration chose not to fund.

The Senate bill includes $2.1 billion for the operations and maintenance account. This is about $121 million more that the President's fiscal year 2006 budget request and will allow the Corps to restore routine levels of services at Corps' facilities and provide dredging for projects that the administration has designated as low use.

The Senate bill rejects the budget proposals from the administration concerning multiple year contracting and direct funding of hydropower maintenance by the Power Marketing Administrations.

The Senate bill also recommends that the administration and the Corps go back to the drawing board on the process that they use to determine which projects should be budgeted. The current process introduces too much uncertainty into the project development process.

The administration needs to honor the commitments that they have made to local sponsors. The sponsors need the certainty that if they get their funding for these projects, the Federal Government will meet their commitments.

Finally, the Senate bill reaffirms the need for the Corps to be able to manage their program in an effective and efficient manner. The ability to reprogram project funds and the use of continuing contracts are a necessary part of this overall management strategy.

The Senate has produced a balanced and fair bill for the Corps.

Thank you Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment of the amendments and third reading of the bill. The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) is absent due to death in family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 172 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Akaka	Cantwell	DeMint
Alexander	Carper	DeWine
Allard	Chafee	Dodd
Allen	Chambliss	Dole
Baucus	Clinton	Domenici
Bennett	Cochran	Dorgan
Biden	Coleman	Durbin
Bingaman	Collins	Ensign
Bond	Conrad	Enzi
Boxer	Cornyn	Feingold
Brownback	Corzine	Feinstein
Burns	Craig	Frist
Burr	Crapo	Graham
Byrd	Dayton	Grassley
Gregg	Levin	Santorum
Hagel	Lincoln	Sarbanes
Harkin	Lott	Schumer
Hatch	Lugar	Sessions
Hutchison	Martinez	Shelby
Inhofe	McConnell	Smith
Inouye	Murkowski	Snowe
Isakson	Murray	Stabenow
Jeffords	Nelson (FL)	Stevens
Johnson	Nelson (NE)	Talent
Kennedy	Obama	Thomas
Kerry	Pryor	Thune
Kohl	Reed	Vitter
Kyl	Reid	Voinovich
Landrieu	Roberts	Warner
Lautenberg	Rockefeller	Wyden
Leahy	Salazar	

NAYS—3

Coburn	McCain	Sununu

NOT VOTING—5

Bayh	Lieberman	Specter
Bunning	Mikulski	

The bill (H.R. 2419), as amended, was passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. FRIST. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees.

There being no objection, the Presiding Officer appointed Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BURNS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BOND, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. REID, Mr. BYRD, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DORGAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. INOUYE conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—VETERANS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives from the House the emergency supplemental bill for veterans health care, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that if the bill is less than $1.5 billion, all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of the amendment as authorized earlier today by the Appropriations Committee to include the full $1.5 billion as passed by the Senate yesterday by a vote of 96 to 0 be agreed to; that the bill as amended be read a third time and passed and motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me take a moment to review where we are. On Wednesday afternoon, on a bipartisan unanimous basis, we passed the Santorum amendment to address the funding shortfall, the surprise funding shortfall, of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Based on the very best information we had 48 hours ago, the amendment was passed at an appropriated $1.5 billion to address the critical health care needs at the Department that had been underfunded as a result of some erroneous calculations of the use and need by our veterans. This money is available to be spent in this fiscal year as well as the next.

In the interim, the administration, working aggressively, refined that estimate for the Department in this fiscal year, fiscal year 2005, and this morning or about 12 hours ago, Thursday morning, informed the House of Representatives that it would be best to appropriate $975 million for these veterans' health care needs for this fiscal year now on an emergency basis.

Tonight, not too long ago, the House passed that request, which was one of the quickest actions on a spending need since the Budget Act became law now 30 years ago. However, and this is important, the administration has not yet been able to adequately define and hone the specific estimate of the extra need for the year 2006.

I have been informed that this work for ensuring an accurate report for Congress for money in fiscal year 2006 is ongoing right now by the Department and by OMB, the Office of Management and Budget. Therefore, it is my expectation that within the next few weeks the administration will give us, will transmit a budget amendment to Congress, which will accurately detail the precise amount of money that the administration needs, or believes that they need, for funding these veterans' health care needs for fiscal year 2006. That request, I understand, is likely to be large and could be even larger than what we approved now on Wednesday.

Once we have that information in hand and know that it is accurate, we can call up the House bill which contains funding for this fiscal year and then add that necessary funding for the next fiscal year and then send it back to the House. That would be a very quick course of action. Or we could take that accurate number, once determined, and in conference with the House, adjust the amendment that we passed yesterday. Finally, we could take that accurate number, incorporate it into the appropriate subcommittee fiscal year 2006 legislation.

