were included in the House or Senate versions of H.R. 3222.

In particular, division B amends the first fiscal year 2008 continuing resolution (Public Law 110–92) to extend its general expiration date to December 14, 2007 and to add additional provisions as follows. (In the following discussion, the section numbers cited refer to sections of Public Law 110–92 as they would be added by the conference agreement.)

New section 151 of the continuing resolution (as added by the conference agreement) extends authority through the general termination date of the continuing resolution for the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board (which is funded through producer assessments) to expend funds for foreign market development.

Section 152 provides an operating rate under the continuing resolution of $1,025,398,000 for the Census Bureau's Periodic Censuses and Programs account, in order to accommodate contracts and activities needed to be undertaken now to stay on schedule for 2010 decennial census and the economic censuses.

Section 153 provides an emergency designation for funds available under the first continuing resolution for the Department of Defense and that are not subsumed into the regular fiscal year 2008 Defense Appropriations Act.

Section 154 appropriates funds for the traditional payment to the heirs of the late Representative Jo Ann Davis.

Section 155 provides operating rates under the continuing resolution equal to the President's fiscal year 2008 budget request for accounts within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Section 156 extends, through the general termination date of the continuing resolution, a provision of law limiting liability of air carriers for claims arising out of acts of terrorism. This provision was last extended by the fiscal year 2007 full-year continuing resolution and expired on September 30. It has been proposed to be extended in the House-passed and Senate Committee-reported FAA authorization bills. '

Section 157 makes a $500,000,000 emergency appropriation to the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management for emergency wildland fire suppression, wildfire risk reduction, reconstruction, and recovery activities in response to the catastrophic wildfire season of 2007. The conferees have included funds to repay other program funds borrowed during fiscal year 2007 to fund emergency wildfire suppression activities, provide additional suppression resources to offset the cost of fighting the devastating Southern California wildfires, and fund critical hazardous fuels and rehabilitation activities. The conferees direct the agencies and their partners to allocate hazardous fuels and mitigation funding to areas that face the greatest risk from wildfires as a result of population densities and excessive fuel loads. Funding has also been provided for urgently needed fire risk reduction projects on State and private lands using all authorities, available to the Forest Service. Rehabilitation funds shall be allocated to areas that face the greatest emergency stabilization and watershed protection needs based on values at risk.

Section 158 makes a $2,900,000,000 emergency appropriation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency: disaster relief fund, to provide the additional amounts estimated by the Department of Homeland Security to be needed for continued and anticipated disaster response and relief efforts for fiscal year 2008.

Section 159 makes a $3,000,000,000 emergency appropriation to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Fund solely to alleviate a shortfall in the ''Road Home'' program to assist people whose homes were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These amounts would be used exclusively to fund eligible claims, for the homeowners' program in Louisiana that were submitted by the program deadline but not covered by current program funding.

COMPLIANCE WITH RULE XXI, CI. 9 (HOUSE) AND WITH RULE XLIV (SENATE)

The following statement is submitted in compliance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, which require publication of a list of congressionally directed spending items (Senate), congressional earmarks (House), limited tax benefits, and limited tariff benefits included in the conference report, or in the joint statement of managers accompanying the conference report, including the name of each Senator, House Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner who submitted a request to the Committee of jurisdiction for each item so identified. Neither the conference report nor the statement of managers for this division contains any congressionally directed spending items (as defined in the Senate rule) congressional earmarks (as defined in the House rule), limited tax benefits or limited tariff benefits as defined in the applicable House and Senate rules.

The following statement is submitted in compliance with House Resolution 491, which requires a listing of congressional earmarks in the conference report or joint statement of managers that were not committed to the committee of conference by either House, not in a report on a bill committed to conference, and not in a Senate committee report on a companion measure. Neither the conference report nor the statement of managers for this division contains any congressionally directed spending items (as defined in the Senate rule) or congressional earmarks (as defined in the House rule).

JOHN P. MURTHA,
NORMAN D. DICKS,
PETER J. VISCLOSKY,
JAMES P. MORAN,
MARCH KAPTUR,
BUD CRAMER,
ALLEN BOYD,
STEVEN R. ROTHMAN,
SANFORD D. BISHOP, Jr.,
DAVID OBEY,
BILL YOUNG,
DAVE HOBSON,
P. FRELINGHUYSEN,
TODD TIAHRT,
ROGER F. WICKER,
Managers on the Part of the House.

DANIEL K. INOUYE,
ROBERT C. BYRD,
PATRICK J. LEAHY,
TOM HARKIN,
BYRON L. DORGAN,
DICK DURBIN,
DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI,
HERB KOHL,
PATTY MURRAY,
Managers on the Part of the Senate.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3043, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 794, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). Pursuant to House Resolution 794, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 5, 2007, at page H12486.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include tabular and extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 3043.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I think everyone understands what the legislation is before us, and I urge adoption of the conference report.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my chairman, Mr. OBEY, for the hard work, the energy and the thought that went into this bill, and both the minority and the majority staff for the hard work that they did in preparing us for the culmination of this work.

But I have to say, Madam Speaker, as someone who supported both of these bills that are contained in this conference report before us, I must admit to no small measure of frustration and disappointment with respect to where we stand today. I'm disappointed because this exercise embodies what is wrong with Washington.

By lancing these two bills together, we ensure a Presidential veto of both. By combining these bills, it makes certain that neither will advance in a timely fashion. And tying them together guarantees that we will further delay vital and noncontroversial spending for our veterans; funding to provide our wounded warriors needed health care; funding to reduce the backlog in the processing of claims benefits; and funding to invest in our veterans hospitals and defense facilities, both here at home and abroad.

I've said over and over, I can't figure out how anyone thinks that holding the veterans funding, which we all support, hostage to a bill that is going to be vetoed is good public policy. The fact is, everyone knows it's not good

public policy; and, frankly, it's not even good politics. As former Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young asked, Give me one good government reason why joining these two bills makes sense.

I supported both the Labor-HHS and the Military Construction-Veterans Appropriations bills when they came to the House earlier this year. I think they're both good bills, and they're both well designed by the chairmen and the ranking members.

Chairman OBEY and I have worked shoulder to shoulder on the Labor-HHS bill for several months now, and I am satisfied with this bill as it has been produced over the last several weeks. I think it is a fair compromise. Knowing the President is not going to sign the bill, I am optimistic that he will negotiate with us in good faith in the coming weeks so that we can produce a final product that he can sign and we can pass that preserves the important bipartisan priorities this legislation seeks to address.

I am incredibly disappointed that leaders of this committee have been forced to yield to the political whims and flippant strategies of party leaders advancing this needless game of partisan one-upmanship.

Appropriations has always been a committee of principle, a committee of good governance. Appropriators have traditionally cast aside politics for policy. Tonight, Madam Speaker, this committee has become the primary sponsor of a partisan stand-off, and that's a shame.

My constituents sent me here to develop good policy. They sent me here to do the right thing. And the fact is that delaying vital funding for our veterans is not the right thing.

I regret that we're here discussing this. I regret that we haven't seen the Military Construction-Veterans bill go to the White House. It's a bill that could have been sent a month ago.

If the Senate sends the Labor-HHS bill back to us as a stand-alone conference report, I will vote for it. As importantly, I will be among the first to vote for a stand-alone Military Construction-Veterans conference report as soon as the House decides to appoint conferees, but the process that has been used to bring us to this point leaves a very bad taste in my mouth.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), chairman of the Military Subcommittee.

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, let me first respond to my colleague and friend, the last speaker, who is highly critical of Democrats having the gall to combine the VA appropriation bill with another bill. I must say, if that is a crime, then some of my Republican colleagues would be serving a life sentence, because in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 they did exactly what they're criticizing tonight. They put the VA appropriation bill in other bills. And oh, by the way, they forgot to tell you, as they criticize us tonight for being 1 month late in passing the VA appropriation bill after Democrats have already led the charge to add $5.2 billion for veterans health care and benefits programs, they forgot to tell you they didn't pass a VA appropriation bill at all last year, not one month late, not two months late, not three months late, not four months late. They just simply didn't do it at all.

So I think it would be fair for an objective person to raise a question of credibility when some in this House say one thing and do another. And by the way, when they talk about how, under Democratic leadership, we're late, just over a month now, in passing the appropriation bill, they conveniently seem to forget, I call it ''politically convenient memory,'' maybe I should call it ''politically convenient loss of memory,'' they forget to say the last time under a Republican leadership they passed a VA appropriation bill on time wasn't 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001. It was 1996.

But let's talk about the substance of this bill under the new leadership in Congress, because that's what this debate is all about. And I'm proud of that substance.

This conference report sends a clear message to America's servicemen and women, their families, and our veterans that a grateful Nation deeply respects their service and sacrifice. This bill says to all who have served in uniform, just as you have kept your promise to our country, we intend to keep our promise to you.

For our veterans, this is a historic bill under Democratic leadership, without precedent. We increase VA discretionary spending by $6.6 billion, which is $3.7 billion above the President's request.

This bill represents the largest single increase in VA discretionary and health care funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration, and our veterans have earned every dime through their service and sacrifice for our Nation.

What this bill means, this bill crafted under Democratic leadership, to our veterans is this: more doctors and nurses for improved medical care, shorter waiting times for doctors appointments. It means case managers for Iraq war veterans with traumatic combat wounds. For those suffering from combat-related PTSD and mental health care issues, it means better and more timely services. For members of the National Guard and Reserve forces in rural areas, it means quality health care closer to home. And for many of the 2,000 homeless veterans on the streets of our Nation tonight, this bill means the dignity of housing and hope for the future.

Let me mention seven major initiatives in this bill, Madam Speaker. First, we increase VA health care funding by $5.3 billion above last year's levels. It bears repeating this is the largest single increase in VA health care funding in our Nation's history.

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When combined with the fiscal year 2000 continuing resolution passed under Democratic leadership and the 2007 Iraq supplemental bill passed earlier this year, listen to this my colleagues, this new Congress in less than 12 months under new leadership will have added $10.2 billion to improve millions of veterans' health care, and $11 billion in increase in VA discretionary spending, which includes health care and benefits.

For the first time in the 21-year history of the veterans service organizations independent budget, led by the DAV, the VFW, AMVETS and Paralyzed Veterans of America and 52 other organizations, under Democratic leadership we meet and exceed the independent budget to the Veterans Health Administration, the first time, and will require no less than $2.9 billion be invested in PTSD and mental health care treatment for veterans.

Our second initiative, and this is important, we had 1,800 new VA caseworkers to reduce unacceptable waiting times for VA benefits, waiting times that are averaging 6 months. Many of those veterans are combat wounded.

A third initiative, for the first time since 1979 when gasoline prices were 90 cents a gallon, we increased the mileage reimbursement for veterans from 11 cents to 28½ cents. That is $78 more for a 400-mile round trip for a veteran to get the care he or she needs at a VA hospital. It may not be a lot of money to some, but to many of our Nation's veterans it might mean the difference between making that trip or not.

Fourth, for the first time in 5 years, we fund a real increase after inflation in VA medical research. That research will help millions of America's veterans live better, longer lives.

Fifth, we increase VA construction by $870 million. Why? Because we want to ensure that not one veteran, not one, ever has to live with the indignity that many of our Army soldiers had to face at Walter Reed Hospital Annex 18.

Six, under Democratic leadership, we recognize that our military spouses and children are truly the unsung heroes and heroines of our Nation's defense. They may not wear our Nation's uniform, but they sacrifice and serve every day. We take a new initiative, the military family initiative, in this bill, that I wish my Republican colleagues would join with us in voting for tonight, provide $130 million for 16 new day care centers to help 3,500 military children get the day care they need.

Seven, we fund $2.8 billion to continue growing the active Army and the Marines so that our Marines and Army soldiers can spend more time at home with the families they love and less time deployed overseas.

We spend $21.5 billion in military construction, support operations, training, quality of life improvements for our service men and women. This is a $5.2 billion increase over fiscal year 2007. The DAV, one of America's most respected veterans organizations, urges this House to vote for this bill. Our veterans, our service men and women deserve that vote tonight.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2008 (H.R. 2642)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE						
Military construction, Army	2,017,321	4,039,197	4,070,959	3,928,149	3,950,383	+1,933,062
Rescission	-43,348	---	---	---	-8,690	+34,658
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	1,255,890	---	---	---	---	-1,255,890
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28). (By (transfer, Army Sec. 3309)	(6,250)	---	---	---	---	(-6,250)
Total	3,229,863	4,039,197	4,070,959	3,928,149	3,941,693	+711,830
Military construction, Navy and Marine Corps	1,130,821	2,104,276	2,125,138	2,168,315	2,220,784	+1,089,963
Rescissions	-27,500	---	-5,862	---	-10,557	+16,943
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	370,990	---	---	---	---	-370,990
Total	1,474,311	2,104,276	2,119,276	2,168,315	2,210,227	+735,916
Military construction, Air Force	1,083,000	912,109	927,428	1,048,518	1,159,747	+76,747
Rescissions	-2,694	---	-5,319	---	-10,470	-7,776
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	43,300	---	---	---	---	-43,300
Total	1,123,606	912,109	922,109	1,048,518	1,149,277	+25,671
Military construction, Defense-Wide	1,127,000	1,799,336	1,806,928	1,758,755	1,609,596	+482,596
Rescission	-110,229	---	-7,592	---	-10,192	+100,037
Total	1,016,771	1,799,336	1,799,336	1,758,755	1,599,404	+582,633
Total, Active components	6,844,551	8,854,918	8,911,680	8,903,737	8,900,601	+2,056,050
Military construction, Army National Guard	473,000	404,291	439,291	478,836	536,656	+63,656
Rescissions	-2,129	---	---	---	---	+2,129
Total	470,871	404,291	439,291	478,836	536,656	+65,785
Military construction, Air National Guard	126,000	85,517	95,517	228,995	287,537	+161,537
Military construction, Army Reserve	166,000	119,684	154,684	138,424	148,133	-17,867
Military construction, Navy Reserve	43,000	59,150	69,150	59,150	64,430	+21,430
Military construction, Air Force Reserve	45,000	26,559	39,628	27,559	28,359	-16,641
Rescission	---	---	-3,069	-3,100	-3,069	-3,069
Total	45,000	26,559	36,559	24,459	25,290	-19,710
Total, Reserve components	850,871	695,201	795,201	929,864	1,062,046	+211,175
Total, Military construction	7,695,422	9,550,119	9,706,881	9,833,601	9,962,647	+2,267,225
Appropriations	(6,211,142)	(9,550,119)	(9,728,723)	(9,836,701)	(10,005,625)	(+3,794,483)
Rescissions	(-185,900)	---	(-21,842)	(-3,100)	(-42,978)	(+142,922)
Emergency appropriations	(1,670,180)	---	---	---	---	(-1,670,180)
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program	204,789	201,400	201,400	201,400	201,400	-3,389
Family housing construction, Army	579,000	419,400	419,400	419,400	424,400	-154,600
Rescission	---	---	---	---	-4,559	-4,559
Total	579,000	419,400	419,400	419,400	419,841	-159,159
Family housing operation and maintenance, Army	671,311	742,920	742,920	742,920	731,920	+60,609
Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps	305,000	298,329	298,329	288,329	293,129	-11,871
Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps	505,472	371,404	371,404	371,404	371,404	-134,068
Family housing construction, Air Force	1,168,000	362,747	362,747	362,747	327,747	-840,253
Rescission	-18,000	---	---	---	-15,000	+3,000
Total	1,150,000	362,747	362,747	362,747	312,747	-837,253
Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force	750,000	688,335	688,335	688,335	688,335	-61,665
Family housing construction, Defense-Wide	9,000	---	---	---	---	-9,000
Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-Wide	49,000	48,848	48,848	48,848	48,848	-152
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund	2,475	500	500	500	500	-1,975
Total, Family housing	4,021,258	2,932,483	2,932,483	2,922,483	2,866,724	-1,154,534

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2008 (H.R. 2642)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
Appropriations	(4,039,258)	(2,932,483)	(2,932,483)	(2,922,483)	(2,886,283)	(-1,152,975)
Rescissions	(-18,000)	---	---	---	(-19,559)	(-1,559)
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-Wide	131,000	86,176	86,176	104,176	104,176	-26,824
Base realignment and closure:						
Base realignment and closure account, 1990	252,279	220,689	270,689	320,689	295,689	+43,410
Base realignment and closure account, 2005	2,489,421	8,174,315	8,174,315	8,174,315	8,040,401	+5,550,980
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	3,136,802	---	---	---	---	-3,136,802
Total, Base realignment and closure	5,878,502	8,395,004	8,445,004	8,495,004	8,336,090	+2,457,588
Appropriations	(2,741,700)	(8,395,004)	(8,445,004)	(8,495,004)	(8,336,090)	(+5,594,390)
Emergency appropriations	(3,136,802)	---	---	---	---	(-3,136,802)
Total, title I	17,930,971	21,165,182	21,371,944	21,556,664	21,471,037	+3,540,066
Appropriations	(13,327,889)	(21,165,182)	(21,393,786)	(21,559,764)	(21,533,574)	(+8,205,685)
Rescissions	(-203,900)	---	(-21,842)	(-3,100)	(-62,537)	(+141,363)
Emergency appropriations	(4,806,982)	---	---	---	---	(-4,806,982)
TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS						
Veterans Benefits Administration						
Compensation and pensions	38,007,095	41,236,322	41,236,322	41,236,322	41,236,322	+3,229,227
Readjustment benefits	3,262,006	3,300,289	3,300,289	3,300,289	3,300,289	+38,283
Veterans insurance and indemnities	49,850	41,250	41,250	41,250	41,250	-8,600
Veterans housing benefit program fund program account (indefinite)	66,234	17,389	17,389	17,389	17,389	-48,845
(Limitation on direct loans)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	---
Credit subsidy	-100,000	-108,000	-108,000	-108,000	-108,000	-8,000
Administrative expenses	154,284	154,562	154,562	154,562	154,562	+278
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	53	71	71	71	71	+18
(Limitation on direct loans)	(4,242)	(3,287)	(3,287)	(3,287)	(3,287)	(-955)
Administrative expenses	305	311	311	311	311	+6
Native American veteran housing loan program account	584	628	628	628	628	+44
(Limitation on direct loans)	(30,000)	---	---	---	---	(-30,000)
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	41,440,411	44,642,822	44,642,822	44,642,822	44,642,822	+3,202,411
Veterans Health Administration						
Medical services	25,518,254	27,167,671	29,031,400	28,979,220	29,104,220	+3,585,966
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	466,778	---	---	---	---	-466,778
Medical administration	3,177,968	3,442,000	3,510,600	3,642,000	3,517,000	+339,032
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	250,000	---	---	---	---	-250,000
Medical facilities	3,569,533	3,592,000	4,100,000	4,092,000	4,100,000	+530,467
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	595,000	---	---	---	---	-595,000
Medical and prosthetic research	413,980	411,000	480,000	500,000	480,000	+66,020
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	32,500	---	---	---	---	-32,500
Medical care cost recovery collections:						
Offsetting collections	-2,329,000	-2,414,000	-2,414,000	-2,414,000	-2,414,000	-85,000
Appropriations (indefinite)	2,329,000	2,414,000	2,414,000	2,414,000	2,414,000	+85,000
Total, Veterans Health Administration	34,024,013	34,612,671	37,122,000	37,213,220	37,201,220	+3,177,207
Appropriations	(32,679,735)	(34,612,671)	(37,122,000)	(37,213,220)	(37,201,220)	(+4,521,485)
Emergency appropriations	(1,344,278)	---	---	---	---	(-1,344,278)
National Cemetery Administration						
National Cemetery Administration	160,747	166,809	170,000	217,709	195,000	+34,253
Total, National Cemetery Administration	160,747	166,809	170,000	217,709	195,000	+34,253
Departmental Administration						
General operating expenses	1,481,473	1,471,837	1,598,500	1,612,031	1,605,000	+123,527
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	83,200	---	---	---	---	-83,200
Information technology systems	1,214,000	1,859,217	1,859,217	1,898,000	1,966,465	+752,465
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	35,100	---	---	---	---	-35,100
Office of Inspector General	70,641	72,599	76,500	88,700	80,500	+9,859
Construction, major projects	399,000	727,400	1,410,800	727,400	1,069,100	+670,100
Construction, minor projects	198,937	233,396	615,000	751,398	630,535	+431,598
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28)	340,485	---	---	---	---	-340,485
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 110-28) (Rescission)	-14,485	---	---	---	---	+14,485
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	85,000	85,000	165,000	250,000	165,000	+80,000

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2008 (H.R. 2642)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
Grants for the construction of State veterans cemeteries	32,000	32,000	37,000	100,000	39,500	+7,500
Total, Departmental Administration	4,086,098	4,648,258	5,932,017	5,645,238	5,751,100	+1,665,002
Appropriations	(3,641,798)	(4,648,258)	(5,932,017)	(5,645,238)	(5,751,100)	(+2,109,302)
Emergency appropriations	(458,785)	---	---	---	---	(-458,785)
Rescissions (emergency appropriations)	(-14,485)	---	---	---	---	(+14,485)
Administrative Provisions						
Sec. 230 Mileage reimbursement, VA medical services	---	---	---	125,000	---	---
Sec. 230 Mileage reimbursement, VA medical administration	---	---	---	-125,000	---	---
Sec. 230 VA Medical Services (P.L. 110-28)	---	---	---	---	-66,000	-66,000
Sec. 230 Construction Major Projects (P.L. 110-28)	---	---	---	---	66,000	+66,000
Total, title II	79,550,522	83,903,751	87,696,839	87,501,280	87,595,142	+8,044,620
Appropriations	(77,761,944)	(83,903,751)	(87,696,839)	(87,501,280)	(87,595,142)	(+9,833,198)
Emergency appropriations	(1,803,063)	---	---	---	---	(-1,803,063)
Rescissions (emergency appropriations)	(-14,485)	---	---	---	---	(+14,485)
(Limitation on direct loans)	(34,742)	(3,787)	(3,787)	(3,787)	(3,787)	(-30,955)
Discretionary	38,265,337	39,416,501	43,209,589	43,014,030	43,107,892	+4,842,555
Mandatory	41,285,185	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	+3,202,065
TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES						
American Battle Monuments Commission						
Salaries and expenses	37,000	42,100	43,470	45,600	44,600	+7,600
Foreign currency fluctuations account	5,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	+6,000
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission	42,000	53,100	54,470	56,600	55,600	+13,600
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims						
Salaries and expenses	20,189	21,217	21,397	24,217	22,717	+2,528
Department of Defense - Civil						
Cemeterial Expenses, Army						
Salaries and expenses	30,000	26,892	30,592	31,865	31,230	+1,230
Armed Forces Retirement Home						
Operation and maintenance	55,991	55,724	55,724	55,724	55,724	-267
Capital program	1,236	---	---	---	---	-1,236
General fund appropriation	---	5,900	800	5,900	800	+800
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home	57,227	61,624	56,524	61,624	56,524	-703
Total, title III	149,416	162,833	162,983	174,306	166,071	+16,655
Appropriations	(149,416)	(162,833)	(162,983)	(174,306)	(166,071)	(+16,655)
GENERAL PROVISIONS						
Sec. 411 Conventions (emergency appropriations)	---	---	---	100,000	---	---
Grand total	97,630,909	105,231,766	109,231,766	109,332,250	109,232,250	+11,601,341
Appropriations	(91,239,249)	(105,231,766)	(109,253,608)	(109,235,350)	(109,294,787)	(+18,055,538)
Rescissions	(-203,900)	---	(-21,842)	(-3,100)	(-62,537)	(+141,363)
Emergency appropriations	(6,610,045)	---	---	(100,000)	(66,000)	(-6,544,045)
Rescissions (emergency appropriations)	(-14,485)	---	---	---	(-66,000)	(-51,515)

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2008 (H.R. 2642)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET RECAP						
Scorekeeping adjustments:						
Emergency appropriations defense	-4,806,982	---	---	---	---	+4,806,982
Emergency appropriations non-defense	-1,788,578	---	---	-100,000	---	+1,788,578
ATB pay raise (Sec. 111 of P.L. 110-5) adjustment	-925	---	---	---	---	+925
Sec. 232 Rounding of benefits	---	---	---	15,000	---	---
Total, adjustments	-6,596,485	---	---	-85,000	---	+6,596,485
Total (including adjustments)	91,034,424	105,231,766	109,231,766	109,247,250	109,232,250	+18,197,826
Scorekeeping adjustments	(-6,596,485)	---	---	(-85,000)	---	(+6,596,485)
Prior year outlays	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total mandatory and discretionary	91,034,424	105,231,766	109,231,766	109,247,250	109,232,250	+18,197,826
Mandatory	(41,285,185)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(+3,202,065)
Mandatory (prior year)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Mandatory (total)	(41,285,185)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(44,487,250)	(+3,202,065)
Discretionary	(49,749,239)	(60,744,516)	(64,744,516)	(64,760,000)	(64,745,000)	(+14,995,761)
Discretionary (prior year)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Discretionary (total)	(49,749,239)	(60,744,516)	(64,744,516)	(64,760,000)	(64,745,000)	(+14,995,761)

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2008 (H.R. 2642)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
RECAP BY FUNCTION						
Mandatory	41,285,185	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	+3,202,065
Prior year outlays	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total, Mandatory	41,285,185	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	44,487,250	+3,202,065
General purpose discretionary:						
Defense	13,123,989	21,165,182	21,371,944	21,556,664	21,471,037	+8,347,048
Prior year outlays	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total, Defense	13,123,989	21,165,182	21,371,944	21,556,664	21,471,037	+8,347,048
Nondefense	36,625,250	39,579,334	43,372,572	43,203,336	43,273,963	+6,648,713
Prior year outlays	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total, Nondefense	36,625,250	39,579,334	43,372,572	43,203,336	43,273,963	+6,648,713
Subtotal, General purpose discretionary	49,749,239	60,744,516	64,744,516	64,760,000	64,745,000	+14,995,761
Prior year outlays	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total General purpose discretionary	49,749,239	60,744,516	64,744,516	64,760,000	64,745,000	+14,995,761
Grand total, Mandatory and Discretionary	91,034,424	105,231,766	109,231,766	109,247,250	109,232,250	+18,197,826
DISCRETIONARY 302B ALLOCATION						
GENERAL PURPOSE	49,749,239	60,744,516	64,744,516	64,760,000	64,745,000	+14,995,761
302B ALLOCATION	---	---	64,744,516	64,745,000	64,745,000	+64,745,000
OVER/UNDER	49,749,239	60,744,516	---	15,000	---	-49,749,239

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in an attempt to set the record straight with respect to recent history of funding for these important veterans programs. Certain speakers over the past several days have made statements that have, in the least, inferred that the manner in which we are being asked to vote for the veterans portion of this package before us is consistent with past practice. This is simply not the case.

The facts of the matter are these: In 7 of 12 years of previous Republican control, funding for veterans was approved in stand-alone bills. In five of those cases, the conference report containing veterans funding was approved in September or October. In one case, the conference report was approved on November 8, and another was approved on November 18.

In 4 of the remaining 5 years, veterans funding was included in multiple omnibus bills. But in all but one of these cases, the House had approved the stand-alone veterans bill. In all but two cases, the Senate passed a stand-alone bill. In one case, fiscal year 2003, the election year in which the Senate switched its majority, neither body approved a stand-alone bill.

In every one of these 4 years, the omnibus bill that was finally approved was both fiscally responsible and negotiated openly by the House and the Senate bodies with full awareness and agreement of the executive branch. In the final circumstance, last year, the House approved a veterans bill before the beginning of the fiscal year and waited until the day before Congress adjourned for the Senate to appoint conferees.

Unfortunately, such appointment occurred too late to act. As we saw, when we had the majority in the House, there was a tremendous amount of frustration with the other body in closing some of these conferences out. I suspect my good friends on the other side of the aisle are experiencing similar frustration this evening.

Although funding for our veterans has found its way to these deserving Americans in more than one manner, the real point here is that not once in the past 12 years or even before that, as far as I am aware, has such funding for veterans been placed in jeopardy in the manner that it is being placed tonight. Never has it been paired with a bill that everyone is certain will be vetoed. Never has it been used as a pawn to force the President to choose veterans over other programs, no matter how important they may be.

Madam Speaker, as many of my friends are wont to say, people are entitled to their own opinions but not to their own facts. In the debate regarding the funding for our veterans, it is particularly important that the facts are not distorted for political purposes.

VETERANS FUNDING HISTORY UNDER REPUBLICAN CONGRESSES

FY 1996: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report passed in December. Subsequently vetoed, and wrapped into an Omnibus which passed the following Spring (4/25/96). House passed conference report 12/7/95. Senate passed conference report 12/14/95. President vetoed conference report 12/18/95. Enacted as part of the Omnibus 4/25/96.

FY 1997: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report enacted before the end of the fiscal year (9/26/06). House passed conference report 9/24/96. Senate passed conference report 9/25/96. President signed conference report 9/26/96.

FY 1998: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report enacted in October (10/27/97). House passed conference report 10/8/97. Senate passed conference report 10/9/97. President signed conference report 10/27/97.

FY 1999: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report enacted in October (10/21/98). House passed conference report 10/6/98. Senate passed conference report 10/8/98. President signed conference report 10/21/98.

FY 2000: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report enacted in October (10/20/99). House passed conference report 10/14/99. Senate passed conference report 10/15/99. President signed conference report 10/20/99.

FY 2001: VA–HUD conference report enacted in October with the Energy and Water attached (10/27/00). Energy and Water conference was previously vetoed and the revised E&W agreement was included within the VA–HUD conference agreement. House passed conference report 10/19/00. Senate passed conference report 10/19/00. President signed conference report 10/27/00.

FY 2002: Stand alone VA–HUD conference report enacted in November (11/26/01). House passed conference report 11/8/01. Senate passed conference report 11/8/01. President signed conference report 11/26/01.

FY 2003: Neither the House nor Senate passed a VA–HUD bill (nor did they pass 9 other appropriations bills). This was the year the Senate changed parties in the 2002 election. The omnibus which was enacted in February 2003 contained 11 of the 13 appropriations bills. House passed omnibus conference report 2/13/03. Senate passed omnibus conference report 2/13/03. President signed omnibus conference report 2/13/03.

FY 2004: Senate did not pass the VA–HUD bill until November 18, 2003. The bill was wrapped into an omnibus conference report which was filed one week after Senate passage (11/25/03) that included 7 of 13 appropriations bills.

The House passed the omnibus in December (12/8/03), however a filibuster in the Senate delayed passage of the omnibus conference report until January (1/22/04) and the omnibus was enacted the next day (1/23/04). House passed omnibus conference report 12/08/03. Senate passed omnibus conference report 1/22/04. President signed omnibus conference report 1/23/04.

FY 2005: Senate never passed the VA–HUD bill. The bill was wrapped into an omnibus which contained 9 of the 13 appropriations bills. The omnibus conference report was enacted in December (12/8/04). House passed omnibus conference report 11/20/04. Senate passed omnibus conference report 11/20/04. President signed omnibus conference report 12/08/04.

FY 2006: Stand alone Military Quality of Life–VA conference report enacted in November (11/30/05). House passed conference report 11/18/05. Senate passed conference report 11/18/05. President signed conference report 11/30/06.

FY 2007: Senate did not pass the Military Quality of Life–VA bill until November (11/14/06) and did not appoint conferees until December (12/06/06) due to objections over earmarks. The bill was wrapped into an omnibus continuing resolution enacted in February 2007 (2/15/07) which contained 9 of the 11 appropriations bills.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, facts are a stubborn thing. These are the facts. In the last 5 years under Republican leadership, only one time, only one time under Republican House leadership did they send a VA appropriation bill to the President as a free-standing bill. And in one of those 5 years, they didn't send any bills at all. Those are the facts.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 4 minutes to the member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise to say while I am pleased with many of the provisions in this bill, and I certainly want to commend the chairman particularly for a hard-fought negotiation with the other body on the issue of getting a toxic substance, mercury, out of the injections that we give little babies, I have to vote ''no'' on this conference report. I want to make very clear that there is an important, I think, distinction. There has been a lot of discussion back and forth about how we had combined appropriations bills in the past as the majority is doing today. At least my recollection of the facts in the past, we were forced to combine appropriations bills typically because there was a problem getting these bills through the other body because they wanted more spending and we wanted less spending.

The purpose of the combination here tonight is to achieve more spending. Now, I saw a poll recently, and it truly amazed me, if you asked the American people a question, do you think the Federal Government taxes and spends too much, you get about 85 percent of Americans agree with that statement. Indeed, a majority of Democrats feel that we tax and spend too much. This bill increases spending $21.2 billion over last year.

Now, the majority has been very quick to point out this is less than what we will spend in 2 months in Iraq and Afghanistan as if we can't deal with those problems and we can walk away from them. I think we have all agreed in this body, we have to try to see the war on terror and the challenges we have there through. But the important point with those conflicts is they will some day end; whereas, the money that is going in this bill will be incorporated in the baseline, and next year, all of these dollars will be increased another, I don't know, what, 3, 4, 5 percent. Depending on how you do the calculations, this $21 billion of increased spending could be $200 billion

in 7 years, 10 years, and in my opinion, we have a responsibility to make tough decisions. And this bill is an attempt to achieve additional spending over and above the President's request. In my opinion, it just goes too far.

I also want to just mention one other item. There are a lot of items in this bill. We cut the Department of Labor 20 percent that oversees our unions. When I first got on this committee, I have to say, I was shocked to see the loose degree of regulation and oversight that we have. The unions have to file a document called an LM–2, which details all their spending. And I saw a document from one union. It was a big union. They had taken in about $78 million. It was one page on one side. The reason it had gotten so bad is because, under the previous administration, oversight had been very, very lax. And this administration, because it is the union workers' money, and how it gets spent needs to be monitored because sometimes it is abused, and it is funneled into political operations inappropriately, this bill reduces that level of oversight. Now, I think that is taking us in a wrong direction.

While there are a lot of features in this bill I think are good, I am forced to vote ''no'' on the conference report.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his leadership in bringing this important legislation to the floor. I commend Chairman OBEY for his leadership of the Appropriations Committee, particularly on the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee on which I had the privilege to serve for a number of years. I commend the chairman of the Veterans Quality of Life Subcommittee, Mr. EDWARDS, for his extraordinary leadership on behalf of America's veterans.

Everyone who wants to honor our promises to our veterans, everyone who salutes their service to our country owes a deep debt of gratitude to you, Mr. EDWARDS, for your extraordinary leadership.

Madam Speaker, our national budget should be a statement of our national values. The legislation that we debate here today invests in America's correct priorities. It includes the largest increase in veterans benefits in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration, and potentially life-saving biomedical research, and it does it all in a fiscally sound way.

Madam Speaker, I have a long speech this evening. But in the interest of time, I am going to submit it for the RECORD and just say two things, because the main focus of this legislation is on our veterans and the other is on the investments made by the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee.

In the military, it is said that we leave no soldier behind on the battlefield, and when they come home, we promise here in this House that we will leave no veteran behind. This legislation fulfills that promise to our veterans. The President has said that he will perhaps veto this bill. I hope that he will have a change of heart and a change of mind in that regard because those who care about our veterans, and I believe that includes everyone, I know everyone in this Chamber and in the Senate, in the Congress and in the country wants them to have what they have earned and what they deserve.

In terms of the other aspects of the bill, I bring to the floor some deep concerns about the priorities that the President is criticizing in this bill. The President says he will veto any bill that is $1 more than what he has asked for in his budget. In this bill, we have $1.4 billion more for the National Institutes of Health. That isn't even enough to meet their needs, to meet the requests for grants that they have in any responsible way. But it is $1.4 billion more than what the President requests. And I can't help but juxtaposition the war in Iraq with this budget today. In the war in Iraq, we spend about 10, $12 billion a month, some of it unaccounted for, some of it in no-bid contracts, some of it in no-performance contracts, some of it the money has just disappeared. Democrats, in taking over the majority, have tried to hold the administration accountable. What we are finding is that it is hard to find some of that money. At the same time, consider this. As the President is spending 10 to $12 billion a month in Iraq, we spend 5 billion, $5½ billion a year on cancer research.

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In America, 550,000 people die of cancer each year. That doesn't count those who are diagnosed, those who are suffering with; I am just talking about 550,000 people who die of cancer. Wouldn't it be better for us to invest more money? Say we doubled the biomedical research for cancer research from $5.5 billion to $10 billion or $11 billion in a year. Think of the return that that could be in scientific advancement. We know the scientific opportunity is there.

The heads of the National Institutes of Health, the National Cancer Institute, the Centers for Disease Control, all the entities of government that deal with the health of the American people want more investments in their budgets; and yet their boss, the President of the United States, who has appointed them, has dismissed their professional judgment on these issues, and not only failed to fund, but threatened to veto if we in Congress try to meet those needs.

Across America, almost every family, certainly probably every family in this body, has been affected by cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, you name it, the list goes on, all of which would benefit by a bigger, more robust investment in basic biomedical research in the budget of the National Institutes of Health. So that is why this bill is so important, because it directly relates to health and well-being of the American people and it directly relates to our national security and how we honor our commitment and our promises to our veterans.

I wish the President were here, and I wish the rules of this House would allow us to address him directly because it's a mystery to me and I wonder how anyone who might consider our national budget a statement of our national values could possibly say that although I know that hundreds of thousands of people in this country are dying of cancer, and although I know that scientific opportunity exists that we are ignoring. We have a moral responsibility to fund that opportunity, that scientific opportunity, but which we are ignoring by the President's call for a veto. How do you justify that?

So, my colleagues, I think it is really important that we send a message to the President in the only way that the rules allow us to do in this House, and that is to send it with this bill to the President's desk with a very, very strong vote, a vote for the health and well-being of the American people. How do you explain to your constituents that we cannot afford to find cures for cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, as I said, and the list goes on, but we can afford to spend $1 trillion in Iraq, much of it unaccounted for, and do that all at the same time?

I urge my colleagues to think about your friends, think about your neighbors, think about your families, think about your own responsibility to a healthy America when you make this vote, because you can make all the difference in the world. I think that we should vote as if the lives of our constituents depended upon this vote, because they certainly do. With that, I urge a ''yes'' vote on this important legislation and once again commend the presenters of this legislation for their great leadership.

Our budget is a statement of our values.

The legislation we debate today invests in American priorities: it includes the largest increase in veterans spending in the 77-year history of the VA, and potentially lifesaving medical research, and it does so in a fiscally responsible way.

These bills have passed the House and Senate with the strong bipartisan majorities they deserve.

The President has said he will veto these bills. But allow me to make the case that these are investments that are necessary and right.

The Labor-HHS spending bill has been historically called the ''People's Bill.'' It is where Congress addresses the aspirations of the American people: the economic security of their families, the health and well being of their families, and the education of their children.

Today, this bill is once again the ''People's Bill.''

This is because it makes crucial investments in the health of all Americans: every dollar spent on NIH research is returned to us manifold: in improved quality of life and millions of lives saved.

We should be proud that NIH supported researchers have made the United States the world leader in biomedical and behavioral research, creating thousands of jobs and new businesses in the process.

But in order to build upon past scientific achievements, address current medical needs, and anticipate future health challenges, we must make investments today.

We stand today on the precipice of countless scientific breakthroughs. For example, mapping of the human genome has greatly advanced our knowledge about the links between genetics and diseases.

Scientists are working right now to identify genetic changes that increase and decrease risk for cancer, to determine patterns of protein markers for very early detection of cancer, and to better treat and cure the disease.

By funding these critical investments, we can declare a national war on cancer—a disease that kills 550,000 Americans a year.

In my hometown, NIH is funding cutting edge research at the San Francisco VA Medical Center on the health of our veterans. Right now, scientists are breaking new ground in the diagnosis, prevention and management of disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries that result from combat.

No group of Americans has stood stronger and braver for our Nation than those who serve in the Armed Forces. From the bitter cold winter at Valley Forge to the boiling hot Iraqi terrain, our soldiers have courageously answered when called, gone where ordered, and defended our Nation with honor. They have done everything asked of them.

How we repay that service speaks volumes about our national character.

I want to thank all of our veterans and military service organizations who have long advocated for the funding contained in this bill.

I also want to thank Chairman SPRATT, Chairman OBEY, and Chairman EDWARDS for their leadership and their dedication to those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

This bill provides $6.6 billion more than last year and $3.7 billion more than the President's budget. These are dollars well-invested.

For example in this bill:

We provide quality healthcare to 5.8 million America veterans, including 263,000 who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We ensure that the veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan—one third of whom will be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and 300,000 who are expected to suffer from Traumatic Brain Injury—get the best treatment possible. We will ensure the polytrauma centers and Centers of Excellence for Mental Health and PTSD are fully operational.

For our veterans living in rural areas, this bill will increase the travel reimbursement rates for those who travel long distances to the nearest VA facility.

These benefits have been earned. These are the benefits our veterans deserve.

Madam Speaker, on this coming Monday, our Nation will honor its veterans with Veterans Day. But in this body, every day should be Veterans Day. On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a Nation, let it be our promise that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.

Today, we are delivering on that promise.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), the distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague yielding me this time and rise simply to say that one of the most important things for all of us to recognize on both sides of the aisle is that the American public is absolutely sick and tired of seeing us doing purely partisan battle in the name of serving the public.

Over the years, if there's an arena where we have come together in a totally nonpartisan way, it has been in support of our veterans. To hear my friend, my colleague from Texas, this evening painting veterans affairs programs in partisan terms, as though this is a partisan political game, would cause our colleague Sonny Montgomery to turn over in his grave. Absolutely he would find this style unacceptable.

Our veteran service organizations know an awful lot better than we do how important it is that we strike a nonpartisan tone. In this arena we have the opportunity to come together, Democrats and Republicans, on behalf of the American people. I urge us to get back to that pattern that says this is not a partisan game. We all, Democrats and Republicans, support our veterans. The record has already been laid out that will make that very, very clear to anybody who would but take the time to read it.

Above and beyond that, Madam Speaker, it is very likely that this package will be vetoed by the President, largely because the President is trying to strike a tone which says you don't solve every problem that faces the American public by way of simply throwing money at those problems. There are those who think that government is the only solution and the only way to get to an end is by throwing mud at the wall and hoping some will stick.

In the arena that involves fundamental and basic research leading to better health care for all Americans, when we played a nonpartisan role, we have gotten very, very positive results. I think the public recognizes that the sooner we can get this House to come together and bring our people together, the more progress we are going to make. It's long past due that we recognize that we do our best work by going to the subcommittee level and setting aside partisan politics, knowing full well that our Appropriation Committee works extremely well with the give-and-take and compromise that happens at the subcommittee level. Some way this year in this House we have gotten away from this. If we continue on this pattern, I predict that we are going to destroy the Appropriations Committee as we know it.

Now, one more thing. The President will veto this bill. I predict his veto will be sustained. Then this House will come back and hopefully in a nonpartisan way, I say to my friend from Texas, in a nonpartisan way pass a bill that reflects all of our support for America's veterans.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to my colleague Mr. LEWIS's comments. He said he doesn't like partisan politics. I agree. Let me tell you what is partisan politics on this bill. Partisan politics is having the Republican majority in this house for 12 years and not passing a VA appropriation bill on time since 1996, and then coming to the floor of this House on a bill I worked with the Republicans on a bipartisan basis on, come to the floor of this House and say it is shameful that we are now 1 month late in passing a VA appropriation bill, while ignoring the fact that under Democratic leadership we have already added more money for VA health care funding and benefits this year, $5.2 billion, than the Republicans ever passed. That is partisan politics.

I will tell you what partisan politics is, Madam Speaker. It is members of the Republican Caucus in this House coming to this floor and chastising Democrats for having the audacity to put the VA appropriation bill with another appropriation bill, when the ugly fact is they don't want to admit that in four of the last five years they did exactly what they are criticizing tonight. Mr. LEWIS, that is what partisan politics is.

What is good for veterans is what the DAV has said is on this floor tonight, what the Disabled American Veterans have said should be passed in this House. I would urge my Republican colleagues to join with us and vote together on a bipartisan basis for the largest increase in the history of VA health care funding.

Democrats promised a new direction for veterans, and tonight and all this year we have delivered on that promise. When we came into the majority in January of this year, under Republican leadership they had frozen VA health care funding and our VA hospitals were struggling to keep up with care for Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. What did we do? We increased VA health care and benefits funding by $5.2 billion, and then we passed a budget resolution to provide an additional $6.6 billion in increased funding for veterans health care and for other veterans benefits, including benefits to combat wounded veterans. I am disappointed that every Republican who spoke on the floor tonight about wanting to support veterans and wanting to be bipartisan voted against the budget resolution led by Democrats to provide an unprecedented increase in veterans spending.

So, yes, Madam Speaker, there has been partisan politics played with this bill. But at the end of the debate, I hope my colleagues, Republicans and

Democrats alike, will listen to the words of the Disabled American Veterans and pass what in their words is the best bill that has ever been provided for veterans, the largest increase for veterans health care spending in our Nation's history.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself just a few brief moments, but first I would like to ask the chairman if he has any additional speakers.

Mr. OBEY. I have one remaining speaker—me.

Mr. WALSH of New York. In that case I will wrap up.

I would just like to express to my good friend and colleague, the chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Committee, that I envy him the ability to say tonight that he has provided, his subcommittee bill has provided, the greatest increase in the history of veterans spending, because I was able to do that four times myself, and it is a great feeling. It is a credit to the subcommittee.

I do believe that is a good bill. I think it is just really unfortunate that we had to put these two bills together and put them both at risk.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized for 18¼ minutes.

Mr. OBEY. First of all, Madam Speaker, I will not take the full time, but I simply want to rise to thank the staff that has helped to put these bills together: Cheryl Smith, Sue Quantius, Nicole Kunko, Teri Bergman, Andria Oliver, Beth Chaney, Rob Nabors, David Reich, Kirstin Brost, Lesley Turner, John Daniel, Christina Hamilton, Steve Crane, Anne Marie Goldsmith, Ron Anderson, all the associate staff and the staff on both sides of the aisle.

I also want to express my appreciation to Mr. WALSH. He is a good man and I think he understands these issues very thoroughly.

Having said that, I would like to spend just a few moments to talk about what this debate is really about, because, so far, it has skirted around the edges.

The fact is that last November the public sent two messages to Washington. The first is that they wanted a change in Iraqi policy and the second is that they wanted a change in priorities here at home.

The President has decided to stiff the American public and reject both of those messages. First, what he is saying to the American people is forget what message you thought you were sending in the last election. I am the great decider and we are going to do things my way. That is what is happening here.

The President isn't just stiffing the Congress when he says that he will veto any appropriation bill that departs from his budget ceiling by one dollar. He is also stiffing the American people, who made it quite clear that they thought very little of his budget and foreign policy priorities.

Since that time, since the election, the President had said ''stay the course'' in Iraq, and in addition to the gargantuan defense budget that he has asked for, he is also asking for $200 billion in additional spending just to deal with the war that he started.

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He is also saying stay the course when it comes to the $60 billion we are providing this year in tax cuts for people who make a million dollars a year. But at the same time, Madam Speaker, he is saying oh, tut, tut, tut, we cannot afford to invest here at home, so he sends the Congress a budget which cuts $16 billion out of education, out of health care, out of science, out of law enforcement and other critical domestic national priorities. And then he threatens to veto any appropriation bill that departs from his great wisdom.

Well, let's walk through where this bill would be and what it would look like tonight if we had followed the President's budget advice. If this bill did what the President wanted to do in his budget, it would be cutting vocational education by 50 percent. Is there anybody on either side of the aisle who is shortsighted enough to think that is a good idea?

If we had followed his instructions, we would have eliminated every student aid program on the books except Work-Study and Pell Grants.

In the area of handicapped education, there are a number of Members on the Republican side of the aisle who have made that their number one priority. They want to raise funds for special education. The President suggested we cut $300 million out of that program. Even the Republican Party objected in the House to that, and they raised the money that I had provided in the chairman's mark above the mark that we had provided, and we restored a significant amount of money to that program.

The President wanted us to cut mental health services by $100 million. He wanted us to cut funds that teach medical personnel how to deal with illness in children's hospitals by 63 percent. The President wanted us to cut rural health programs by 54 percent. He wanted us to cut the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program by 18 percent. We have rejected those cuts, and this House on a bipartisan basis provided 53 Republican votes for this bill as it left the House.

Now some people say this bill spends too much. This bill is a billion dollars less than it was when it left the House because we cut that in a concession to our minority party Members.

We have also in the bill respected a good many Republican priorities and respected a good many Republican initiatives, and in the process we have cut $1 billion.

Surely, surely at a time when we are spending $200 billion or close to it in Iraq, surely we can spend the equivalent of what we spend in Iraq in 6 weeks in order to meet high-priority domestic needs in the education, health, and job training areas.

Now our Republican friends cry newly found crocodile tears because we are also marrying this bill up with the military construction bill. Well, it seems to me if we can't agree on the advisability of the war, at least we ought to be able to agree how we feel about the warriors. And what we are doing in this bill is adding $3.5 billion for veterans health care. And we paid for it. We paid for it by making an identical reduction in the Defense appropriation bill, but that didn't suit the President. He said you have to pay for it again, and so he has issued this dictate that we pay for this increase in veterans health care twice by now going in and cutting other domestic programs by $3.5 billion. And that is why we are marrying these two bills together, because we want the public to see what the specifics are. We want the public to see what the domestic priorities are that would have to be cut if the President wants us to double pay for the bill we have already paid for in increasing veterans health care by $3.5 billion.

Now the President says he is going to veto any bill we send him, and the House Republican leadership says they already have the votes to sustain any veto the President makes. So we have a choice. We can sit here like potted palms and do nothing and supinely roll over to the President's dictation; or we can try to make it as uncomfortable as possible for him to be irresponsible and unnecessarily confrontational. And that's what we are trying to do.

We are sending these bills to the Senate because it is the right thing to do. And as the gentleman from Texas points out, when the minority says that this is an unprecedented act, that is absolute nonsense, because they did the same thing four times themselves; nary a peep from anybody on that side of the aisle then.

I would simply make one last point. We have heard the slogan ''better late than never.'' Well, last year the Republicans decided rather than being late, they chose never. And they delivered not one dollar, not one dollar in additional expenditures for veterans health care, and it fell to us after they shut this Congress down and went home without appropriating a single dollar in veterans health care. It was left to us to fix that mess and to add over $3.5 billion in new funding for veterans. We did it last year. We are doing it again this year. We have made it our number one priority.

But that isn't what the boys and the girls on the other side of the aisle want to talk about. They want to obscure a few facts. And here they are:

In health care, the President cut funding for the primary Federal agencies responsible for increasing health care access in this country. This conference report rejects those cuts and provides $1.5 billion above the President's request to provide programs to improve health care access for the millions of Americans that don't have it. We do that at the cost of 5 days of what we spend in Iraq.

On education, the President cut funding for the Department of Education by $1.2 billion. This conference report rejects those cuts. We invest $4.5 billion above the President's request to the Department of Education, roughly the cost of 2 weeks in Iraq. And by doing that, we provide strong increases for Pell Grants, Head Start and various other education programs.

In job training, the President cut the largest job training in vocational education programs by $1.2 billion. This conference report rejects those cuts and invests $1.3 billion above the President's request, roughly the cost of 4 days of the war in Iraq.

In medical research, the President cut funding for medical research at the National Institutes of Health by $480 million. I have never had anybody in my life come to me and say, ''Obey, why don't you guys in Washington get together and cut cancer research.'' But that's what the previous Congress did in each of the last 2 years. They cut 1,100 grants out of the National Institutes of Health with the complicity of this President. We are saying no way. Let's have an end to that nonsense. We reject those cuts. We invest $1.4 billion above the President's request, roughly the cost of 3 days of fighting in Iraq.

For economic development, in helping to alleviate poverty, the President slashed those programs by over a billion dollars. We rejected those cuts, costing roughly 4 days of what we spend in Iraq.

Lastly, the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program. The President comes from an oil State. He knows energy prices have skyrocketed, but he has cut LIHEAP by $380 million in his budget. We have rejected those cuts and invested $630 million more than the President's request, roughly the cost of 2 days of activity in Iraq.

So we are left with this. We are left with two arguments. We hear some of our Republican friends say we are going to vote ''no,'' we are going to vote against the Labor-Health-Education bill because we don't like the fact that the bill also contains the veterans funding. And we hear others say we are going to vote ''no'' on the Military Construction bill because we don't like the fact that it contains too much for education and health. Those are two beauties as reasons for voting against this bill.

I want to see whether the minority party Members of this House, I want to see whether they are going to be following the wishes of their constituents or whether they have their votes tied once again lock, stock and barrel to the President's desk. I want to see if they came here to represent their constituents or be another set of lemmings jumping off the cliff once again for this President. We will find out on that vote tonight. I hope we see the right vote.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Conference Report on the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education and Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations bills. This bill begins to correct key deficits in biomedical research, elementary and secondary education, job training, and health care for veterans and civilians alike, and sets out a clear, sustainable vision for the future. I want to thank and congratulate Chairman OBEY, Ranking Member WALSH, the Conferees and their staff for putting together such an excellent bill, one which will bring needed relief to so many of our constituents.

The President, of course, has vowed to veto this bill, because he believes it costs too much, that we can't afford to make these investments in cancer research, in Head Start, in economic development. Meanwhile, the President is asking us to spend an additional $200 billion this year alone in his misguided war in Iraq. The amount by which this bill exceeds the President's request, $9.8 billion, would pay for approximately 1 month of that war. Instead, this bill would use that money to help States provide health coverage to people with pre-existing conditions, help college-ready low-income students afford higher education, and help low-income individuals and their families keep their homes warm in the wintertime—a wintertime that could well feature oil at costs in excess of $100 a barrel.

The President says we can't afford to make these investments; I believe we can't afford not to. These are investments which pay dividends over time, investments which will keep America strong, competitive, and healthy. While I strongly support this Conference Report, I would be remiss if I didn't express my concern that this bill includes a $27.8 million increase for abstinence education programs, which research has shown to be ineffective, and worse, often medically inaccurate. Since 2001, we have spent more than $1 billion on these programs, some of which tell our children that using condoms is ''like Russian Roulette,'' and that HIV/AIDS can be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact.

Madam Speaker, teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are serious problems that demand serious solutions. Of course we should want to delay the onset of sexual activity in our children—what parent of a teenager wouldn't want that? But we cannot let that desire blind us to the very real fact that teenagers, despite our best intentions, will and do have sex, and that our wanting them not to does not absolve us of our obligation to protect them and keep them safe.

Pretending that sexual activity among teenagers does not exist will not reduce the number of new sexually transmitted infections; it will not reduce the number of teenage girls who become pregnant; and it will not reduce the number of abortions performed every year.

I want to thank Chairman OBEY for including language in this Conference Report to ensure that programs will not be funded that are medically inaccurate. I hope that in the future, we can continue to work together to ensure that our children receive high quality, science-based, age-appropriate sex education that is medically sound and free from ideological or religious bias. Despite my concerns about this program, Madam Speaker, I am proud to support this important bill and urge my colleagues to do the same, so that we can get needed funds to these critical programs as soon as possible.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this conference report and want to single out one provision that is vital if we are going to protect our children.

I want to thank Chairman OBEY for including language in this conference report adopted by the Senate which includs $500,000 for a feasibility study for a National Registry of Substantiated Cases of Child Abuse or Neglect, as described in the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act. I also want to thank my home state colleague, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, who was instrumental in getting the Senate to adopt this important provision.

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act was signed into law in July of 2006. This landmark piece of legislation served to reform the Federal standards for sex offender registration, enhances criminal penalties for sex offenders, creates and amends various grant programs to protect children, and called for the creation of a National Child Abuse Registry to further protect America's children.

Unfortunately, child abuse is a huge problem and the statistics tell a troubling story. Each week, child protective services, CPS, agencies throughout the United States receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In 2002, 2.6 million reports concerning the welfare of approximately 4.5 million children were made.

In over two-thirds of these cases, an assessment or investigation followed. As a result of these investigations, approximately 896,000 children were found to have been victims of abuse or neglect—an average of more than 2,450 children per day.

As the parent of two children adopted from foster care, I am particularly concerned about the number of children in the foster care system who have been physically abused.

People who work in the foster care system estimate that the percentages of boys and girls in foster care who have been physically abused is as high as 75 percent. Many came into foster care initally because of physical abuse and others are children who were re-victimized while in foster care.

This is unconscionable. All children, no matter what their background, deserve to grow up in a stable and loving home.

The Adam Walsh Act addresses this problem by directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish the National Registry which would be available to child protection authorities for use as a resource in tracking previous instances of child maltreatment in order to enable child protection workers to be better equipped with relevant information in assessing cases.

Each State already collects information on substantiated cases of abuse and neglect, but once an investigation is under way, adult perpetrators need only to move to another State to escape detection and punishment. This National Registry will address this loophole and ensure that violators, no matter where they live, can be brought to justice.

Unfortunately, the Registry has not come to fruition. This legislation would require the Department of Health and Human Services to complete the study on the feasibility of establishing the Registry within a year of enactment.

The President should sign this conference report and enact this vital provision. We must do a better job of protecting our Nation's most vital resource, our children, and this money will help us in that effort.

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, thank you to Chairman OBEY and Ranking Member WALSH and their staffs for their hard work in crafting this bill.

This conference report goes a long way towards addressing the current and future needs of millions of Americans and their families.

It provides relief for families that desperately need child care and afterschool programs; for teachers anxious to receive classroom training or professional development; for students who won't be able to attend college without an increase in the maximum Pell Grant; and for the elderly who depend on LIHEAP to help pay for the rising cost of home heating oil.

What some of my friends on the other side of the aisle who intend to vote against this conference report don't seem to understand is that the programs funded in this bill literally make a life-or-death difference in the lives of millions of American families who are struggling to make ends meet.

We find a way to pay $12 billion every month for the war in Iraq, yet some of you will fight tooth and nail against the additional $9.8 billion in this bill that will help 436,000 more disadvantaged children receive math and reading assistance; or 130,000 more children receive afterschool care; or support 600 additional research grants at NIH; or provide 1.2 million uninsured Americans access to healthcare at community health centers.

It is outrageous, and it is unconscionable.

Chairman OBEY should be commended for what he accomplished in this bill, and I urge every member in this body to support the conference report.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill.

The conference report includes funding for many important programs and I recognize that the conferees had a challenging task in shaping the report because of budget constraints. Overall, I think the report is a good one and I hope that the President will change his mind and sign it.

This conference report funds our military construction needs and keeps our commitment to veterans, with the largest single funding increase in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The report provides needed funding for veterans' medical care—both for VA hospitals and clinics as well as for research into conditions such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, both of which are common problems facing Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The report also includes funding to provide 1800 new claims processors to address the 400,000 benefit claims backlog.

I am pleased that key funding for Colorado installations and facilities has also been included in this report.

The report includes $7.3 million for a new F–16 facility for the 140th Air Wing of the Colorado Air National Guard at Buckley Air Force Base (AFB). I led the Colorado delegation this year in securing this funding, which will help the Guard replace an outdated facility that can no longer provide proper security and communications to support one of its key missions—to fly F–16s in support of homeland defense. The soldiers and airmen of the Colorado National Guard who are activated and deployed to support our homeland defense deserve this safe and modern facility.

The report also includes $61.3 million for the Fitzsimons Veterans Hospital, another key priority for the Colorado delegation. The funding will enable construction to begin on the facility's parking structure and energy plant. Denver's current Veterans Hospital is fifty years old, is at full capacity and does not meet the needs of our veterans. As Colorado's service members continue to be placed in harm's way, it is essential that we be prepared to meet their needs when they return home. This funding will put us on a path toward making the new campus at Fitzsimons a reality.

The conference report also includes an amendment, passed overwhelmingly in the House in June and later passed in the Senate, that prohibits the Pentagon from taking the first steps toward expanding the Army's Pinon Canyon training site.

After meeting with community members in La Junta and Trinidad in September, it is even more clear to me that the Pentagon has failed to convince Coloradans of a pressing military need for the Army to acquire an additional 418,000 acres at this particular location. I hope the Army hears the strong message Congress is delivering today that we will ensure that the livelihoods and property of Colorado citizens are respected and protected.

Another key provision for southern Colorado is the inclusion of $35.1 million for the construction of on-site chemical destruction facilities at the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

We need to continue to do all we can to safely and expeditiously remove the mustard agent remaining at the Pueblo depot. The sooner we clean up these weapons, the sooner the surrounding communities will be safe—and a clean-up by the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty deadline of 2012 will come at a lower cost to taxpayers.

The conference report also includes nearly $170 million to support Fort Carson as it expands because of the stationing of two new brigades and the new headquarters of the Fourth Infantry Division. This includes $53 million for new barracks; $18 million for an addition to Evans Army Hospital and a dental clinic; $8.3 million for a Defense Access Road to allow personnel and equipment to deploy easily from Peterson Air Force Base; $4.9 million for a new indoor range; $72 million for new unit operation facilities; and $13.5 million for construction of new facility support operations for the 13th Air Support Operations Squadron.

The conference report also includes $24.5 million for an Air and Space Integration Facility at Schriever Air Force Base and $15 million to upgrade academic facilities at the Air Force Academy.

This conference report also provides funding for the Department of Health and Human Services, one of the most vital agencies in our government. This report will increase funding by $4.4 billion over the fiscal year 2007 budget—a 6.9 percent increase and one that I strongly support. This funding will be important both to Colorado and to our country.

This report provides funding for a broad range of important projects, from increasing funding for essential research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to increasing health care access in rural areas. I strongly support include the 3.8 percent increase in funding for the NIH. This increase will be pivotal in jump starting a reinvestment in important medical discoveries.

Included in the report is important funding for Children's Hospital of Denver. Funding obtained to build the North Campus Ambulatory Surgery Center will broaden access to pediatric care in the north Denver metro area. This new development will also add more convenient alternative to patients, families, pediatricians, and physicians while also decreasing the burden on other health centers in the Denver metro area.

Making our health care system safe and more efficient is a goal of this Congress and I am happy to announce that Avista Hospital will contribute to that goal. Avista has been a leader in the Electronic Medical Record field and will continue to implement a cutting edge system thanks to funding included in the report.

The report provides for increases in the Center for Disease Control (CDC) which will fund important public health programs such as children's immunizations, environmental health and cervical and breast cancer screenings.

Our nation's youth are our greatest resource, and we must do all that we can to prepare them to lead our country in future years. This report would provide very important funding for the Department of Education to further the education of our children.

I supported the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 because we need to create higher academic standards and accountability in our education system and close the so-called achievement gap in this country. However, NCLB has been underfunded since it was first passed, meaning that local school districts do not have the resources available to try to meet these new standards. This report takes a step in the right direction by increasing funding for NCLB over both the fiscal year 2007 budget and the President's request. I am also pleased to see increases in funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). IDEA provides resources to meet the unique challenges in educating children with disabilities.

In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, higher education is more important than it has ever been. Yet skyrocketing tuitions are making college education increasingly difficult for many students and families to afford. Just a few weeks ago, the College Board announced that the average tuition at four-year schools in my home state of Colorado had increased 16 percent from last year. Pell Grants are one important and effective way that the federal government helps students and families afford college. The conference report will increase the maximum Pell Grant award to $4,925.

I am encouraged that the report includes an increase in funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a critical program that helps many Colorado families, who are struggling to get by, avoid having to make choices between paying their heating bill and putting food on the table. The conference report will increase funding for this program by $250 million over the fiscal year 2007 budget.

I am pleased the labor provisions of this report reflect a new direction and commitment to

expanding job training and enhancing the safety of workers, by increasing funding for a number of employment, education, and protection programs for the American workforce.

With that said, I am disappointed the conference report does not include my amendment to increase the funding for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The board plays a vital role in labor-management relations. While funding is not the only problem that faces the NLRB I am concerned that without the additional funding, there is a danger they will have to layoff some of their staff in order to pay for their required overhead, including salaries.

The funding for programs included in this report is a cause for celebration, not a veto. The President suggested underfunding for many of these programs and has threatened to veto the report in its current form. I request that the President reconsider his veto threat and sign this conference report.

In summary, Madam Speaker, this is a good report that provides funding for many important purposes. It is good for Colorado and good for the country, and it deserves approval.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, colleagues, appropriations bills are moral statements. They document the direction that we as a Congress desire our Nation to go. With our vote on H.R. 3043 today, we once again have an opportunity to show Americans that the 110th Congress is committed to taking our Nation in a New Direction—putting the needs of the American people first and making long-delayed investments in our future.

Unfortunately, this commitment to improving the lives of our soldiers, veterans and ordinary Americans seems not to be shared by the President. The Administration apparently feels that while it is necessary to spend $12 billion a month in Iraq, the Federal Year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill is just $9.8 billion too expensive and needs to be vetoed. He believes that an extra $10 billion to provide grants to low-income children for after school programs, increasing the purchasing power of Pell Grants, fund job training programs for dislocated workers and helping families facing rising energy prices with the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is just wasteful spending.

The President, in an attempt to burnish his credentials as a bona fide fiscal conservative, now seems to know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. I wonder where this conservatism was from 2001 through 2006, when the Republican-led Congress went on a deficit financed spending spree with our national treasury taking the United States from a $5.6 trillion, 10–year surplus to a $2 trillion, 10-year deficit.

By passing H.R. 3043, which combines the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education FY 08 Appropriations bill and the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs FY 08 Appropriations bill, we will be making the largest investment in veterans' health care in history and making long overdue investments in education, worker safety and health care for our citizens.

If the President is truly concerned with how his legacy will read, I urge him to listen to the overwhelming bi-partisan majority in Congress that supports H.R. 3043. Mr. Bush, help us reverse the sharp rise in college costs that continue to be a barrier to millions of low- and middle-income students by increasing the Pell Grant from $4,050 to $4,435. Help us increase access to Head Start programs so that more disadvantaged children have access to preschool. Provide a 10.1 percent increase for community health centers, an increase that will serve an additional 1 million uninsured people. Stand with the strong bipartisan majority that passed both these bills this summer. Mr. President, approve this bill and help us make America stronger.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I first want thank the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, DAVID OBEY—who also chairs the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education—for his hard work and vision in putting this appropriations conference report together.

I also want to thank the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs—Congressman EDWARDS of Texas—for his outstanding work on this conference report and his unwavering dedication to our Nation's veterans.

This is an excellent, fiscally responsible conference report that makes vital investments in expanding access to health care for our people, in educating our children, in job training, in medical research, and in providing the largest single increase in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Simply put, this conference report deserves the overwhelming support of members—just as the individual bills did when they were considered in both the House and Senate.

Recall, we passed the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill on a bipartisan vote of 276 to 140, with 53 Republicans joining a nearly unanimous Democratic caucus.

The Senate passed its own version of this bill 75 to 19.

And, both chambers passed the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill by overwhelming margins—409 to 2 in the House, and 92 to 1 in the Senate.

This conference report demonstrates our democratic priorities—as well as the President's misguided, shortsighted budget proposals, which would cut funding for Labor, Health and Education programs by $3.6 billion below the enacted funding level in fiscal year 2007.

If the President had his way, he would cut vocational education; eliminate all student aid other than work study and Pell Grants; cut medical research; cut law enforcement grants; cut education for children with disabilities; cut rural health programs; cut clean water programs; and cut the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program. The American people do not support such a proposal. And neither do Democrats.

Thus, this conference report provides $9.8 billion above the President's request for Labor, Health and Education programs—which barely keeps pace with inflation and population growth.

Through this conference report, 1.2 million more Americans would have access to community health centers, and we would increase funding for programs that help parents pay for college, for No Child Left Behind programs, for vocational education and Job Corps, and for medical research into life threatening diseases.

Through this conference report, we also will keep our commitment to our Nation's veterans, providing $3.7 billion more than the President requested for veterans' medical care, claims processing personnel, and facility improvements.

The President has said such funding is unnecessary.

We absolutely disagree.

The idea that we cannot find the funds necessary to invest in health care, education and medical research, and in medical care of the men and women who have sacrificed for this country is patently absurd—and it must be rejected.

How is it that the President can demand that this Congress spend another $200 billion of taxpayers' dollars for his failing policy in Iraq while he seeks to shortchange critical programs at home?

His vain attempt to try to claim the mantle of fiscal responsibility by threatening to veto this conference report—particularly in light of his disastrous and irresponsible fiscal policies—will fool no one.

Madam Speaker, this is an excellent conference report that reflects the priorities of the American people, and rejects the President's misguided proposals.

Finally, let me say that Mr. OBEY effectively dispensed yesterday—in his speech at the National Press Club—with the Republican complaint that this conference report threatens enactment of the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs bill.

Only once in the last 5 years did the Republican Majority send the President a free-standing Military Construction conference report. Three times you packaged that bill with others. And last year, you failed to even enact a Military Construction-Veterans Affairs bill.

I urge my colleagues: vote for this fiscally responsible conference report, which makes critical investments in our Nation, our people and our future.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I am deeply disappointed that this bill increases the amount of money going to abstinence-only programs.

In 2004 I asked my staff to look at the curricula most popular among federally funded grantees in this abstinence-only program. We found that most contained significant scientific and medical errors. Kids were being taught that HIV can be spread through tears and sweat. They were taught that condoms didn't help prevent STD transmission. And they were taught that pregnancy occurs one in every seven times a couple uses condoms.

But these findings didn't lead to change—instead the administration and other defenders of this kind of program dug in their heels. They insisted there was no problem, without taking seriously the fact that flawed public health information was being provided to American teens with taxpayer dollars. In 2006, GAO found that HHS still wasn't reviewing the medical accuracy of curricula used in the biggest Federal abstinence-only programs.

It would be one thing if these programs actually worked. If they helped kids make healthier decisions, then maybe it would make sense to go in and try to deal with some of the accuracy issues. But abstinence-only programs don't work. In 2007, HHS released the results of an independent study it had requested on the effectiveness of federally funded abstinence-only programs. This was a randomized, controlled study—the gold standard of research. The researchers found that compared to the control group, abstinence-only

programs had no impact at all on whether participants had sex. They had no impact on the age of first sex. They had no impact on the number of partners. And they had no impact on rates of pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.

There is no evidence to support these programs, and they should get no Federal funding. It is an outrage that instead they are receiving an increase.

Defenders of abstinence-only like to claim that parents support abstinence education. It's true that surveys show parents want programs to promote abstinence as the healthiest choice for young people. We all want that. But the surveys also show that parents overwhelmingly want a full range of age-appropriate information taught, so that youth are best prepared to stay healthy.

Parents care more about the health of their children than about politics or ideology. I think that's probably why they understand that the abstinence-only programs we've been funding are a mistake. They contain serious misinformation and, most importantly, are not effective in improving adolescent health. After putting more than a billion Federal dollars into these programs, we have seen no results.

I know it's critical that we pass this appropriations bill. But it's wrong to spend scarce dollars on programs that we know don't work. It's wrong to put our children at risk of health problems and unwanted pregnancies because we've withheld essential health information. And it's indefensible to use adolescents as political pawns instead of taking an honest, evidence-based look at their health and well-being.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report accompanying the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill funding the Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education, as well as Military Construction and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the domestic side, this legislation makes important investments in our health care and education programs. After many years of flat funding and small increases that have resulted in funding reductions when taking inflation into account, the National Institutes of Health would receive a 4 percent increase over current funding levels. This legislation provides $30 billion for life-saving medical research, much of which is performed in my back yard at the Baylor College of Medicine, the MD Anderson Cancer Center, UT Health Science Center, and many other impressive research facilities located in the Texas Medical Center.

I am also pleased that the bill provides a 35 percent increase for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The $2.4 billion in LIHEAP funding that this bill provides will better ensure that LIHEAP funding is more equitably distributed among cold weather and hot weather states. By providing LIHEAP funding above the threshold of $1.975 billion, this legislation ensures that the funding will be sufficient to meet the historical needs of cold weather states while also recognizing the unmet needs of hot weather states, which experience higher levels of weather-related deaths.

I would also like to thank the conference committee for retaining House-passed funding for two projects in our district. The conference committee generously provided funding for Gateway to Care, the community health care access collaborative in Harris County. Gateway to Care will utilize this funding to help coordinate the deployment of health information technology among the county's health care clinics. The bill also provides much-needed funding for the Harris County Hospital District's Diabetes Program, which offers a culturally-sensitive, interdisciplinary, and educational approach to the treatment of diabetes in our community, which experiences higher than normal rates of this devastating disease.

As Veterans' Day approaches, we should also highlight the significant funding increases made in the Military Construction/VA portion of the bill. The conference agreement provides a total of $109.2 billion for veterans' affairs and military construction programs, roughly $18 billion more than the current level and $4 billion more than the president's request. For the last 11 months, this Congress has demonstrated its commitment to fulfilling the promises made to our veterans, and this bill reaffirms that commitment in the strongest terms by providing the largest funding increase in VA history. With the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan creating hundreds of thousands of new veterans, this level of funding reassures our veterans, our troops, and their families that this Congress will fulfill the promises we made to those who fight for our country, even after they are done with their service.

I would also like to offer my thanks for the inclusion of funding for a new fire station at Ellington Field. I have supported this project for several years, and am glad to see it funded in this bill. The existing fire station at Ellington field is in a rapidly deteriorating condition and does not meet OSHA or Air Force Standards. Roof leaks and lack of insulation have resulted in equipment being destroyed and extremely high operating costs. New firefighting apparatus must be parked outside the station because they will not fit into the truck bays. This fire station supports all flying operations at Ellington Field including Air National Guard, Army National Guard, US Coast Guard, NASA, and civilian aircraft. Construction of the new fire station at Ellington is critical for the Texas Air National Guard and all units stationed at Ellington Field, and I am pleased funding for this project was included.

Madam Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this conference report.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to adjourn.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. OBEY. Are we participating in Little League politics or doing the country's business tonight?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not stating a parliamentary inquiry.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 158, nays 248, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 1049]

YEAS—158

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Emerson
English (PA)
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCrery
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Putnam
Rehberg
Renzi
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Sullivan
Taylor
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wu
Young (FL)

NAYS—248

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Burgess
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez