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

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 3 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2528 and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

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

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

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

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

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

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

This subcommittee was formed for the purpose of taking a more comprehensive look at programs related to providing a suitable quality of life for our service men and women, from recruitment through retirement.

I believe the bill before Members today does just that, and it does it in a fiscally responsible way.

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

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

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

The bill before us today totals $121.8 billion, of which $35.2 billion is discretionary spending. On the discretionary side, the bill is $1.1 billion above the President’s request and $5.9 billion above last year’s bill. The bill funds the VA at $88.1 billion, $2.3 billion above fiscal year 2005, and $635 million above the budget request. Included in this amount is $21 billion for medical services, a $1.6 billion increase above the 2005 enacted level, and $1 billion above the budget request. This is an 8.5 percent increase over last year. I would also note that with the funding in this bill, the medical services account will grow by 18.2 percent over the past 2 years.

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

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

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

Regarding BRAC, let me just repeat what we have said in subcommittee. As of now, we consider the Secretary of Defense’s recommendations just that, recommendations only. We will be following the commission process, but we see no need to make changes to the military construction budget at this time. Also included in this total is $20 billion for the Defense Health Program, an increase of $1.8 billion above fiscal year 2005 and $192 million above the budget request. This amount supports not only readiness by making sure we have an adequate funding level to prepare our soldiers, sailors, and airmen for training and deployments while caring for their families and dependents.

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

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

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

Thanks to my subcommittee members for their active participation in the hearing process and also for their advice, and also to our very professional staff led by the capable Carol Murphy, and to my personal staff for their help in preparing this work product. I am very grateful to all of them. This would not have been possible without their help.
### Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2006 (H.R. 2528)

(Amounts in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2005 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 2006 Request</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Bill vs. Enacted</th>
<th>Bill vs. Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Title I - Department of Defense**

**Military construction, Army**
- 1,981,084
- 1,479,841
- 1,652,552
- (-328,532)
- (+172,711)
- (-16,976)

**Rescissions**
- (-16,976)

**Total**
- 1,962,108
- 1,479,841
- 1,652,552
- (-309,556)
- (+172,711)

**Military construction, Navy and Marine Corps**
- 1,069,947
- 1,029,249
- 1,109,177
- (+39,230)
- (+79,028)
- (-24,000)

**Rescissions**
- (-24,000)

**Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)**
- 138,800

- (-4,350)

**Total**
- 1,180,597
- 1,029,249
- 1,109,177
- (-71,220)
- (+79,028)

**Military construction, Air Force**
- 866,331
- 1,069,840
- 1,171,338
- (+305,007)
- (+101,698)
- (-21,800)

**Rescissions**
- (-21,800)

**Total**
- 844,531
- 1,069,840
- 1,171,338
- (+326,807)
- (+101,698)

**Military construction, Defense-wide**
- 686,055
- 1,042,730
- 976,664
- (+280,696)
- (-66,066)
- (-22,737)

**Rescissions**
- (-22,737)

**Total**
- 663,318
- 1,042,730
- 976,664
- (+313,346)
- (-66,066)

**Total, Active components**
- 4,650,354
- 4,621,460
- 4,909,731
- (+259,277)
- (+288,271)

**Military construction, Army National Guard**
- 446,748
- 327,012
- 410,624
- (-36,124)
- (+83,612)

**Military construction, Air National Guard**
- 243,043
- 165,256
- 225,727
- (-17,316)
- (+60,471)
- (-5,000)

**Rescissions**
- (-5,000)

**Total**
- 238,043
- 165,256
- 225,727
- (-12,316)
- (+60,471)

**Military construction, Army Reserve**
- 92,377
- 106,077
- 138,425
- (+46,048)
- (+32,348)
- 8,700

**Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)**
- 8,700

**Total**
- 101,077
- 106,077
- 138,425
- (+37,348)
- (+32,348)

**Military construction, Naval Reserve**
- 44,246
- 45,226
- 45,226
- (+880)
- ---

- 4,350

**Total**
- 48,596
- 45,226
- 45,226
- (-3,370)
- ---

**Military construction, Air Force Reserve**
- 123,977
- 79,260
- 110,847
- (-13,130)
- (+31,587)

**Total, Reserve components**
- 958,441
- 722,831
- 930,849
- (-27,592)
- (+208,018)

**Total, Military construction Appropriations**
- 5,608,795
- 5,344,291
- 5,840,580
- (+231,785)
- (+496,269)

**Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)**
- (147,500)

**Rescissions**
- (-147,500)

**Total**
- 5,461,295
- 5,196,791
- 5,693,080
- (+536,289)
- (+496,269)

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program**
- 165,800
- 206,858
- 206,858
- (+41,058)
- ---

**Rescissions**
- (-5,000)

**Total**
- 160,800
- 206,858
- 206,858
- (+46,058)
- ---

**Family housing construction, Army**
- 636,099
- 549,636
- 549,636
- (-86,463)
- ---

**Rescissions**
- (-21,000)

**Total**
- 615,099
- 549,636
- 549,636
- (-65,463)
- ---

**Family housing operation and maintenance, Army**
- 926,507
- 812,993
- 803,993
- (-122,514)
- (-9,000)

**Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)**
- 1,200

**Total**
- 927,707
- 812,993
- 803,993
- (-123,714)
- (-9,000)
MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)
(Amounts in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>FY 2005 Request</th>
<th>FY 2006 Request</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Bill vs. FY 2005 Request</th>
<th>Bill vs. FY 2006 Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps</td>
<td>139,107</td>
<td>218,942</td>
<td>218,942</td>
<td>+79,835</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescission</td>
<td>-12,301</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126,806</td>
<td>218,942</td>
<td>218,942</td>
<td>+79,835</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps</td>
<td>696,304</td>
<td>593,860</td>
<td>588,680</td>
<td>-107,644</td>
<td>-5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>9,100</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-9,100</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>705,404</td>
<td>593,860</td>
<td>588,680</td>
<td>-107,644</td>
<td>-5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family housing construction, Air Force</td>
<td>846,959</td>
<td>1,251,108</td>
<td>1,236,220</td>
<td>+369,261</td>
<td>-14,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescission</td>
<td>-45,171</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td>+45,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>884,788</td>
<td>1,251,108</td>
<td>1,236,220</td>
<td>+369,261</td>
<td>-14,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force</td>
<td>653,384</td>
<td>766,939</td>
<td>755,319</td>
<td>-98,065</td>
<td>-11,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-11,400</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>664,784</td>
<td>766,939</td>
<td>755,319</td>
<td>-98,065</td>
<td>-11,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family housing construction, Defense-wide</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-49</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-wide</td>
<td>49,575</td>
<td>46,391</td>
<td>46,391</td>
<td>-3,184</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescission</td>
<td>-19,109</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>+19,109</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-16,609</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>+19,109</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Family housing appropriations</td>
<td>4,074,603</td>
<td>4,242,169</td>
<td>4,201,661</td>
<td>+120,058</td>
<td>-40,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4,150,484)</td>
<td>(4,242,169)</td>
<td>(4,201,661)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+51,177)</td>
<td>(-40,508)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations</td>
<td>(21,700)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-21,700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescissions</td>
<td>(-97,581)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+87,581)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-wide</td>
<td>81,886</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-81,886</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base realignment and closure:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base realignment and closure account, 1990</td>
<td>246,116</td>
<td>377,827</td>
<td>377,827</td>
<td>+131,711</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base realignment and closure account, 2005</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1,880,466</td>
<td>1,570,466</td>
<td>+1,570,466</td>
<td>-310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Base realignment and closure</td>
<td>246,116</td>
<td>2,258,293</td>
<td>1,948,293</td>
<td>+1,702,127</td>
<td>-310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Allowance for Housing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>3,341,882</td>
<td>3,945,392</td>
<td>3,945,392</td>
<td>+603,510</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>3,471,251</td>
<td>3,592,905</td>
<td>3,592,905</td>
<td>+121,654</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>1,053,573</td>
<td>1,179,071</td>
<td>1,179,071</td>
<td>+125,498</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>3,010,770</td>
<td>3,240,113</td>
<td>3,240,113</td>
<td>+229,343</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army National Guard</td>
<td>434,073</td>
<td>453,690</td>
<td>453,690</td>
<td>+19,617</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air National Guard</td>
<td>214,151</td>
<td>248,317</td>
<td>248,317</td>
<td>+34,166</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
<td>290,117</td>
<td>310,566</td>
<td>310,566</td>
<td>+20,449</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval Reserve</td>
<td>202,282</td>
<td>191,338</td>
<td>191,338</td>
<td>-10,944</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps Reserve</td>
<td>38,945</td>
<td>40,609</td>
<td>40,609</td>
<td>+1,664</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Reserve</td>
<td>17,781</td>
<td>17,286</td>
<td>17,286</td>
<td>-500</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Basic Allowance for Housing</td>
<td>12,116,825</td>
<td>13,273,287</td>
<td>13,273,287</td>
<td>+1,156,462</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>1,967,028</td>
<td>1,825,518</td>
<td>1,850,518</td>
<td>-16,510</td>
<td>+25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>1,333,288</td>
<td>1,344,971</td>
<td>1,344,971</td>
<td>+11,683</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>523,756</td>
<td>553,960</td>
<td>553,960</td>
<td>+30,204</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>1,991,710</td>
<td>1,815,701</td>
<td>1,845,701</td>
<td>-146,000</td>
<td>+30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense-Wide</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>115,400</td>
<td>115,400</td>
<td>+20,400</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army National Guard</td>
<td>354,044</td>
<td>391,544</td>
<td>391,544</td>
<td>+7,500</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air National Guard</td>
<td>230,642</td>
<td>169,791</td>
<td>164,791</td>
<td>-45,851</td>
<td>+15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
<td>201,141</td>
<td>204,370</td>
<td>204,370</td>
<td>+3,229</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval Reserve</td>
<td>73,410</td>
<td>62,788</td>
<td>67,788</td>
<td>-5,000</td>
<td>+5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps Reserve</td>
<td>12,126</td>
<td>10,105</td>
<td>10,105</td>
<td>-2,021</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 (H.R. 2528)

(Amounts in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2005 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 2006 Request</th>
<th>Bill vs. Enacted</th>
<th>Bill vs. Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Reserve</td>
<td>53,056</td>
<td>55,764</td>
<td>55,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization</td>
<td>6,865,201</td>
<td>6,549,912</td>
<td>6,624,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Restoration:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>400,948</td>
<td>407,865</td>
<td>407,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>266,820</td>
<td>305,275</td>
<td>305,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>397,368</td>
<td>406,461</td>
<td>406,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense-Wide</td>
<td>23,664</td>
<td>28,167</td>
<td>28,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formerly used Defense sites</td>
<td>268,516</td>
<td>221,921</td>
<td>221,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Environmental Restoration</td>
<td>1,356,336</td>
<td>1,369,689</td>
<td>1,369,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Health Program:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation and maintenance</td>
<td>17,297,419</td>
<td>19,247,137</td>
<td>19,184,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>387,035</td>
<td>375,319</td>
<td>355,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and development</td>
<td>508,862</td>
<td>169,156</td>
<td>444,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Defense Health Program</td>
<td>18,171,436</td>
<td>19,791,612</td>
<td>19,563,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General provision (sec. 120)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, title I:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New budget (obligational) authority</td>
<td>48,681,048</td>
<td>53,101,111</td>
<td>53,514,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations</td>
<td>(169,250)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescissions</td>
<td>(-195,094)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Veterans Benefits Administration</td>
<td>35,261,849</td>
<td>36,780,131</td>
<td>36,780,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Health Administration:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and pensions</td>
<td>32,607,688</td>
<td>33,412,879</td>
<td>33,412,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readjustment benefits</td>
<td>2,556,252</td>
<td>3,214,246</td>
<td>3,214,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans insurance and indemnities</td>
<td>44,360</td>
<td>45,907</td>
<td>45,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans housing benefit program fund program account</td>
<td>43,764</td>
<td>64,586</td>
<td>64,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Limitation on direct loans)</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>(500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit subsidy</td>
<td>-144,000</td>
<td>-112,000</td>
<td>-112,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>152,842</td>
<td>153,575</td>
<td>153,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational rehabilitation loans program account</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Limitation on direct loans)</td>
<td>(4,106)</td>
<td>(4,242)</td>
<td>(4,242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American veteran housing loan program account</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Limitation on direct loans)</td>
<td>(50,000)</td>
<td>(30,000)</td>
<td>(30,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, Veterans Health Administration</td>
<td>28,188,875</td>
<td>28,203,684</td>
<td>28,203,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Administration:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General operating expenses</td>
<td>1,314,155</td>
<td>1,418,827</td>
<td>1,411,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cemetery Administration</td>
<td>147,734</td>
<td>156,447</td>
<td>156,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Inspector General</td>
<td>69,153</td>
<td>70,174</td>
<td>70,174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2006 (H.R. 2528)

**(Amounts in thousands)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2005 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 2006 Request</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Bill vs. Enacted</th>
<th>Bill vs. Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction, major projects</td>
<td>455,130</td>
<td>607,100</td>
<td>607,100</td>
<td>+151,970</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, minor projects</td>
<td>228,933</td>
<td>208,937</td>
<td>208,937</td>
<td>-19,996</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-324)</td>
<td>36,343</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-36,343</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants for construction of State extended care facilities</td>
<td>104,322</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>-79,322</td>
<td>+25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants for the construction of State veterans cemeteries</td>
<td>31,744</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>+256</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, Departmental Administration</strong></td>
<td>2,388,109</td>
<td>2,493,485</td>
<td>2,511,485</td>
<td>+123,376</td>
<td>+18,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2005 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 2006 Request</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Bill vs. Enacted</th>
<th>Bill vs. Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New budget (obligational) authority</td>
<td>65,838,832</td>
<td>67,477,300</td>
<td>68,112,300</td>
<td>+2,273,468</td>
<td>+635,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations</td>
<td>(65,714,762)</td>
<td>(67,477,300)</td>
<td>(68,112,300)</td>
<td>(+2,397,538)</td>
<td>(+635,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency appropriations</td>
<td>(124,070)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>(-124,070)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Limitation on direct loans)</td>
<td>(54,608)</td>
<td>(34,742)</td>
<td>(34,742)</td>
<td>(-19,866)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, title II</strong></td>
<td>30,730,748</td>
<td>30,851,682</td>
<td>31,466,682</td>
<td>+755,934</td>
<td>+635,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretionary</td>
<td>35,108,084</td>
<td>36,625,818</td>
<td>36,625,818</td>
<td>+1,517,534</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandatory</strong></td>
<td>35,108,084</td>
<td>36,625,818</td>
<td>36,625,818</td>
<td>+1,517,534</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES

**American Battle Monuments Commission**

| Salaries and expenses | 40,771 | 35,250 | 35,750 | -5,021 | +500 |
| Foreign currency fluctuations | 11,904 | 15,250 | 15,250 | +3,346 | - |
| **Total, American Battle Monuments Commission** | 52,675 | 50,500 | 51,000 | -1,875 | +500 |

**U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**

| Salaries and expenses | 17,112 | 18,295 | 18,295 | +1,183 | - |

**Department of Defense - Civil**

**Cemeterial Expenses, Army**

| Salaries and expenses | 20,363 | 28,050 | 29,550 | +187 | +1,500 |

**Armed Forces Retirement Home**

| Operation and maintenance | 57,163 | 57,033 | 57,033 | -130 | - |
| Capital program | 3,968 | 1,248 | 1,248 | -2,720 | - |
| **Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home** | 61,131 | 58,281 | 58,281 | -2,850 | - |

### Total, title III:

| New budget (obligational) authority | 160,281 | 155,126 | 157,126 | -3,155 | +2,000 |

### Grand total, all titles:

| New budget (obligational) authority | 114,860,161 | 120,733,537 | 121,783,618 | +7,103,457 | +1,050,081 |
| Appropriations | (114,581,935) | (120,733,537) | (121,783,618) | (+7,103,457) | (+1,050,081) |
| Emergency appropriations | (293,320) | --- | --- | (-293,320) | - |
| Rescissions | (-195,094) | --- | --- | (-195,094) | - |
Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I, for one, believe it will be one of the important legacies of his service in Congress.

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

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

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

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

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

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

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

I'd like to comment briefly on an issue that is important to me as the Chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the National Shrine Commitment. As you may know, pursuant to Public Law 106–117 the Department of Veterans Affairs entered into a contract to assess the state of VA's national cemeteries. That study identified...
provide cutting-edge, quality care for the recruits who are joining the United States Navy.

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

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER). Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman’s courtesy in yielding me this time.

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

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

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

Cleanup gives the military many advantages. There are less hazards to fighting men and women. There will be no more area to train. There are better relationships with the surrounding area. Most important, it will develop tools and techniques that will save American lives. It will give the military long-term security with these new techniques and technologies.

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

We are looking at allocating over $1.5 billion to the 2005 base closure rounds, and we have not yet cleaned up after the very first round of military closures. That is unacceptable. It is time for Congress to no longer be missing in action. We need to step up, provide the guidance, and clean up these areas.
It is unacceptable after 17 years that we will tell the people in Sacramento that their base might be cleaned up in the year 2027. The money is available. The Congress just needs to find the will to allocate it and support the Military Quality of Life Subcommittee in its important work to make sure there are not only benefits to active military families but the retired families as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. WALSH. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for raising this issue, and I share his concern. The gentleman has correctly indicated that this bill works to address PTSD research so that we can better treat mental health symptoms of our active and retired military personnel.

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

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

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

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

The VA is looking to the military to increase the number of our troops, and there are not enough resources to deal with that influx of such patients, I would like to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for the work that they have done dealing with keeping veterans hospitals open. I would have hoped, however, that we would have been able to debate the Obey amendment that would have given us $2.6 billion to really be able to honor and be with our veterans and mourn those who had lost their lives, because let me remind them, when soldiers fall, their families are left behind and we need a strong VA health system.

In fact, I recently, in my representation, had the Veterans Hospital of Houston in my congressional district. I am pleased today with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) on the floor, and I just want to note the great work done with the Fisher House in years past when we funded a place for veterans’ families, families of veterans who are in the hospital, that their families may stay nearby.

We must realize that we have 1,500 dead in Iraq and Afghanistan, maybe
upwards of 2,000, and they are dying every day. But we also have the injured who are coming home who need to have a full open hospital system. Their families need to have it. So it is important, Mr. Chairman, that even as we look at the good work that this committee, to see the opportunity to be able to debate the Obey amendment because the $2.6 billion is needed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And we are going to end this procurement of work I will buy my own systems and VA buys their own systems and then they are incompatible and we have got duplication and multiplicity and, guess what, it is now up to us to end this. And we are going to make this seamless transition work. We are going to give the right platforms with regard to IT. I want to thank them for making that cut in IT. A lot of people are going to say, Why did they do that? We are about to set the correct platform under the right form of leadership. And what I would like to work with the gentlewoman on the VA is to hope fully take the chief information officer within the VA and we are going to give them line and budget authority. We are going to end the stovepipes and the wasting of hundreds of millions of dollars, because we need to modernize this system. So I want to work with them as we proceed.

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

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

With regard to their focus on PTSD and following the President’s recommendation of the $100 million, I thank them. We are going to be holding a hearing coming up; so to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) and the lady from Texas, my friend and colleague, for yielding me this time.

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

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

We have been working in Northern Virginia in concert with the Pentagon for years to get the Department of Defense employees to their work in a
cost-efficient manner and to be able to meet the Pentagon’s needs.

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

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

This bill preserves the organization of our Defense Cancer Research Programs, which have saved so many lives and have helped drive breakthroughs in breast, ovarian and ovarian cancer research. Consolidation of these programs would have disrupted and delayed the granting of research awards, so I want to thank Chairman Walsch and Ranking Member Edwards for seeing the wisdom of this approach.

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

Despite progress made, we still do not fully understand the risks factors, symptoms and causes of ovarian cancer. Unlike other diseases and conditions, there is no screening test for ovarian cancer—there is no equivalent to the mammogram. And as such, more than 80 percent of women are diagnosed late stages when prognosis is the worst, and the overall rates of ovarian cancer mortality remain stubbornly high. So I want to thank Chairman Walsh for his strong commitment to funding some of the funds appropriated under the Military Construction and National Atlantic Treaties Organizational Security Investment Program sections of this bill.

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

I also strongly object to the appropriation of U.S. taxpayer funds for, as the bill states, “the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area.” NATO is a relic of the Cold War and can certainly not justify the cost of funds appropriated under the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, NATO’s official fund, that drives this construction.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to speak on H.R. 2528 the
Military Quality of Life-Veterans Affairs Appropriations. Unfortunately, in rising to speak on this spending legislation, I have to tell our Nation’s veterans that they can not expect the level of medical care that they deserve from this appropriation’s measure. The sad truth is that over the past three years veterans have been getting the short end of the stick, and unfortunately they will receive no relief from H.R. 2528.

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

The sad secret of Veterans Affairs and medical care for our veterans is that with the rising cost of health care these days, the modest increases in funding for veterans’ medical care in this legislation are not even enough to maintain the current level of care, which in itself is insufficient. Our veterans need and deserve proper VA benefits because they defend so heavily upon them. According to the Veterans Health Administration, 28 million veterans, 29 million veteran families are currently using VA benefits. Another 70 million Americans are potential candidates for such programs. This amounts to a quarter of the country’s population. Veterans and their families will sadly begin finding that they have no place to turn for their medical treatment as V.A. hospitals across the country face closing their doors. With the budget shrinking, staff will be let go. This could mean the loss of over 19,000 nurses. Without these nurses, this leads to the loss of over 6.6 million outpatient visits. Of these out of every two veterans could lose their only source of medical care. This is a shameful situation and one that again is not properly addressed in this appropriation bill.

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

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

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

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

Finally, the new appropriations structure irresponsibly pits active military needs against veterans needs. Our great Nation can support both! Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Obama Amendment. This amendment provides badly needed funding for veterans health care, and represents the minimum necessary to maintain the current level of services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

This legislation: Significantly increases funding devoted to military housing and health care. Increases total funding for the VA by 3.5 percent; Boosts Veterans Medical Services $1 billion above the budget request and $1.64 billion over last year’s levels: (Over the last 2 years, funding for Veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent.) Appropriates $20 billion for the Defense Health Program—a 9.9 percent increase over fiscal year 2005. Proposes a slight decrease in the basic allowance for military housing; Hikes total military construction 4.2 increase above last year’s levels.

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

We know from experience that the mental health and physical health of our troops are closely linked, and mental health disorders can exacerbate or even induce physical disorders. Returning service men and women need to be treated for both through integrated physical and mental health care and this bill recognizes that fact on many important levels. Mr. Chairman, I would also like to point out what is NOT in this bill, namely higher copays at veterans health care facilities and new annual surcharges for certain categories of veterans.

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

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

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Chairman, when the Appropriations Committee realigned its subcommittees earlier this year, one of the larger challenges fell to the measure we are considering today—the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. The bill provides benefits, housing, and health care for our military troops and their families; and ensures that our veterans—who have given so much in the service of our country—continue to receive their pensions, readjustment benefits, loans, and medical care. I am pleased to rise in full support of the bill the appropriators have crafted.
be a slight increase over the President’s request and an increase of $1.8 billion over the 2005 enacted level. This bill also funds the military construction and family housing accounts used by DoD to provide our service members and their families quality housing. The funds made available in this bill for base allowance and housing—$13.3 billion—also ensure that those serving our country are able to afford to live in quality housing whether on or offbase. This represent an increase of $1.2 billion over the 2005 enacted level.

H.R. 2528 provides $31.5 billion in discretionary funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs [VA]. Most of this amount—$28.8 billion of it—is for the Veterans Health Administration, which provides top-notch medical care to our service members and their families at little or no cost to them. This amount represents a slight increase over the President’s request and an increase of $1.8 billion over the 2005 enacted level. This bill also funds the military construction and family housing accounts used by DoD to provide our service members and their families quality housing. The funds made available in this bill for base allowance and housing—$13.3 billion—also ensure that those serving our country are able to afford to live in quality housing whether on or offbase. This represent an increase of $1.2 billion over the 2005 enacted level.

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

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

Amendment offered by Mr. MELANCON

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. MELANCON:

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

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

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

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

Mr. MELANCON (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD. The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Chairman, as I begin my remarks, let me say that in the first 2 days as a newly sworn-in Congressman, I had the unfortunate experience of attending seven funerals for young men within a 20-mile radius of my home. I bring this war-related veterans service amendment to you today. This amendment provides an additional $53 million in urgently needed funding for items critical for veterans returning from the war. The increased money for veterans was paid for by getting back this year’s funding for the next round of the BRAC by 9 percent.

The amendment will provide $38 million for combat-related trauma care. The VA is currently operating four polytrauma centers for research, education and clinical activities on complex polytrauma and polytrauma associated with combat injuries. The important work of these centers needs to be expanded and demands dedicated funding.

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

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

Provide retroactively $23 million for war orphans: Surviving spouses with minor children are eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to assist the families with immediate and transitional needs after the death of a spouse. Right now, only service members’ families whose spouses died after November 30, 2004, receive this $250 per...
month benefit for 2 years. This amendment will help approximately 4,100 spouses with children whose service-member spouse died during the war on terrorism between September 11, 2001, and November 30, 2004.

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

I propose a BRAC offset. The administration requested $1.18 billion for fiscal year 2006 for the new round of BRAC. While the administration was formulating this request, the DOD consistently stated that there was about a 20 to 24 percent excess capacity in military installations. Then, on May 12, just 2 weeks ago, Secretary Rumsfeld reported at a press conference that the new BRAC list would only cut between 5 and 11 percent of excess capacity.

The 2005 BRAC round will actually require less than half of the closure and realignment activities originally projected. The administration’s budget request reflects much more money than will be needed to be spent for BRAC activities in fiscal year 2006. The bill already cuts $230 million from the BRAC request, and the program would not suffer with an additional $169 million cut. This is well under the $380 million in additional cuts that was approved by the Committee on Armed Services.

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

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

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

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome the gentleman to the Congress. We are very proud and happy to welcome the gentleman to the floor of the House, to Members who appeared before the committee on Armed Services.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman’s amendment. The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome the gentleman to the Congress. We are very proud and happy to welcome the gentleman to the floor of the House, to Members who appeared before the committee on Armed Services.

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

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

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I simply want to say that I congratulate the gentleman for offering this amendment. He says that I would like to take out of BRAC will not get you, dollar for dollar, the money that you would like to see spent in veterans’ health care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read. The Clerk reads as follows:

In addition, $50,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007, for overhead cover and design and military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, $1,109,177,000, to remain available.
For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $45,226,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

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

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

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $603,993,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $549,836,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $358,680,000.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Within the last 2 months, there have been significant changes in the status of what is known as the ACWA program, which consists of the Blue Grass Ammunition Demilitarization Facility at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky and at the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Pueblo, Colorado.
Due to recent Department of Defense decisions, the President’s fiscal year 2006 budget no longer reflects the funding requirements needed for the Blue Grass site.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk reads as follows:

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I rise to bring to the attention of the House a complicating factor. However, I assure the gentleman from New York that the Department does not want to submit a budget amendment. The gentleman from New York is correct, the jurisdiction complicates the transfer of funds from RDT&E to the Chemical Demilitarization Construction account.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk reads as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

Closing bases do not need new construction. Seneca Army Depot in New York has $39 million. The five bases in my district, closed base Fort Ord, as having yet another $322 million in cleanup costs before the land can be transferred. This is on top of the $327 million that has already been spent on the cleanup at Fort Ord.

The scope of this problem is large, and Fort Ord is not the only problem. The same GAO report shows that Kelly Air Force Base in Texas still has about $299 million in cleanup costs outstanding. Seneca Depot in Illinois has $55 million, and the naval air station in South Weymouth, Massachusetts, has $39 million. All of these bases cited carry a $697 million cleanup price tag, yet the bill is only able to provide $377 million for that purpose, less than half.

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

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

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

I would suggest one option for us to consider is to rescind the MILCON money in this bill currently slated for bases that are on the closure list, and reallocate it to the BRAC cleanup. Closing bases do not need new construction, but they will need cleanup.
Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), who is a respected and active member of the subcommittee and knows these issues very well. Certainly, the gentleman has made us all more aware of the problems of unexploded ordnance and hazardous wastes at closed bases, and I commend the gentleman for that.

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

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

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

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

I thank the chairman for engaging in this colloquy.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk reads as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, $2,500,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2885 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACCOUNT 1990


AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER

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

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

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

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

My amendment would simply say, before we step into a second round of base closure, the fifth round, that we ought to take some of that money that has been designated for the fifth round and instead keep faith with the communities that are waiting, now since 1989, to have their problems solved.

We are all aware of the trauma that can take place in communities when bases close, how they lose jobs. They are upset. But to compound it by leaving people with a toxic white elephant is absolutely unacceptable. I have before me here a list of the 1988 BRAC installations and the estimated date of the cleanup. At the top of the list, in no particular order, in Sacramento, California. They are going to have to clean up 2072 to be able to fully clean this up.

As we go down the list, it is absolutely unacceptable. It is one of the reasons that we find such apprehension regarding the BRAC process, although there is the promise of redevelopment.

There are opportunities that we have seen, for example, in Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. Where it is done right, bases can be cleaned up, it can add economic vitality to communities. The sorry fact is that we have not kept faith with the communities that have suffered base closure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I do intend to deal with this issue in conference. And we will look at what funds may reasonably be added to the prior BRAC account to accelerate environmental cleanup. We need to make
Mr. WALSH of New York. Clearly, his involvement for raising this issue is very disturbing, and that is why I am here. I have been in those areas as well. So these findings initially have projected, and they said they were one-third of the way there in terms of the funding. One-third of the way there in doing the work, we are less than one-third of the way there in the time frame we project out, you know understand why communities have such enormous apprehension about this. Or as Peter Finley Dunne might say, “Trust everyone, but cut the grass.”

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

And in looking at what the BRAC findings initially have projected, and especially at the State of Connecticut in terms of the cleanup, how drastically underestimated they have been in those areas as well. So these are very disturbing, and that is why I again thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for raising this very important and thoughtful amendment, a common-sense approach, that before we proceed to a fifth round, that we need to get the job done. I applaud this effort to bring attention to all of the Members of Congress that we have got a real problem here, and that we have got to focus some attention and figure out the resources that we need to get the job done. I applaud the chairman for his work and conscientiousness in trying to see that we might be able to go some money in conference to address this problem.

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

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

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

Mr. Chairman, yesterday morning I flew home to Marietta, Georgia, in my district of course, I had the pleasure of meeting one of the nine BRAC commissioners as he toured Naval Air Station Atlanta in the 11th district. While we
Mr. Chairman, our military plays a vital role in our society and throughout the world. My home state of Hawaii is the perfect example of how and why funds for the cleanup of UXO are very much needed. Several years ago, I led a tour for the Blumenauer amendment.

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

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

The first ordnance cleanup activity occurred in 1946. In 1954, military ordnance disposal units began to identify and dispose of thousands of munitions. We could return it to be put to good use.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I deeply appreciate the time that has been taken this afternoon for this discussion. I appreciate the chairman and ranking member for their engagement in this important issue for providing feedback to me and my staff and others, for the assurances that in conference we will try to move some of this money around, that the El Toro money that could be used for additional naval cleanup. All this is great, but it is a drop in the bucket of the overall problem. It is less than half of our obligation just for things that we have already closed.
Mr. Chairman, as I said, I am going to withdraw this amendment. I appreciate being able to make the point. I look forward to working with the gentleman, but I would hope that our colleagues will take this seriously because it can have vast implications for military readiness, for the environment, and keeping faith with our communities who expect that we will do our job. Today I hope we will take a step in doing just that.

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

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk will read. The Clerk read as follows:

**BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACCOUNT 2005**

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure Account 2005, established by section 206(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), $1,570,466,000, to remain available until expended.

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, NAVY**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, MARINE CORPS**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, AIR FORCE**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, ARMY RESERVE**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, NAVY RESERVE**

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

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, MARINE CORPS RESERVE**

For basic allowance for housing, for members of the Marine Corps Reserve on active duty, $46,609,000.

**BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING, AIR FORCE RESERVE**

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

**FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, ARMY**

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

**FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, NAVY**

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

**FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, MARINE CORPS**

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

**FACILITIES SUSTAINMENT, RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION, AIR FORCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, AIR FORCE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)**

For the Department of the Air Force, $306,461,000, to remain available until transferred: Provided, That the Secretary of the Air Force shall, upon determining that such funds are required for environmental restoration, reduction and recycling of hazardous waste, removal of unsafe buildings and debris of the Department of the Air Force, or for similar purposes, transfer the funds made available by this appropriation to other appropriations made available to the Department of the Air Force for similar purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, DEFENSE-WIDE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION, FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)**

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

**DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM**

For expenses, not otherwise provided for, for medical and health care programs of the Department of Defense, as authorized by law, $19,983,912,000, of which $19,184,537,000 shall be
for operation and maintenance, of which not to exceed 2 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2007, and of which up to $19,212,427 may be available for contracts entered into under the TRICARE program of which $355,119,000, to remain available for obligation until September 30, 2008, shall be for procurement; and of which $444,256,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007, shall be for research, development, test and evaluation:

Provided, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the appropriation available for basic research for which this heading is being used is not to be used for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed $25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 111. None of the funds appropriated in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title shall be available for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing pertaining to alternative means of acquiring family housing projects that are being constructed in foreign nations.

SEC. 113. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

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

SEC. 115. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized by the Joint Committee on Appropriations for the current session of Congress.

SEC. 116. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed or for which temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed $100,000.

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

SEC. 118. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, proceeds deposited to the Department of Defense Base Closure Account established by section 209(a)(1) of the Base Closure and Realignment Amendments and Base Closure and Realignment Act (10 U.S.C. 2678 note) pursuant to section 209(a)(2)(C) of such Act, may be transferred to the account established by section 209(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2678 note), to be merged with, and to be available for the same purposes and the same time period as that account.

SEC. 120. Subject to 30 days prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in “Family Housing” accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for military construction unaccompanied housing in “Military Construction” accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time appropriated directly to the Fund: Provided, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 189 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

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

SEC. 122. (a) Not later than 60 days before issuing any solicitation for a contract with the private sector for military family housing, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the notice described in subsection (b). Notice referred to in subsection (a) is a notice of any guarantee (including the making of mortgage or rental payments) proposed to be made by the Secretary to the private party under the contract involved in the event of—

(A) the closure or realignment of the installation for which housing is provided under the contract;
(B) a reduction in force of units stationed at such installation; or
(C) the extended deployment overseas of units stationed at such installation.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 123. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the account established by section 209(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2678 note), to be merged with, and to be available for the same purposes and the same time period as that account.
expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program. Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriations to which transferred.

SEC. 124. Notwithstanding this or any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters; provided, That not more than one flag officer quarter and one general officer quarter will be transferred to acquire land for family housing; provided further, That such transfer may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 125. None of the funds made available in this title under the heading “North Atlantic Treaty Organization Construction Program”, and no funds appropriated for any fiscal year before fiscal year 2006 for that program that remain available for obligation, may be obligated or expended for the construction of new or existing military construction projects, land acquisition, or family housing for military construction projects, inserted after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $1,500,000,000)

SEC. 126. Whenever the Secretary of Defense or any other official of the Department of Defense determines that the appropriation made in the current fiscal year for operation, maintenance, or repair of housing for Federal employees after a review, pursuant to a hearing or other activity, the Secretary (or other official) may not transfer funds appropriated for any fiscal year before fiscal year 2006 for that program that remain available for obligation, may be obligated or expended for the construction of new or existing military construction projects, land acquisition, or family housing for military construction projects.

SEC. 127. Notwithstanding subsection (d) of section 709 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by the enactment of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990: Provided, That such transfers shall be merged with and to be available for the same appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 128. During the 5-year period after appropriations available to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction for obligation, up to a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unbudgeted balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the accounts of the other military departments and agencies as determined by the Secretary of Defense, for purposes not inconsistent with the projects specified in subsection (b) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (c) of such section.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 129. None of the amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 130. That the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, may carry out a program to distribute surplus dental and medical equipment of the Department of Defense, at no cost to the Department of Defense, to Indian Health Service facilities and to federally-recognized health care facilities.

SEC. 131. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to carry out a military construction project, land acquisition, or family housing for military construction projects, inserted after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $33,412,879,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That such amounts may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be available to “Medical facilities required for the maintenance and repair of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to veterans as authorized”.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. OBEY:

Page 31, line 1, relating to VA compensation and pensions, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $25,000,000)

Page 34, line 21, relating to VA medical services, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $510,000,000)

Page 36, line 9, relating to VA medical administration, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $200,000,000)

Page 37, line 6, relating to VA facilities, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $67,000,000)

Page 37, line 20, relating to VA general operating expense, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $1,000,000)

Page 41, line 16, relating to VA construction projects, insert after the dollar amount the following: (increased by $1,500,000,000)

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

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

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

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS, COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 1551 et seq.: Provided, That the appropriation for compensation and pensions as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 1551 et seq.) shall be augmented by $40,000,000 for taxable year 2006, the amount of tax reduction resulting from the enactment of the Economic Growth and Reconciliation Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-16) and the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-27) shall be reduced by $1,500,000.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

There was no objection.

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

The CHAIRMAN. A point of order is reserved.

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

As I discussed earlier, under existing law given the tax cuts that the Congress has passed this year, persons making a little more than a million dollars or more will on average get a tax cut of $14,000. Meanwhile, we have a significant squeeze on veterans funding.
Very briefly, my amendment would simply scale back the size of those tax cuts from $140,000 to $129,000. It would use the $2.6 billion saved by that action to add funding to a number of accounts for veterans health care. It would add $1.5 billion more for medical services for veterans, for example. It would add $500 million more for increased medical administrative costs. It would add $300 million to keep the VA medical facilities up and running by refurbishing them. It would add $67 million for VA medical and prosthetic research; $77 million to build medical clinics and long-term care facilities; and $37 million for general administrative costs to assist veterans in receiving the prompt attention they deserve.

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

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

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

□ 1330

POINT OF ORDER

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

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

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

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

Mr. OBEY. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

The Clerk will read. The Clerk reads as follows:

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 51, 53, 55, and 61), $3,214,246,000, to remain available until expended.

Veterans Insurance and Indemnities

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen’s indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 19; 70 Stat. 887; 72 Stat. 487, 655,907,000, to remain available until expended.

Veterans Housing Benefit Program Fund Program Account (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

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

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, such sums as may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for “General operating expenses”.

Vocational Rehabilitation Loans Program Account (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

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

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, such sums as may be authorized by section 506(b) of title 38, United States Code, and merged with the appropriation for “General operating expenses”.

Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program Account (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, $580,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for “General operating expenses”: Provided, That no new loans in excess of $30,000,000 shall be made in fiscal year 2005.

Guaranteed Transitional Housing Loans for Homeless Veterans Program Account

For the administrative expenses to carry out the guaranteed transitional housing loan program authorized by section 71 of chapter 37, of title 38, United States Code, not to exceed $750,000 of the amounts appropriated by this Act for “General operating expenses” and “Medical administration” may be expended.

Veterans Health Administration Medical Services

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1768(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment and salaries and expenses of employees, $7,390,000,000, to remain available until expended.

Veterans Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 721 of title 38, United States Code, to aid to States homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, to reduce the indebtedness of the homes, not to exceed $1,000,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priori treatment for veterans who are service-connected disabled, lower income, or have special needs: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: Provided further, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided further, That, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 721 of Public Law 107–314, a minimum of $15,000,000, to remain available until expended, for the purposes authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

Medical Administration

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses; capital policy activities; information technology hardware and software; uniforms or allowances therefor, as authorized by sections 801–802 of title 38, United States Code; administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.); $1,134,874,000, plus reimbursements, of which $250,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007.

Medical Facilities

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing...
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

H4107

May 26, 2005

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

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until September 30, 2007, $935,000,000, plus reimbursements.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses, expenses of the Department for hospital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms or allowances therefor; not to exceed $25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and the Department of Defense for personnel expenses, to remain available not to exceed $1,411,827,000: Provided, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 310(a) of title 38, United States Code, shall be available until September 30, 2007: Provided further, That from the funds made available under this heading, the Secretary determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: Provided further, That the Veterans Benefits Administration shall be funded at not less than $1,086,938,000: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $4,000,000 shall be available for obligation until September 30, 2007: Provided further, That from the funds made available under this heading, the Veterans Benefits Administration may purchase up to two passenger motor vehicles for use in the performance of that Administration in Manila, Philippines.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemetery expenses as authorized in title 38, United States Code, purchase of passenger motor vehicles for use in cemetery operations; and hire of passenger motor vehicles, $136,447,000: Provided, That such funds shall be available under this heading, not to exceed $7,800,000 shall be available until September 30, 2007.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL


CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending and improving necessary facilities including parking projects under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, 8102, 8103, 8106, 8108, 8109, 8110, and 8122 of title 38, United States Code, including planning, architectural and engineering activities; construction design, administration; or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38 of United States Code, shall be made available for a previous major project appropriation, $607,100,000, to remain available until expended, plus the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38 of United States Code, shall be made available for a previous major project appropriation, $3,091,000,000, to be made available for reimbursement as provided in section 13 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 612) for claims paid for project disputes: Provided, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, such as portfolio development and management activities, reimbursement of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be for Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) activities; and of which $5,091,000 shall be to make reimbursements as provided in section 13 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 612) for claims paid for project disputes: Provided, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, such as portfolio development and management activities, reimbursement of funds which may or may not lead to capital investments, none of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: Provided further, That funds provided in this appropriation for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 may be transferred to CARES activities (except those for CARES activities referenced above) shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2006; and (2) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2007: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly report in writing to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate any approved major construction project in which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities including parking projects identified or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, mortgage acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, 8102, 8103, 8106, 8108, 8109, 8110, and 8122 of title 38, United States Code, and the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38 of United States Code, shall be available for obligation until September 30, 2007:

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2006 for “Compensation and pensions”, “Re-adjustment benefits”, and “Veterans insurance and indemnity” is transferred to any other of the mentioned appropriations.

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

SEC. 203. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for “Construction of State Veteran’s Cemeteries”, and “Construction, minor projects”) shall be available for the purchase of any site or for toward the construction of any new hospital or other construction. No appropriation in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled under the laws bestowing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901–7904 of title 5, United States Code or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), unless reimbursement of cost is made to the “Medical services” account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 205. Appropriations available in this title for “Compensation and pensions”, “Re-adjustment benefits”, and “Veterans insurance and indemnity” is transferred to any other of the mentioned appropriations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2005.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3323(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are not paid within the time limitations established thereof and the funds in such accounts are not payable from “Compensation and pensions”.

SEC. 207. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1920), the Veterans’ Special Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1923), and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund (38 U.S.C. 1955), reimburse the “General operating expenses” account for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed from the mentioned accounts. That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in an insurance program in fiscal year 2006 that are not required by law to be paid to the claimants of that insurance program after the claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: Provided, That
further, That if the cost of administration of an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of the surplus earnings.

further, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2006 which is properly allocable to the provision of each insurance plan and to the payment of any total disability income insurance included in such insurance program.

Sec. 206. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall continue the Franchise Fund pilot program authorized to be established by section 403 of Public Law 105-336 until October 1, 2006: Provided, That the Franchise Fund, established by title I of Public Law 104-204 to finance the operations of the Franchise Fund pilot program, shall continue until October 1, 2006.

Sec. 207. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may require, in the same manner and to the same extent, that reports be furnished based on estimated costs: Provided further, That amounts received shall be credited to “General operating expenses of the Office of Resolution Management and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not exceed $2,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and $3,059,000 for fiscal year 2007.”

Sec. 208. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for the payment of funds for construction and renovation of Armed Forces Retirement Home and related facilities, except for a Department of the Treasury Departmentalenders motor vehicles for replacement only, and not to exceed $1,000 for official use and representation expenses, $29,550,000, to remain available until expended. In addition, such sums as may be necessary, for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies account.

Armed Forces Retirement Home

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $38,281,000, of which $1,248,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport.
The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the amendment is considered withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MRS. JONES OF OHIO

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mrs. Jones of Ohio:

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

Sec. 408. None of the funds made available by this Act to close or realign any military installation approved for closure or realignment in 2005 before the Secretary of Defense makes the information available to the Congress which the Secretary’s closure and realignment recommendations were based, as required by section 2903(c)(4) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (title XXIX of Public Law 101-158, 10 U.S.C. 2687 note).

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

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order against the gentleman’s amendment.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment to the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

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

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

Mr. Chairman, in the 11th Congressional District and in northeast Ohio, over 1,100 jobs will be lost due to the BRAC process. These job losses will have a tremendous economic impact on the City of Cleveland, which has been named the most impoverished city in the country.

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

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

Mr. Chairman, I support this amendment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Jones amendment, but I also want to mention because it gives this House another opportunity to slow the process down. We did not take that opportunity last night in...
support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY), despite the compelling testimony offered by a number of Members about the fact that we still have a lot of information outlying that should come in within the upcoming months, within the year, including the Quadrennial Defense Review, that would actually help the BRAC commissioners to evaluate the DOD’s recommendations for those installations that are in a list that is written on a list of recommendations of closure and realignment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I encourage my colleagues, while Members may have had reservations last night, to postpone the BRAC round awaiting all of the other information.

Can we not at least slow it down enough to ensure that the Department of Defense is accountable to each and every one of us and our constituents and our military installations to get that information to ensure a fair, open, and transparent process? I hope Members will agree and support the Jones amendment.

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

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

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

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

We do not have the background information that the Pentagon used to make those kinds of number-crunching decisions. The number-crunchers have not given us that kind of information.

How are we supposed to prepare for a site visit next week, or regional hearings in early July, without having that information?

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

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

How can the Pentagon make recommendations and not take that into mind? We have no indication of how they address that issue because we do not have the backup data. That is why the amendment that I am offering today, I urge my colleagues from New Jersey was talking about, Fort Monmouth, for example.

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. WALSCH). The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TIAHRT

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

The Clerk read as follows:

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TIAHRT

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

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

Mr. WALSCH. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order against the gentleman’s amendment.

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

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

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

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

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

How can we expect our economy to develop and grow when bureaucracy prevents businesses from starting and expanding. It is estimated today that the total regulatory burden is about $850 billion a year. That is $850 billion that is subtracted from the economy, not enough to meet inflation.$850 billion a year. That is $850 billion

Regulations can help create jobs or strangle them. Each and every Federal agency should take into consideration the economic effect of their actions with that funding. They also provide the space for businesses to thrive and create more jobs instead of stifling growth.

As we approve spending allocations on this bill and other bills, we need to remind regulators about the importance of their actions with that funding. Regulations can help create jobs or strangle them. Each and every Federal agency should take into consideration the economic effect of their actions with that funding. They also provide the space for businesses to thrive and create more jobs instead of stifling growth.

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

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

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

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

There was no objection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE
Messrs. BILIRAKIS, GINGREY, TOM DAVIS of Virginia, and SIMMONS, and Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

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

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BLOMMAEUER.

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

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment. The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

A recorded vote has been demanded. A recorded vote was ordered. The CHAIRMAN. This will be a 5-minute vote.

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

[Roll No. 225]
Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GILLUM) having assumed the chair, Mr. BASS, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that the Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, had directed him to report the bill back to the House with the recommendation that the amendment be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

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

The question is on the amendment. The amendment was agreed to.

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

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

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

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

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

[ROLL NO. 296]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeas</th>
<th>Nays</th>
<th>Not Voting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. HALL and Mr. SCHIFF changed their vote from “nay” to “aye.”

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Voted for:

Mr. FILNER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. JOHNSON (WI), and Mr. GONZALEZ.

NOT VOTING—8

Cox  Boehner  Jim Costa  Joe Courtney  Jim  Walker

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

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. HOEKSTRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 2 minutes.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OBERSTAR

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

The Clerk reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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