I mention these options—and there may be even other options as well—to cure the problem. I look forward to working with the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to ensure that the administration gives us accurate information for next year, as well as the appropriations subcommittee chairman, as well as the leadership of the House and the administration.

So before the Chair asks again if there are any objections to the unanimous consent, let me just turn to the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to see if there is a comment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first let me say that I am surprised that the distinguished majority leader is surprised at what the Veterans' Administration and the administration has talked about today of what they need. We have been, for months, talking about the shortfall with the Veterans' Administration, months—not weeks, not days but months. We have had three votes, two in committee and two on the Senate floor, where we, the minority, have begged for more money for our veterans.

It seems somewhat unusual to me that approximately 24 hours ago, the Senate unanimously passed a $1.5 billion supplemental for veterans for health care. We just did it. The House Republicans have again shortchanged our veterans by reducing this number by over $500 million. We will insist on a right to amend the bill to bring it to the full $1.5 billion mark. This is the same amendment which the Senate Appropriations Committee, on a bipartisan basis, unanimously authorized the chairman and ranking member to offer to the House supplemental, should it arrive here below the $1.5 billion mark. This is the real world we are in.

Now, I also say this: We are depending on the Office of Management and Budget and the Veterans' Administration at this late hour? Would it not be terrible, would it not be awful, if the veterans got a little too much money? What is this, some game that we are playing? We are playing with the lives of people.

In Las Vegas, we have people waiting as long as 11 months to get into a hospital to have some of the radiology work done. We learned yesterday that they are literally borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, they are robbing the capital accounts with the Veterans' Administration.

As we speak, we have about 140,000 troops in Iraq. They are being worked back all the time, and these people who come home need help, in addition to World War II veterans who need help.

Why don't we have the House Republicans meet their responsibilities? And why at this late hour are we trying to protect the White House when this body voted by a unanimous vote, everybody in the Senate voted for this? Yet we had a unanimous vote in the Appropriations Committee authorizing the chairman and ranking member to do the exact thing that I have asked to do.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I am happy to yield for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. Through the Chair, I would like to ask the Senator from Nevada a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will suspend. The unanimous consent request is pending. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAIG. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, at this late hour it is interesting to me that, having had the House and the Senate speak in two different voices on the same issue in less than 24 hours, we would stand here and determine exactly the right thing to do.

The $1.5 billion that we voted on yesterday is a figure I and my staff came up with. I happen to be the Republican chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. But, having said that, the ranking Democrat Member, DANNY AKAKA, agreed with that. Senator PATTY MURRAY had been out front on it early on. I told her at the time I didn't know if our figures were right, and if we were wrong we would correct them.

We can point a lot of fingers, but here are some realities. We have increased the veterans budget nearly 10 percent every year for the last 4. I said on the floor yesterday and I will say it again tonight, because it cannot be disputed, whether it was a Democratic President or whether it was a Republican President, the fact is they almost always underfunded veterans. It was the Congress in a bipartisan vote that funded it accurately and adequately. For those percentages of increase over the last several years, Democrats and Republicans alike stood together to do it and we produced a high-quality health care system.

No veteran who is qualified today is being denied. No veteran tonight, with the now shortfall, is being denied. The reason they are not being denied is quite simple. We are borrowing interagency accounts to address the immediate shortfalls. And as we do that at the administration level, the Congress, the Senate, the House, are seeking to replenish those funds.

There is a difference of opinion here, not between Democrats and Republicans, but between the Congress and the administration. We are working that out.

I hope, and many of my colleagues on the other side agree, that when we return from the July 4 break, with a request of OMB to have those figures accurate, we can address this in an accurate way. I believe we are right. I believe the $1.5 billion is an accurate figure. But we agreed in a bipartisan way to say that those moneys shall be spent in 2005 and 2006, that there would be carryover money passing through in a seamless way from those two fiscal years.

If we do what the minority leader, the Democratic leader asks that we do

tonight, it is a political expression. It is not something that will become a functional, operative bill.

The House is out. We are about to go out. There will be no conference. We will be back to visit this again a week from now. The reason we will be back a week from now with or without action on the floor of the Senate tonight is we do not have answers to this problem. We are asking for those answers because this time I have told the Secretary, I have told OMB, and as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee—Senator HUTCHISON is chairman of the Appropriations Committee and made it very clear, and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are backing us on this—we will get the right figures and we will do it right.

