

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting  
Requests for Supplemental and Emergency Appropriations  
May 21, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed request for an FY 2002 supplemental appropriation for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This request is for an increase in the mandatory cost of disability compensation and pension benefits for veterans.

During the current year, VA has made dramatic improvements processing claims, significantly accelerating the rate of payments. This supplemental request for \$1.1 billion is needed to help pay the benefits associated with reducing the backlog of claims from previous years.

Absent this adjustment, there would be insufficient funds in September to pay the 2.5 million veterans who are entitled to benefits.

This transmittal also contains requests for FY 2002 supplemental appropriations for the legislative branch. As a matter of comity, appropriations requests of the legislative branch are transmitted without change.

Furthermore, in accordance with provisions of Public Law 107-63, the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002, I hereby request and make available \$54.0 million in emergency appropriations for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management. These emergency funds will be used to undertake necessary rehabilitation projects on lands damaged by wildland fires and to support fire suppression activities. I hereby designate this amount as an emergency requirement in accordance with section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Interview With European Journalists  
May 21, 2002

*The President.* I have a couple comments, and I'll answer some questions, obviously.

This is a trip that I've been looking forward to. I've never been to Germany; I'm looking forward to it. I've prepared a speech to the Bundestag, which is going to be a very interesting opportunity for me to talk about a very important relationship.

In my speech I'm going to refer to my trip to Russia as well, about how I view this as an opportunity—my trip to Russia and Germany and France and eventually

Italy—as a way to confirm the importance of our relationship bilaterally as well as institutions like NATO but as a way to talk about how welcoming Russia, Russia's vision into the West is important for all of us.

I look forward to my bilaterals with Gerhard Schroeder. We've got a good relationship. I look forward to my bilaterals with Jacques and Prime Minister Berlusconi, who is—three friends. As you know, I rely upon personal diplomacy a lot. I think it's easy, when people find areas