Now, with the new progressions, now with the growth rates understood, now with the incoming out of Iraq and Afghanistan and those numbers clearly understandable, we will serve them as we have been serving them and no veteran so qualified will be denied.

That is what this Congress has done responsibly year after year and that is what this Congress will do. The Senate has acted. But in this hour there is nothing we can do, nor in this instance should do. In that time, no veteran will be denied service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. It is interesting to hear the description given by the Senator who is the chairman of the veterans' committee. It is also interesting to put it in the context of where we have come over the last few days.

The amendment on the floor just a few days ago when the shortfall was noted on a bipartisan basis from Senator MURRAY was an amendment less than the one adopted. It was $1.4 billion. The Senator, the chairman of the committee, as well as others, came together on a bipartisan basis and said, That is not enough. That is not enough, $1.4 billion will not meet the shortfall. By our best estimate, they said 24 hours ago or whenever we debated it, we need more, we need $1.5 billion. And we acceded to your knowledge of the agency and your knowledge of its need and came together on a bipartisan basis—I believe the vote was 96 to nothing—and said that is exactly what we will do, $1.5 billion.

Then while we barely finished this work, the House came back and said no, the figure is $975 million or whatever number they came up with, dramatically less than what we had approved.

It strikes me as interesting that we are going to back off of our best estimate and say let's err on the side of less money for the Veterans' Administration. Why wouldn't the Senate be holding fast to its position? Why wouldn't the Senate be holding fast to its position and say we believe $1.5 billion is the right number still, as we believed 24 hours ago when we voted on it? Why do we want to back off at this point and say it must be that much less?

It strikes me, unless there has been a dramatic infusion of new information and knowledge, that we are acceding to the House of Representatives because they have decided to go home.

Mr. REID. Regular order, Mr. President.

Mr. CRAIG. Will the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Regular order has been called for. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Reserving the right to object, and I will be brief, just listening to the conversation, I ask the minority leader's unanimous consent agreement be modified to simply clear the House legislation for 975, and that the House bill be considered read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with all due respect to the distinguished majority leader, my friend, I will not agree to the modification. I am standing on the unanimous consent request I offered a few minutes ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. FRIST. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the original request by the minority leader for the unanimous consent.

Mr. FRIST. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, for the short term, we have a problem that we will resolve when we return a week from now. By then I hope we have accurate figures, so that we can do as I think the Senate wants to do, and as the unanimous consent of the Senate expressed the other evening. At this late hour, all we could do is make a political expression. We could not resolve an issue. I think we are all intent on resolving a very important issue for the sake of our veterans. We hope to have those numbers, and I think we will. Those requests have gone to OMB, to see what their figures are, as I work with the Veterans' Administration, as appropriators do to make sure we have those accurate figures. I think all of us this time want to get it right. I know this Senator does.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO BERNARD A. ''TONY'' GOETZ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a Kentuckian who has spent much of his life dedicated to improving access to healthcare and educational opportunities for the people of the Commonwealth. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Owensboro native, Mr. Bernard A. ''Tony'' Goetz, as he prepares to begin a new chapter in his life—retirement.

I have had the pleasure of working with Tony on several different occasions, particularly through his tenure at the University of Kentucky where he served as Associate Dean of the College of Medicine and later as Director of Government Relations. In addition, Tony dedicated more than half of his professional career to developing an effective alumni affairs program at UK. He also helped establish the UK Center for Rural Health, create the UK Area Health Education System and launch the McDowell Cancer Network, which later became the Kentucky Community Cancer Program.

Tony's background in healthcare education and advocacy dates back to 1965, when he first served as executive director of the Owensboro Council for Retarded Children. He then served as executive director of the Blue Grass Association for Mental Retardation. In his next two jobs, Tony served as chief executive officer of the Bluegrass Regional Health Planning Council, Inc. and the East Kentucky Health Systems Agency, Inc.

Continuing his pattern of selfless service, Tony most recently worked in the Office of the Governor in Frankfort, KY. For the past two sessions, he has served as liaison between the Governor and the Kentucky General Assembly, combining his legendary affable nature with encyclopedic command of details he helped the Commonwealth move forward on a number of legislative fronts. Though his employers and responsibilities have changed over the years, it is obvious that Tony was instrumental and effective at every position he held. He balanced many duties and he performed each of them with tremendous skill. I ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in honoring Tony Goetz for his dedicated service. I wish him well in retirement.

EULOGY TO FORMER SENATOR JAMES EXON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the eulogy given by former Senator Bob Kerrey at the funeral of our late colleague, Jim Exon, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: