

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I wanted to join both Senators from Arkansas in stating what an excellent choice Jim Sasser is for Ambassador to China.

I had the good fortune to be in Beijing this summer and to see firsthand the importance of that post which the President has chosen Senator Sasser to fill. I had the good fortune to serve here in the Senate for 12 years with Jim Sasser. I know of his great negotiating skills, his great leadership ability, and I believe his great advocacy skills, which will serve him well and serve this country well in this new position which he is about to take on.

So I think the Senate has acted very appropriately, the President has acted appropriately, and I look forward to the day when Jim Sasser is our representative, very soon, in Beijing. I again commend all Senators for voting for his nomination.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES— H.R. 1561

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendment to H.R. 1561 and requests a conference with the House.

The Chair appointed Mr. HELMS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. PELL, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. DODD conferees on the part of the Senate.

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD]

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives on H.R. 927, Cuban Liberty and Solidarity Act:

Resolved, That the House disagree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill to seek international sanctions against the Castro government in Cuba, to plan for support of a transition government leading to a democratically elected government in Cuba, and for other purposes, and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Ordered, That Mr. Gilman, Mr. Burton of Indiana, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, Mr. King, Mr. Diaz-Balart, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Gejdenson, Mr. Torricelli, and Mr. Menendez be the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendment and agrees to the request by the House for a conference.

The Chair appointed Mr. HELMS, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. THOMPSON, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. PELL, Mr. DODD, and Mr. ROBB conferees on the part of the Senate.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2099, the VA-HUD appropriations bill, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2099) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of November 17, 1995.)

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and my distinguished ranking member. We have before us the VA-HUD appropriations conference report. As I understand it, there is to be 30 minutes equally divided between the two managers, 10 minutes under the control of Senator BUMPERS, 10 minutes under the control of Senator BOXER, 10 minutes under the control of Senator HUTCHISON, 10 minutes under the control of Senator LAUTENBERG, and 10 minutes under the control of Senator MCCAIN.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. The Senate will come to order. The Senator from Missouri has the floor.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, it is with some pride, some relief, and some frustration, I now present to the Senate the conference report on the appropriations bill for the Departments of Veterans Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development, and independent agencies for fiscal year 1996. Consideration of this bill has been a long, difficult process. While we should have been able to complete our work long before now, I do believe we have wasted little of this time in producing the best possible measure for consideration by the Senate.

Work on this measure began over a year ago, beginning with analyses of budgetary trends and programmatic needs for activities under the subcommittee's jurisdiction. It was obvious at that time, that our Federal low-income housing programs were out of

budgetary control. Concerted policy reform was critical to avoid a disaster of unprecedented magnitude.

In January of this year, as the newly selected chairman of this subcommittee, I convened a series of special hearings on the budgetary and management crisis at HUD. We detailed the magnitude of our budgetary shortfall to maintain the existing multifamily subsidized housing inventory of the Department. We explored urgently needed reforms in the housing preservation program to reduce cost, avoid windfall payments, and reduce long-term rental subsidies. We also delineated policy changes in public housing to reduce bureaucratic overregulation and micromanagement, to increase local flexibility, decision-making, and efficiencies.

From these hearings we developed a strategy to begin these comprehensive changes in Federal housing programs. First, in the Disaster Supplemental and Rescission Act we initiated the first round of deregulation, and rescinded \$6.5 billion of previously appropriated HUD funds to turn-off the spigot of unsustainable housing subsidy commitments. At that time we noted the urgency of comprehensive housing authorization legislation to complete this reform effort during fiscal year 1996.

Unfortunately, this legislation has been delayed, although we remain hopeful that early next year the measures reported by both the House and Senate authorizing committees will pass the Congress. In the absence of such legislation, however, we have used the appropriations process to establish a strong foundation in beginning the major reform and overhaul of HUD. The measure before us today reflects almost all of the reform proposals which passed the Senate in September. They include public housing and assisted housing rent reforms, including a minimum rent, repeal for onerous Federal resident selection criteria, free-market decontrol of section 8 lease terms, and flexibility in resident income mix and funds utilization.

This measure maintains the Senate-passed public housing demonstration initiative which will allow up to 30 public housing authorities to combine public housing and section 8 subsidies into a locally determined low-income housing assistance block grant. In addition, the bill also includes the Senate proposed multifamily mark-to-market demonstration, which is discretionary authority for the Department, and willing apartment development owners, the opportunity to explore work-out strategies which reduce dependence on rental subsidies while preserving affordable housing. Coupled with the one-time, 1-year extension of expiring project-based subsidy contracts, the multifamily housing demonstration authority sets the stage for consideration and enactment of needed comprehensive reform legislation next year.

Mr. President, the measure before us also maintains the effort recommended

by the Senate to fund a reformed housing preservation program. As I noted earlier, the committee identified a number of very troubling defects and problems in the previously enacted Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act [LIHPRA]. In fact, the HUD inspector general labeled this program as a "rip-off" and urged reform or termination. But with as many as 150,000 affordable housing units at risk, the committee chose the more difficult task of identifying less costly and more efficient means of preserving this valuable housing resource. Working with residents, owners, nonprofit organizations, and the Department, a strategy to prioritize sales to non-profits and tenant-sponsored organizations utilizing capital grants was developed and is provided for in this conference agreement. This provides the best means of assuring long-term preservation of this housing without encumbering the government with expensive and continuing rental subsidy obligations.

It was our intent that the Department cut off any further use of section 8 assistance to finance these preservation arrangements. The Department has already initiated the use of capital grants to finance sales of these developments, and we expect that similar authority will be identified or enacted to utilize similar capital loans for refinancing preservation agreements when such projects become eligible for funding in July.

Because of technical budgetary rules, the committee was not able to delineate fully these program changes within the conference agreement. Moreover, in connection with the larger issue of maintaining the inventory of the newer-assisted section 8 new construction-substantial rehabilitation multifamily projects, Congress will be required to address these complex and difficult housing finance issues in a comprehensive authorization measure next year. At that time, we hope to enact a carefully targeted and efficient housing preservation program. Pending that action, the conference agreement provides the Department the authority and resources to minimize potential displacement of low-income families.

Mr. President, the housing preservation program included in this conference agreement also recognizes that the severe budgetary constraints on these housing activities will not permit preservation of all units under all circumstances. This measure will permit owners to prepay their existing mortgages, as was provided for in their original subsidy contracts, because we cannot afford to compensate every owner to maintain these developments as low-income housing. In those cases, however, existing law, and the conference agreement does provide for section 8 assistance to avoid involuntary displacement of families due to increased rent burdens, and moving expenses if these developments are converted to other uses.

Mr. President, the conference agreement affords the highest priority to veterans programs. The largest increase in the conference agreement—\$400 million—goes to veterans medical care, for a total of \$16.564 billion. The amount provided ensures that all veterans currently receiving care in VA medical facilities will continue to receive high-quality medical care. The conference agreement makes no reductions to patient care at the VA. It requires administrative improvements—which have been recommended by VA's own inspector general and the General Accounting Office—to make budgetary savings so that VA's medical dollars are spent on veterans, not on bureaucracy and administrative waste.

The conference agreement provides the full budget request for VA's research program, a program critical to ensuring VA recruits and retains top quality medical personnel. In addition the bill also provides full funding for the staff needed to process compensation and pensions claims, so that VA's claims backlog can be eliminated and veterans won't have to wait 6 months or longer to receive an answer on their claim. It provides funding for a study of VA's claims processing system by the National Academy of Public Administration, which we expect will provide specific recommendations for improving and expediting VA's antiquated system.

The conference agreement provides \$136,155,000 for VA major construction, an increase of approximately \$100 million over the Senate-passed level. The agreement provides funding for authorized construction projects only. No new hospital construction is funded, following the recommendations of the General Accounting Office, and in view of the need to curtail future budgetary commitments.

Mr. President, the conference agreement provides \$9 million for the Court of Veterans Appeals, the same amount recommended by both the House and Senate for fiscal year 1996. As with all agencies and activities under this subcommittee's jurisdiction, the court is being required to absorb a reduction in funding in fiscal year 1996 in an effort to reach a balanced budget. While less than the amount requested, the amount provided should be adequate for the court's operations in fiscal year 1996.

Despite the fact that the court's budget has been reduced, I believe that the pro bono representation program should receive full funding in fiscal year 1996. This program has proven very successful in helping the court to address adequately the very large number of pro se cases.

I am troubled by reports that the chief judge does not intend to provide any funds for the pro bono program this year in view of budgetary reductions. I wish to remind the court of the Congress' support for this program, and the fact that the Senate committee report accompanying H.R. 2099 indicated

that the program was to receive the full budget request. Any changes will be made only upon the notification and approval of the Committees on Appropriations.

While I certainly do not oppose private sector funding for this program, to my knowledge such funding sources have not been identified, and until there is adequate private sector funding, I do not believe it is prudent to withdraw Federal support.

Mr. President, for the Environmental Protection Agency, the conference agreement provides \$5.7 billion, an increase of \$48 million over the Senate-passed level and a reduction of just \$235 million—4 percent—below the fiscal year 1995 post rescission level.

The largest reductions below fiscal year 1995 come from earmarked water and sewer projects—a reduction of \$500 million below last year, and from Superfund, a program which everyone agrees simply is not working as it should, and one which desperately needs reforms before we provide significant additional funding.

Despite substantial reservations about funding a program which is as flawed as Superfund, the conferees found an additional \$160 million for Superfund above the House- and Senate-passed levels, for a total of \$1.163 billion. This is a reduction of \$172 million below current spending, most of which is taken from management and support costs and lower priority activities. All Superfund sites posing an immediate risk to human health and the environment will be funded under the conference agreement.

The conferees funded EPA's drinking water State revolving fund program, which is not yet authorized, at the President's request of \$500 million, of which \$225 million is from previous year's appropriations. The Senate recently passed the legislation authorizing this important program, and I hope the House will pass similar legislation shortly so that the States may spend these funds in fiscal year 1996.

For clean water State revolving funds, the conferees provided \$1.125 billion. In addition, if drinking water legislation is not enacted by June 1, 1996, the conference report stipulates that the \$500 million in drinking water State revolving funds will become immediately available for clean water State revolving funds, for a total of \$1.625 billion. This ensures that the States will be able to spend these funds in fiscal year 1996, regardless of whether drinking water legislation is enacted.

EPA's science and technology account is funded at \$525 million, the same level of funding as fiscal year 1995. The conferees recognized the importance of ensuring adequate funding for the research activities which support EPA policy and decisionmaking. Additional funds are provided for research into the health effects of arsenic, so that we have the best science for a new standard for arsenic in drinking water.

EPA's environmental programs and management are funded at \$1.55 billion, a reduction of approximately 7 percent below current levels. Reductions are taken from lower priority activities such as the environmental technology initiative, which has received substantial funding to date with very little to show for it.

As to the so-called EPA riders, the conference agreement does not include any of the 17 House riders. Instead, the conference agreement includes only six legislative provisions for EPA—most of which are completely non-controversial and several of which were included in previous VA-HUD bills.

Mr. President, while the statement of the managers accompanying the conference report includes some language on legislative issues which had been included as riders in the House bill, in no case does the statement of the managers limit spending or direct that a specific rulemaking or activity be discontinued. The conferees simply urge EPA to consider reviewing these issues.

It should be noted, that this conference agreement will provide the Environmental Protection Agency an 11½ percent increase over the funding levels currently stipulated by the continuing resolution. Anyone who is concerned about potential cutbacks in EPA enforcement activities should understand, in clear and unmistakable terms, that failure to enact this conference agreement means deeper and more devastating cut-backs in that Agency's activities.

Mr. President, the House, 2 weeks ago, recommitted our conference agreement on this bill. The second conference on the VA-HUD Appropriations Bill adopted a package of technical amendments and corrections. In addition it included an amendment to the National Service appropriation to reflect the Congressional Budget Office estimate of close-out costs. Finally, conferees amended the previous agreement to freeze administrative fees of the HUD section 8 program and thereby address concerns over the unintended consequences of attempting to institute a two-tiered reimbursement system.

As noted earlier, further increases for VA Medical Care would only mean much deeper cuts in the other agencies funded in this bill. No conferee advocated such an adjustment. Furthermore, I believe we must insist that the VA implement improvements and reforms before providing further funding increases. We all support the best possible medical care for those who have been injured or wounded in defense of our Nation. Unfortunately, even with all the money in the world, there is no assurance that VA's existing bureaucratic structure could deliver such services, and we must demand these corrections.

Mr. President, this is a good conference agreement which, within our very severe budgetary and legislative constraints, goes a long way toward

needed reforms in HUD, VA, and EPA. It addresses the highest priority needs served by agencies within the subcommittee's jurisdiction, and it is fully in compliance with our fundamental goal of bringing the Government's budget into balance.

I hope that this bill will be enacted. It needs to be enacted soon, if only to begin the process of reforming HUD housing programs which will permit future year cost savings and efficiencies, to improve the quality of EPA regulatory decisionmaking so that it is based on sound science, and to infuse modern medical practices into the archaic and bureaucratic veterans health care system.

Mr. President, unfortunately I must report that despite our best efforts and repeated attempts, we have been unsuccessful in gaining the attention of the White House to negotiate a reasonable compromise on their demands for more spending, far more than what any balanced budget plan can accommodate. That is the source of my very deep frustration over this bill.

I have stated repeatedly that while some White House priorities are very different from my own and that of a majority of the Congress, we are prepared to sit down and seek a reasonable compromise on these issues. Matters such as the national service program, one of this administration's highest priorities, is an activity which I believe is very flawed in its approach and rife with misuse in its current management. I don't disagree with the fundamental goal of this program, but I cannot recommend more funding for the current program. Termination of this program is proposed in this conference agreement, but we have offered to consider additional funding if necessary reforms could be negotiated. Unfortunately, these offers have fallen on deaf ears in the White House, and only further threats of a veto have been communicated back to us.

Mr. President, this is no way to run a government. It certainly is no way to consider and enact legislation to assure the taxpayers that the sums we propose to spend are being devoted only to the most critical needs and in the most efficient manner possible. Unfortunately, unless the White House changes its tune, we have no alternative but to proceed with the agreement before us, despite the veto threats. We can only hope that by the end of this session some agreement with the administration can be struck, and the many critically needed reforms included in this bill will be enacted into law.

I think we were very successful in the conference. With the very able assistance of our ranking member, we prevailed on many of the issues. This measure is not an easy one because we took a 12-percent cut this year from the appropriated level last year. Nevertheless, we have tried to accommodate the various needs of the many agencies under the control of this subcommittee. I think this is a good meas-

ure. We have been advised by the President's representative that he does plan on vetoing it.

Earlier today, I made a very strong plea that the administration reconsider that decision. There has been a great deal of objection from the administration to the very low level of funding available for certain vital EPA functions, particularly in the enforcement area. Under the continuing resolution, there is only \$320 million available for EPA enforcement in the current year, if the continuing resolution is in effect. Under this measure, we have raised that amount to \$449 million.

I have also previously stated that we tried on numerous occasions to enlist the representatives of the administration in constructive negotiations with us as to how we might reallocate the funds within the budget allocation. The response has been solely that they want \$2 billion more. It is beyond the ability of this committee to grant them that money. I would suggest very strongly that if the administration does not like the CR funding level for EPA and the other agencies, they can sign this bill and get about an 11.5 percent increase in funding for EPA. If at a later date in the process of negotiations between the congressional leadership and the White House a decision is made at that level to make available more dollars for the functions in this bill, then they could at that time add it in a continuing resolution.

There are certain measures that I know are very important to the administration. The ranking member has argued very strongly to continue funding of the national service. We were unable to find that money in the very narrow allocation that we had, although had the administration been willing to negotiate with us and support the bill, I am confident we could have. We would have not been able, however, to pass the measure with majority party support if we had put in a large amount for national service.

I remain hopeful that this measure can be signed, and at such appropriate time as the administration, the congressional leadership reach agreement on additional funding which may be available to these functions, they would include it in a continuing resolution.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this is the toughest year I have ever faced as a member of the Appropriations Committee. I would like to thank Senator BOND and his staff, who worked very hard, under difficult conditions, to bring this bill to the floor. I also want to thank my own staff for the hard work that they put in and their effort to try to create a VA-HUD appropriations bill that would pass the Senate and be approved by the President.

However, I believe that this bill will be vetoed, and I believe that the bill will be vetoed not because of the hard work of the chairman, not because of

our attempt to strategize on an effective allocation of funds, but this year was so tough simply because of the modest allocation we received, and that was due to the issues related to the budget.

The amount that this subcommittee was allowed to devote to so many important priorities is indeed skimpy. Under these conditions I believe Senator BOND has done a commendable job. I chaired this committee for 6 years and brought six bills to the floor. I know how much work it is, and, again, I am going to thank him for his cooperative effort. He tried very hard to bring about change. I believe this bill reflects this change.

I believe that this bill begins to reform HUD. It puts into action the recommendations of the National Academy of Public Administration to reform the structure of HUD and consolidate its maze of programs so we get a dollar's worth of services for the poor and homeownership instead of dollars going to a bureaucracy.

This bill also streamlines the EPA. It follows the National Academy of Public Administration's recommendations to streamline EPA management and get started on a strategy to put EPA's resources where they are most needed, to be based on the risk to human health and safety.

There are other things about this bill that I like. First is Mission to Planet Earth. The funding cut was limited to only \$75 million. Ordinarily I would say, "Wow, cutting \$75 million," but given the fact that we faced a \$300 million cut, I believe we preserved the Mission to Planet Earth. The House bill cut much of the crucial space science programs, and the House language was to close NASA space flight centers, and those things have been removed from the conference report.

Second, veterans medical research is fully funded at the President's request of \$257 million, and a provision to deny benefits to vets who become mentally incapacitated has been removed.

Third, this bill will help those who want to help themselves. It contains a moving-to-work demonstration project for public housing residents, and rent ceilings and income disregards to help support the working poor.

Fourth, Federal housing preferences were moved, which I believe led to the ZIP codes of pathology in public housing. And I am pleased they, too, have been removed.

Lastly, the conference report removes House language to prevent HUD from enforcing fair housing laws on property insurance red lining.

But, Mr. President, unfortunately, serious problems remain in this bill. If these problems are not worked out, the President will veto this bill.

The first problem is that this bill contains no funding to continue national service. National service creates an opportunity structure in which young people can earn credit for higher education while serving their commu-

nities. It gives help to those who practice self-help and gives low- and middle-income young people access to the American dream.

National service makes voluntarism a fact of life and rekindles the habits of the heart. It fosters the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor that has made our country great.

The second concern that I have is in the area of veterans medical care. The bill reduces veterans medical care by \$400 million below the President's request. With the cuts in Medicare and Medicaid that loom on the horizon, many vets will turn to the VA for medical care but will be turned away because there is not enough money. This, I know, the President cannot support.

Our Nation's veterans did not hesitate to risk their lives for our freedom. There should be no hesitation to fund their health care. When they went to war, we told them we would provide health care. I believe promises made should be promises kept.

The third serious problem is EPA funding. EPA must be funded to protect health and environment. This bill funds EPA \$1.5 billion below the President's request, and it will hinder the EPA's ability to do its job in enforcement and in Superfund legislation.

Finally, this bill will transfer HUD's authority to enforce fair housing to the Department of Justice. On this side of the aisle we are opposed to this. Removing this authority from HUD is a step backward in time, and the transfer to Justice will hollow out fair housing enforcement efforts. This flies in the face of civil rights progress we have made over the last 25 years.

It is for these reasons that I oppose this bill. I know my colleagues on this side of the aisle will oppose it. It is regrettable that a budget agreement could not be arrived at so that Senator BOND and I, with the new allocation, could have moved forward to avoid a veto. I know that Senator BOND, and I must say Chairman JERRY LEWIS on the House side, have worked very hard and been open to further negotiations with the White House to avoid a veto. I thank them for that. I want to again thank Senator BOND for his willingness to listen to our concerns.

I think a better allocation would produce a better bill. I regret that we are heading for a veto. With these remarks, though, we could talk long into the night. I now yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. I yield myself just 1 minute, and then I would like to yield. But first, let me point out that occasionally we do get some humor in these proceedings, these very serious matters we are dealing with. I got this statement of administration policy. At the end of it, it said, "The administration would like to work with the Congress to address the issues discussed above."

Well, they have done a pretty good job of preventing working with us after

spending 3 frustrating weeks trying to hear from them. I find out now in their written statement that they want to work with me. I have a telephone number. It is listed. I can be reached. Nobody called.

Let me just say that all of the items you can make an argument we need more money for. Nobody is willing to come forward and say where the cuts are made. We cut low-priority EPA items, useless funds in Superfund, earmarked or pork projects in waste-water treatment. I think we have done as good a job as we can under the circumstances.

Mr. President, if I may, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the Senator from North Carolina. I know that the Senator from Arizona is here. He has the longer statement. The Senator from North Carolina had asked for 3 minutes. I yield 3 minutes to him.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. I thank Senator BOND.

Mr. President, the conference report provides \$19 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since HUD was created in 1965, spending for HUD has increased every single year. HUD's spending is increasing so rapidly that by the year 2000, spending on housing will be our largest domestic discretionary spending item. In fact, HUD has unused budget authority of over \$190 billion—unused budget authority.

Mr. President, this conference report is significant because, for the first time, it begins to reverse the spending trend at HUD. For the first time in a long time, spending at HUD will decline, and the American people will be better off for it.

While I appreciate what the Appropriations Committee has done for the short term, I think the long-term future of HUD has to be decided and what direction we are going to move it in.

I have introduced legislation with Senator DOLE and Senator ABRAHAM that eliminates HUD.

The legislation we have introduced also provides a clear roadmap as to how HUD can be eliminated. Regrettably, HUD has become a mammoth bureaucracy with over 11,000 employees. It has 240 housing programs—so many that Secretary Cisneros did not even know he had that number. HUD has entangled the American taxpayers in 23,000 long-term housing assistance contracts that will not expire until well past the year 2000.

In short, HUD as it is currently constructed, cannot continue. We need to begin working on how it can be replaced.

Mr. President, let me also add that while there are significant cuts in this bill, there are still some that can be cut a lot more. For example, this bill provides \$15 million for the Tenant Opportunity Program—whatever that is. Recently, the Washington Times reported that at least \$70,000 from the Tenant Opportunity Program was used to essentially pay for a vacation to

Puerto Rico for public housing tenants from Detroit. Mr. President, that is taxpayers' money that people worked for that is paying for vacations for tenants. In all, we do not know how many people used taxpayers' money, the bookkeeping is so confused. But if one used it, that is one too many.

Mr. President, I support the bill, but we need to do a lot more to cut HUD. I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. BOND. I yield to the Senator from Arizona 10 minutes.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, first let me praise the managers of this bill for all their hard work. Although I have concerns about this measure, it contains many good, worthwhile provisions.

Mr. President, as always I remain very concerned about items added in conference that were never considered in either the House or the Senate. It is wrong when pork barrel projects are added in the dark of night to the benefit of certain States and districts. The American public as a whole will benefit most when as distribution of discretionary funds are allocated through competitive bidding and on the basis of need as prioritized on a national level. I would hope we can move more in that direction in the future.

I want to raise two specific matters contained in the VA-HUD Appropriations Conference report.

Section 218 calls for debt forgiveness for the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to cancel the indebtedness of the Hubbard Hospital Authority of Hubbard, TX, the Groveton, Texas Hospital Authority, and the Hepzibah Public Service in Hepzibah, WV.

I am very concerned about this mandate. The report that explains this action merely states: "These loans were previously written off as uncollectible and will not increase the Federal debt."

Unfortunately, this sheds little light on the subject. I would hope that the distinguished managers of the bill—who deserve praise for doing a great deal of good work—would explain why this language will added to the bill in conference and give a rationale for its apparent urgency.

I would also like to know why are we mandating this action. Might it not be more appropriate to authorize to the Secretary to take such action in a manner that treats all other similarly situated entities and localities in a fair and equitable manner?

I am sure there are other localities around this Nation that would like to have their indebtedness forgiven and doing so in conference greatly concerns me.

Mr. President, I am also interested in section 221 of the bill. Section 221 allows for funds to be used in California and Ohio for different purposes than they were originally proscribed. I would inquire of the managers why this language is necessary?

Mr. President, is this not the exact argument why earmarking does not

truly serve the public interest. When we earmark and ignore national or regional priorities and then those priorities change, we are forced to change the law or further earmark funds. This clearly demonstrates micromanagement at its worst.

And it is this micromanagement, this endemic earmarking, that has caused us to waste billions of dollars. Are these projects I mentioned today costing the taxpayers millions of dollars? Maybe. But we must change our way of thinking. We must pass a truly balanced budget. We must pass this year the line item veto. And we must stop earmarking.

Unfortunately, it is entirely too easy to say "yes" around here and little courage demonstrated to say "no". It is much easier to say yes to a colleague who wants to bring home a little piece of pork. But we were not sent here to go along to get along. As Senator GRAMM noted earlier today on the floor in an outstanding statement regarding the budget, the American people sent us here in 1994 to change the way things are done. We were not sent here so that there would be new faces before the cameras voicing the same old fiscal practices of the past.

I am hopeful we will send the President line item veto legislation in the upcoming weeks. It will serve as further notice that the changes called for in 1994 are indeed becoming a reality. I would hope that we will continue to act in a manner that reflects this new thinking.

I congratulate the managers on a fine job, and it is my understanding that the distinguished manager will supply the responses to my concerns for the RECORD.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, let me take a minute and thank the Senator from Arizona. Basically, as he indicated, the debt forgiveness was designed to clear the books. There is no prospect of recovery. We will provide a fuller answer for the RECORD. The two provisions relating to Texas were included in the House. The one with respect to West Virginia was added in the conference. We will provide the full information on that.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, am I recognized for 10 minutes under the order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I will not vote for the bill before us principally because it has the space station in it, \$2.114 billion, while we cut EPA by about \$1.5 billion and veterans medical services by somewhere between \$300 and \$600 million. The space station, which is now calculated by the General Accounting Office to cost \$94 billion, still does not have one single redeeming value. Of the \$94 billion it is going to cost, \$90 billion of that is going to come from the United States. You hear the argument made this is now an international undertaking.

That is some undertaking when we are putting up \$90 billion of the \$94 billion it is going to cost.

Now, for the past several days, we have been reading that even though NASA is giving the Russians \$200 million a year to participate in this program—so much for international participation because they are participating and we are giving them the money to participate—they are saying they cannot afford to fulfil their part of the program because we are not giving them enough. So now they are proposing that we allow them to use a part of their existing *Mir* space station, hang it onto our space station and let that count as a contributory share.

Mr. President, I am not going to take up much time on that. I intend to vote against the bill. I am just saying what I have been saying on this floor for about 6 years now. The space station is going to be one disaster after another. This year it is the Russians. Next year, it will be something else.

My staff brought me a little squib on some company that said they had been able to use protein crystals that had been grown on one of the shuttles to develop a flu vaccine, which they hope to finish and perfect by the year 2000. I read the story closely since NASA keeps saying that we will cure all kinds of diseases if only we spend \$94 billion on the space station. Well, what the president of the company said was that it was nice to have the space shuttle to develop these crystals, but they could do it on the ground, and they were going to do it anyway. The space shuttle happened to be handy so they used it at taxpayer expense.

None of the pharmaceutical companies in this country is willing to pay for any share of the shuttle or the space station as of this date. Yet, you keep hearing that the space station is going to cure warts, cancer, emphysema, and everything else.

So I am going to vote "no" on that.

As far as cuts to the environment, I think this body makes a very bad mistake. We act as if all environmental regulation is somehow bad. Nobody defends environmental regulations that are out of order and excessive. But many environmental regulations are absolutely necessary.

This morning, I picked up the paper and saw that the Washington, DC, sewage system is going kerplunk. It is dilapidated, worn out, and no one has the money to repair it. You are reading more and more stories about that all the time. Bear in mind, colleagues, that the environment determines our very existence, and to build a space station that is going to cost \$94 billion while we have sewage running up and down the streets of this country is an absolute outrage.

So I repeat that I won't vote for this bill because the priorities it represents are all skewed-up.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise to commend the tireless efforts of the chairman and ranking member of the

VA/HUD Appropriations Committee, Senators BOND and MIKULSKI, in bringing this 1996 VA/HUD conference report to the Senate. As Senators may recall, this is the second iteration of the VA/HUD conference report. The House re-committed the first conference agreement and several technical changes were made, resulting in a second conference report, which is now before the Senate.

This has been a most difficult year for many, if not all, of the thirteen appropriation subcommittees. The VA/HUD Subcommittee, for example, has had to make deep cuts in many critical areas totalling some \$9.3 billion below the President's 1996 requests. Cuts in funding for veterans, public housing, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, and in a number of other independent Federal agencies, have been necessary.

I greatly appreciate the outstanding work of Senators BOND and MIKULSKI over many months in conducting the numerous hearings, the subcommittee and full committee markups, Senate floor consideration, and the conference on this very important and complex appropriation bill.

This is the first year of Senator BOND's chairmanship of the VA/HUD Subcommittee and he has carried out his responsibilities admirably, under extreme budgetary constraints. I recognize and compliment his efforts.

As for the ranking member of the VA/HUD Subcommittee, the distinguished Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], I am a great admirer. Senator MIKULSKI joined the Appropriations Committee in 1987 and chaired the VA/HUD Subcommittee from 1989 through 1994. She immediately took charge of this most complex subcommittee and never missed a beat. Each and every year, Senator MIKULSKI was able to accommodate whatever came her way in the form of subcommittee allocations which were clearly too small to adequately address the many critical needs under the subcommittee jurisdiction.

She never complained; instead, she went about the difficult task of making the hard decisions of where to cut in the most fair and equitable manner. I am certain that her experience and expertise have been most helpful to the new chairman, Senator BOND, on the bill that is now before the Senate.

I also thank the very capable and dedicated subcommittee staff: Stephen Kohashi, Carrier Apostolou, and Lashawnda Leftwich for the majority; and Rusty Mathews and Steve Crane for the minority. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Although this bill may be vetoed by the President, it is in no way a reflection upon the admirable work of the subcommittee members and staff.

LIHPP

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I want to recognize the chairman's successful efforts to not only continue the Low-Income Housing Preservation Program in

fiscal year 1996, but provide \$624 million in funding. This program is extremely important to my state and to many across the country. Thousands of Massachusetts tenants are threatened with displacement if the owners prepay their HUD-assisted mortgages and convert the property to uses other than affordable housing.

I am also generally supportive of the reforms to the program that are incorporated in the appropriations language. There is significant concern that the program may provide excessive incentives. I am hopeful that the authorizing committee on which I serve will take another look at the preservation program next year—with a particularly thorough review of the proposed capital grant approach—and make further refinements with the objective of preserving affordable housing and preventing displacement—without unnecessary costs to the taxpayer.

Unfortunately, the funding levels and program changes also mean that some owners will now choose to prepay. This raises the concern about the adequacy of protections for the residents of buildings in those circumstances where owners decide to prepay and convert their buildings to other uses.

The conference report language protects residents by preventing owners from prepaying their mortgage unless they agree not to raise rents for 60 days following prepayment. The language also raises the value of vouchers to a rent level necessary to allow the residents to stay in the buildings. These are appropriate protections.

Section 223 of the current Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act [LIHPRHA] provides significant protections to residents who are faced with a prepayment action by an owner. It is my interpretation that nothing in the appropriations language would override the protections provided to residents under section 223 of LIHPRHA, and that these protections would still apply to residents in those buildings where the owners decide to prepay their mortgages. Is that also the understanding of the distinguished Senator from Missouri?

Mr. BOND. Yes, I agree with the Senator from Massachusetts' interpretation—particularly as it relates to eligibility for voucher assistance and moving expenses of residents who are involuntarily displaced. The appropriations bill is intended to restore the right of owners to prepay their mortgages. At the same time, I have argued throughout this process that it is important to retain a preservation program that preserves as much of the affordable housing as possible and protects the residents of the buildings from involuntary displacement.

The appropriations language does not override the protections in section 223. I must add, however, that section 223 may provide benefits to residents that may be inconsistent with the decision by Congress to restore the owner's right to prepay and to the degree that

the nature of the section 8 assistance has been modified by the appropriations language. It is my view that the authorizing committee should review all of LIHPRHA—including section 223—over the next year in light of the new funding levels and the changes in the appropriations bill. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for raising this concern.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the distinguished chairman of the VA-HUD Subcommittee for his remarks and I look forward to working with him on the preservation program in the Banking Committee in the coming year.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to commend the efforts made by Senators BOND and MIKULSKI to improve the fiscal year 1996 VA-HUD appropriations bill. Given the budget constraints, they have done an admirable job of trying to craft appropriate and acceptable language.

Unfortunately, I am still frustrated by what this legislation does to this Nation's veterans programs, housing assistance priorities, and environmental protection policies. This bill not only compromises successful programs like AmeriCorps and Youthbuild, it cuts our housing budget by more than 20 percent.

Mr. President, we have an obligation to improve each and every American's access to safe and affordable housing. Unfortunately, as I warned last spring, the bill before us weakens our ability to provide adequate housing, and it ultimately cuts valuable programs that work.

Mr. President, the HOPE VI Program is designed to replace this Nation's most desperate and distressed housing stock with new, sustainable housing communities that will instill a sense of pride and community. The fiscal year 1996 appropriations bill cuts the HOPE VI Program from \$500 million to \$280 million. Mr. President, this cut will make it very difficult for current HOPE VI projects to complete their work. Because of this, I want to emphasize how important it will be for the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to comply with the Senate report language that expresses the Senate's intent to give priority funding to already-approved HOPE VI sites.

The Senate language allows us to follow through on our commitment to improving housing conditions and opportunities in a time of severe funding constraints.

Mr. President, I am also deeply concerned about the funding cuts the conference bill has imposed on the Environmental Protection Agency. While the conference opted to stay with the higher funding levels urged by the Senate, this level of \$5.7 billion still results in a 22.5 percent reduction from the President's budget request and a 14 percent cut from 1995. However, I am most worried about the reductions in several important programs, including environmental and public health standards enforcement, drinking water and

wastewater treatment infrastructure projects for States, and hazardous waste site cleanup.

Mr. President, we are finally making real progress in environmental protection. Our rivers and lakes are cleaner, our air is more breathable, and our drinking water is safer. Now is not the time to slow that progress. Instead, we should move forward so that we leave our world a safer, healthier place for our children.

Mr. President, for these reasons, I must vote against this legislation. But, should the President veto this bill, I look forward to working with my colleagues to improve the bill.

SPELMAN COLLEGE OUTREACH

Mr. COVERDELL. I would like to commend the chairman for his skillful work in shepherding this bill through the Senate and Conference Committee. There are certainly more enviable jobs than having to direct a major portion of spending reductions necessary to reach our ultimate goal of a balanced budget.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Senator.

Mr. COVERDELL. Recognizing his accomplishment in this regard, I would like to bring to the chairman's attention the fine work of many like my constituents at Spelman College in Atlanta in the arena of public housing assistance.

Located near urban Atlanta, Spelman College has established a quality outreach program for public housing residents that seeks to address many of the housing needs and problems in Atlanta and other large cities throughout our country.

Mr. BOND. I am indeed aware of the fine work performed at Spelman and am interested in their progress.

Mr. COVERDELL. The distinguished chairman's comments are appreciated. I would ask the Senator if the committee recognizes the role institutions of higher education play in revitalizing economically distressed urban and rural communities.

Mr. BOND. The committee certainly recognizes the vital role that colleges and universities can play in alleviating many of our problems in these areas, particularly with housing.

Mr. COVERDELL. Recognizing the disproportionate representation of minority women in public housing, would the chairman be willing to consider funding for minority institutions in their efforts to assist with these programs.

Mr. BOND. The committee recognizes the indelible role minority institutions can play in providing outreach and supportive services for residents of public housing. Therefore, of the funds provided, HUD should consider giving to support qualified minority institutions, like Spelman College, that have established outreach programs for public housing residents.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the conference report on the VA, HUD-independent agencies appropriations bill for fiscal

your 1996. While this agreement is an improvement over the bill that passed the Senate earlier this fall, it still fails to provide adequately for a number of programs which are essential to the fulfillment of many of our national priorities.

First, the agreement before us today represents a major step backwards for the environment. This legislation proposes to cut the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency by \$1.7 billion, fully 21 percent below the levels enacted in fiscal year 1995. This would significantly undermine the agency's ability to administer and enforce environmental laws and perform its critical mission of protecting public health and the environment. Although most of the harmful House riders in the bill have been stricken, language with similar intent remains in the conference report, including language which would attempt to undermine the Community right to Know Act of 1986.

Under this conference report, Maryland alone, would lose over \$14 million in funding required for substantial upgrades to long outdated sewage treatment facilities—projects which will have a direct impact on the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay, our coastal beaches and bays, and other local waters.

Provisions in the underlying measure would cut EPA's enforcement and compliance assurance by 25 percent which would severely impact upon the agency's ability to inspect industrial and Federal facilities in Maryland and prosecute violations. Mr. President, it is my view that this bill unfairly singles out EPA to bear a disproportionate share of the deficit reduction burden. It will not just decrease the rate of increases, but will also severely reduce EPA's funding.

I am also very concerned that this legislation would terminate funding for the national service program. Signed into law on September 21, 1993, the National Service Act has helped to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community service while also providing critical assistance to needy communities throughout the Nation. The measure has encouraged and provided the opportunity for thousands of Americans to give of themselves for the greater good while earning money to further their education. In my view, the legislation effectively merges education and service, two critical components of a healthy society. Eliminating funding for this successful program renege on our commitment and our responsibility to provide leadership and opportunity in national service.

AmeriCorps, the centerpiece of the national service program, is not one large Federal program, but a network of locally developed and locally managed service corps which gives thousands of young people the opportunity to serve their country while improving their own lives and those of their neighbors. Moreover, the initial investment we have made has encouraged in-

creased private sector involvement in community service programs, including AmeriCorps.

It is my view that those who participate in national service represent the best of our Nation. At a time when we, as a society, are searching for ways in which to strengthen our families and our communities, it would be foolhardy to abandon the national service initiative. AmeriCorps volunteers are taking part in the oldest and best of America's traditions—the spirit of service—and they deserve our support.

Mr. President, this legislation also includes large cuts in Federal housing programs. The VA-HUD appropriations conference report before us contains significant reductions in public housing modernization, public housing operating subsidies, severely distressed public housing programs, homeless assistance programs, incremental housing assistance, programs for distressed multifamily housing, and salaries and expenses.

The funding levels for housing programs included in this bill are inadequate given the housing needs of low-income Americans and the community development needs of our Nation's communities. There is no evidence that the number of homeless people in our society is declining. In fact, available evidence suggests that the number of homeless families with children are increasing. Waiting lists for public and assisted housing remain years long in many places around the country. Too many of our neighborhoods are plagued with vacant homes, aging and decaying infrastructure, and high levels of social distress. HUD's programs, which are being cut severely in this conference report, address these important national needs.

The funding cuts included in this bill will make it that much harder to resolve some of HUD's problems and may, in fact, exacerbate these problems. HUD will need sufficient funds to rebuild the management capacity of the troubled public housing authorities, tear down and replace the aging stock, and address the housing needs of those who currently live in the buildings. Likewise, in order to address the embedded losses in the insured multifamily housing portfolio, the Federal Government should invest resources now in order to save money in the future. If the Federal Government walks away from its longstanding involvement in these buildings, there will be negative consequences for the residents, for the buildings, and for the surrounding neighborhood.

Finally, I am concerned that this bill provides nearly \$55 million less than the funding level requested by the administration for staffing and management resources—even though HUD currently has severe staffing shortages. I am deeply concerned that these cuts will harm HUD's ability to meet its mission and, at the same time, resolve some of the management problems that confront them. Significant cuts in

staffing and management resources in advance of restructuring the Department's programs and reducing its workload are, at best, unwise when HUD employees are attempting to manage Government commitments of nearly \$1 trillion on behalf of American taxpayers.

Mr. President, with respect to funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, while I am pleased that the conference report eliminated a provision that would have limited the service-connected compensation paid to certain incompetent veterans who have no dependents, I remain deeply concerned about the overall funding levels provided in this legislation for veterans programs.

Although this measure provides an increase in funding for VA medical care above the fiscal year 1995 level, the \$400 million increase does not come close to the level necessary to provide current services. Put simply, this would translate into a drastic cutback in services provided by VA and substantially fewer veterans being treated. We owe a considerable debt to our Nation's veterans and, in my view, the medical care funding in this measure reflects an abandonment of the Federal Government's commitment to them.

I also am concerned with the appropriation in the conference report for the general operating expenses [GOE] account which funds the administration of all VA benefits other than medical care, such as compensation, pension, and educational assistance. The funding level for GOE in this measure represents a reduction of more than \$42 million from fiscal year 1995. This decrease in funding will seriously impair VA's ability to make progress in reducing the current backlog of pending claims and, in fact, may result in a reversal of the progress the VA has made already in this important area.

Finally, I note the discontinuation of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals pro bono representation program. For the past several years, this program has fulfilled a critical need, providing representation for hundreds of veterans who have appealed the denial of their benefit claims to the Court of Veterans Appeals, and who otherwise would have been without counsel. The elimination of this program would be a severe loss, leaving low-income veterans, the majority of all veterans who file appeals, to handle their cases without legal assistance.

Mr. President, it is clear that the conference report before us fails to provide adequate funding for many programs critical to the future of our Nation and the health and well-being of its citizenry. I would urge my colleagues to join me in opposition to this legislation.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the conference report accompanying the VA, HUD, and independent agencies appropriations bill. This legislation would cut funding at the Department of Housing and

Urban Development by more than one-fifth, and is yet another clear reflection of the misguided priorities that have driven the budget process this year.

Mr. President, HUD today provides housing assistance to over 4 million households, including working families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Yet this only makes a dent in the housing needs of lower income Americans. Millions of our citizens are living in substandard conditions or are paying more than half of their incomes for housing. Countless others are homeless entirely.

Unfortunately, this conference report not only fails to meet these pressing needs, but it is a step backward. And its proposed cuts will have a real impact on needy Americans throughout our Nation.

This legislation virtually eliminates funding for incremental housing assistance, and slashes funding for homeless programs by a quarter. As a result, hundreds of thousands of families will continue to languish on public housing waiting lists. Many will be forced to live in substandard housing or on the streets. Meanwhile, Congress is about to pull the safety net out from under them, with cuts in nutrition, health care, education and other critical programs.

The cuts in this legislation also will lead to the continued deterioration of our Nation's public housing stock, by cutting the modernization budget by one-third. Mr. President, this stock represents a \$90 billion investment by our taxpayers. To allow it to deteriorate further is short-sighted. It also will mean that tens-of-thousands of our citizens will continue to live in substandard housing, as major repairs and renovations are canceled due to lack of funds.

The conference report also includes a nearly 50-percent cut in funding for severely distressed public housing. This will inhibit efforts to revitalize our Nation's most troubled and most dangerous public housing developments.

If there is one bright spot in the conference report, Mr. President, it is the inclusion of \$290 million for the Public and Assisted Housing Drug Elimination Program, which I developed several years ago. This program has had great success in reducing crime in housing developments around the Nation. And I am encouraged that we are maintaining our commitment to this initiative in this legislation.

Still, Mr. President, the cuts in housing proposed in this legislation are deeply troubling. Not only because of their impact on ordinary Americans. But because they are being proposed as part of a Republican budget with seriously misplaced priorities.

Mr. President, the new majority in the Congress is committed to providing huge tax breaks for millionaires, \$7 billion for the Pentagon that the generals don't even want, large subsidies for western ranchers and mining compa-

nies, and various other special interest giveaways. Meanwhile, they are slashing programs that provide assistance to the most vulnerable Americans, especially those in our cities.

In my view, Mr. President, this reverse Robin Hood approach is inconsistent with true American values. I am sympathetic to calls for a balanced budget, Mr. President. But the pain must be shared, not targeted at our cities and the poor.

Mr. President, the median income of households receiving Federal housing assistance is \$8,000. This happens to be about the same amount that the Republicans want to provide in tax breaks to those with incomes over \$350,000. What does this say about our priorities, Mr. President?

In the 1960's, our Government declared war on poverty. In 1995, it seems that our Government has declared war on poor people.

Mr. President, the millions of Americans with severe housing needs deserve better. And it is not enough to say that we don't have the money. If we have the money to provide huge tax breaks for millionaires, if we have the money to provide \$7 billion to the Pentagon that our military does not even want, if we have the money to subsidize large mining and agricultural corporations, how can we say that we lack the money to ensure that ordinary Americans have a decent place to live?

So, Mr. President, I cannot support this bill and will vote against it. I call on President Clinton to veto the legislation, and continue to stand firm until Congress agrees to provide adequate funding for housing programs.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I want to express my admiration to a number of Senators who have struggled valiantly to produce a bill acceptable to the great majority of Senators and to the administration, that appropriates funds for the vital services provided to American citizens by the Veterans Affairs Department, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies.

The challenge this posed, in a time when it seems too many in both parties have as their objective scoring political points off the other party rather than reaching reasonable middle ground on contentious issues, proved unfortunately to be an insurmountable challenge at least to this point. And despite the great and perhaps even herculean effort invested in this bill by the chairman of the subcommittee, the distinguished Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND], and the ranking member, the distinguished Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], I regret very much I have concluded I have no choice but to oppose the bill, and urge the President to veto it, assuming as I do that it will reach his desk for his action. Its shortcomings are numerous, and they are not minor.

With regard to the budget for the environmental Protection Agency, the severe cuts of 22 percent from the President's request threaten public health and the environment. Of particular concern are the significant cuts to the enforcement budget, the Superfund Program and the State revolving funds that finance clean water and safe drinking water remedial action.

The conference agreement cuts the EPA's enforcement program by 25 percent—in effect allowing more polluters the freedom to continue to pollute our land and water without challenge. The bill also slashes the Superfund budget by 25 percent, which would slow existing cleanups and prevent new cleanup starts. That means that at least four cities in Massachusetts will have to live with continued exposure of thousands of their citizens to dangerous chemicals.

The agreement also reduces by \$762 million from the President's budget the funding provided for water infrastructure improvements to States and needy cities across the country. For the past several years—under both the Bush and Clinton administrations—Congress has appropriated at least \$100 million for Boston Harbor cleanup alone. However, this bill provides just a fraction of that amount—\$25 million, thus neglecting to recognize the dire straits of communities such as those of the Greater Boston area which are grappling with the enormous water rate increases which result from Federal mandates.

In addition to inadequate funding levels for vital EPA efforts to ensure that public's health and safety, also of grave concern to me are legislative riders that eviscerate existing environmental safeguards, without the benefit of congressional hearings or any input from the general public. We as a nation have struggled valiantly over the past quarter century to identify and eliminate threats to our environment which directly or indirectly threaten our health, safety or well-being, and to begin to clean up the existing mess. I will not willingly participate in the thoughtless and hurried abandonment of these efforts.

Mr. President, I am also voting against this bill because it includes excessive cuts in our Federal housing programs. I am concerned that cutbacks of the magnitude visited on the Department of Housing and Urban Development in this bill and some of the changes it makes in housing policy represent a retreat from our Nation's goal to provide all Americans with decent, safe, and affordable housing, and undercut efforts we have been making to reform the agency and its programs.

The conference agreement contains significant cuts in HUD's overall budget and particularly deep cuts in public housing programs, incremental assistance, and homeless assistance. Yet, HUD's purpose has not gone away, and this bill provides no roadmap to meeting the pressing needs in our Nation that agency was established to meet.

The unmet housing needs of our people are significant. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are homeless every night. Millions of Americans are still living in substandard housing or paying a painfully heavy portion of their income for rent. Too many young families find the barriers to homeownership insurmountable. The goal of a decent, safe, and affordable home for all Americans is still a valid goal for this country. The needs of our cities—large and small—are national in scope. The distressed neighborhoods around the country—like those in Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River, Springfield, Boston, and other Massachusetts cities and towns—rely on Federal community development assistance to battle the declines that face all of our older urban areas.

We also need to be concerned that the cuts in the bill will have serious consequences by making it much more difficult to resolve some of HUD's management problems. The bill, in fact, may exacerbate rather than ameliorate these problems by reducing funding levels for programs that maintain and operate public housing or prevent defaults on HUD-insured multifamily properties. Fixing some of HUD's programs, quite frankly, will require us to invest more resources, not less—because the small percentage of public housing authorities that are troubled will require strong intervention by the Federal Government. It will require large sums to rebuild the management capacity of these authorities, tear down and replace the aging stock, and address the housing needs of those who currently live in the buildings. The severely distressed housing program—HOPE VI—is providing funding for innovative approaches to remedying distressed public housing around the country—including efforts to revitalize Mission Main and Orchard Park developments in Boston. The conference agreement, unfortunately, cuts this program just as we are showing signs of making progress.

I am also concerned that the bill before us establishes a policy that, beginning in 1997, we will only renew expiring section 8 contracts at fair market rents. At the same time, the bill codifies a cut in fair market rents from the 45th to the 40th percentile. Without question, Mr. President, we need to enact changes in the section 8 program that reduce rents where they are excessive and address the burgeoning long-term costs of the section 8 program. We must be careful, however, that a blanket approach does not undermine the viability of existing affordable housing projects. We are responsible for what happens to both the public and assisted housing inventory: the Federal Government walking away from its longstanding involvement in these buildings will have negative consequences for the residents, for the buildings, and for the neighborhoods that surround them.

Mr. President, I know the appropriators struggled with a wholly insuffi-

cient allocation from the 1996 Congressional budget. Their mission arguably was impossible from the outset. In my judgment, it is simply imperative that the overall budget negotiations provide a higher allocation to the VA/HUD subcommittee. Nonetheless, I do want to acknowledge the chairman's, ranking member's, and subcommittee's actions to help several key programs—and there are some example of their efforts that deserve mention. The subcommittee was able to find \$20 million for the Youthbuild Program, though I am extremely disappointed that this level represents a significant cut, relative to last year, in the resources for this valuable and successful program. I am pleased that the conference agreement preserves the funding levels for the HOME and CDBG Programs at 1995 levels. And finally, the agreement provides \$624 million for the preservation of low-income housing; continuing this program is very important if we are to prevent the loss of affordable housing and the displacement of thousands of families across Massachusetts and the entire Nation.

There are other deficiencies—serious deficiencies—in this bill—for example, in provisions pertaining to veterans programs and services, about which others have eloquently remarked in this debate, remarks I will not take the Senate's time to replicate. The sum is a bill that is fatally flawed.

Mr. President, it disturbs me that this has occurred on yet another bill. It disturbs me greatly that, less than 3 weeks before the end of the calendar year, and nearly 3 months after the beginning of the current fiscal year, the Republican leadership of this Congress still is engaged in the political game of sending the President a bill he already has announced emphatically he must and will veto on the basis of deeply-held, principled conviction—before there have been any definitive negotiations to reach real middle ground. The American people don't understand what is going on, here, Mr. President, and with good reason. It defies rational explanation.

But, at the insistence of the intemperate Speaker of the House, the President and the Congress will be required to play out this charade. I thank the President for his courage and steadfastness to vital principles which will be the foundation for the veto he will cast. I remain very hopeful that all parties to the budget negotiations will engage in them diligently and in good faith, that one of the outcomes will be to provide a more realistic allocation of discretionary funding to this bill, and that in the near future we will be debating in this chamber a reasonable bill behind which Senators of good will from both parties can unite and which we can send to the President for his signature.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, there are many aspects of this appropriations bill which I find deeply troubling. I am thankful we have a President who has

clearly said that he will veto this bill if presented to him in its current form.

I would like to take this opportunity to focus on two areas of the bill which are of particular concern to me—the unacceptable cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], and the lack of funding for the VA medical center at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, CA.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The EPA is the agency responsible for the implementation of our most fundamental environmental protection laws: The Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, laws that protect us from improper hazardous waste disposal, laws that protect us from exposure to radiation and toxic substances, laws that regulate the clean-up of hazardous waste sites all over the country, laws that ensure that every citizen in this country has a right to know about what kinds of toxics are being released into their environment.

And how much does it cost us to run the EPA? In 1995 we appropriated about \$6.6 billion for the EPA. Let me put this into context. The whole EPA budget is the same as the cost of about three B-2 bombers. In the 1995 budget we appropriated over 40 times this amount—\$241 billion—for the Department of Defense. The fiscal year 1996 defense appropriations bill that recently passed the Senate included \$7 billion more than the Department of Defense says it needs. We are throwing an extra \$7 billion at the Pentagon and the same time we are taking away vital funds that protect our health and safety. It simply does not make sense.

The cuts made in this bill to the EPA budget are unacceptable. This bill appropriates \$5.7 billion for EPA—that is a 14-percent cut—or nearly \$1 billion from the fiscal year 1995 level. It is a 22.5-percent cut—or \$1.7 billion—from the President's fiscal year 1996 request.

Republicans seem to take great pride in their efforts to dismantle key social programs that Americans hold dear, but they have chosen to take their war against the environment underground. The cuts to the EPA budget show us the covert war that is being waged by Republicans against our environment.

It has to be covert because they have seen the results of poll after poll showing that the vast majority of Americans feel that our environmental laws should be strengthened, not stripped away. In my many years in public office not once has anyone told me, "Senator, our air is too clean," or "our water is too safe."

The back door attack on our environmental laws seen here is cuts in EPA's budget that will cripple EPA's ability to set and enforce environmental standards.

This bill cuts enforcement of all environmental programs by 22 percent—\$128 million—from the President's request and 14.6 percent—\$77 million—from fiscal year 1995.

It hits at the heart of EPA administration and management in EPA's abil-

ity to set and enforce environmental and public health standards with a 17-percent cut—\$310 million—below the President's request, and a 7-percent cut—\$115 million—from fiscal year 1995.

Mr. President, these cuts mean that an already stretched EPA will not be able to carry out critically important work that ensures the health and safety of all Americans, and will result in a setback of national efforts to ensure that every American citizen breathes clear air, drinks clean water and is safe from the dangers of hazardous waste.

These are the EPA funds that are spent working with States and municipalities in the development of our air quality, water quality, lead abatement, and food safety standards; the funds that allow EPA to keep track of the levels of pollution in our air, our water, our food, our environment; that allow the EPA to work with States and with industries to help them discover the sources of pollution problems and help them comply with Federal safety standards; that allow the EPA to give technical assistance to State pollution control agencies and county air and water quality boards; that allow the EPA to carry out environmental impact statements on industry actions that may hurt the environment; that allow EPA to work all over this country to educate industry and small business and help them comply with the law so that enforcement actions are avoided.

In the long run this will mean more water pollution, more smog in our cities and countryside, more toxic waste problems.

EPA's budget is cut in many other areas to levels that are unacceptable.

A 30 percent—\$462 million—cut from the President's request and a 9 percent—\$110 million—cut from fiscal year 1995 in funds that go straight to the States to help cities all over the country build sewage treatment plants that keep raw sewage from flowing into our coastal waters, rivers, lakes and streams.

A 45 percent—\$225 million—cut from the President's request and a 79 percent—\$1 billion—cut from the pre-recessions fiscal year 1995 level in funds that go to States to protect our drinking water nationwide.

A 25 percent—\$400 million—cut from the President's request and 13 percent—\$168 million—cut from fiscal year 1995 in funds that go toward cleaning up hazardous waste sites.

But, Mr. President, I would like to close my statement with a comment about the presence of riders in this conference report—in the face of the House vote to instruct conferees to omit riders that would limit EPA enforcement of existing environmental protections.

This conference report includes a rider that strips away EPA's veto authority over U.S. Corps of Engineers wetlands permits decisions. Although the EPA has only vetoed 11 permit requests since 1972, the power of EPA's

veto has played a very important and constructive role in the reaching of compromises on innumerable proposed development plans to fill wetlands. I believe that EPA's veto power is absolutely essential in maintaining a balanced approach to making environmental permit decisions. Without this veto authority, we are opening the door to very serious potential losses of wetlands.

We have lost approximately 53 percent of our historic wetlands in the continental United States—and in my State of California, the loss is over 90 percent. We continue to lose wetlands at the alarming rate of about 300,000 acres per year, and there still seems to be a general lack of appreciation for the vital role that wetlands play in protecting our people's health, sustaining our Nation's natural systems and supporting America's economy.

Wetlands preservation is often seen as incompatible with economic growth. I believe that not only does wetlands conservation make good environmental sense, it makes good economic sense. The value of wetlands in flood control, groundwater storage, water purification and commercial and recreational uses has been estimated to be \$1.4 trillion annually.

An economic analysis of the value of wetlands was prepared in 1993 under the direction of the School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. Using my State of California as an example, the study showed that the total annual benefit of wetlands to the State ranges from a low of \$6 billion to almost \$23 billion. Those are the amounts the State would lose annually if 100 percent of our wetlands were lost to filling and development.

Mr. President, in 1994, over 48,000 Americans sought approval to fill wetlands. The number of permit requests has increased by 27 percent since 1990. If this rider goes into law, every request will be submitted with the knowledge that the EPA has no veto authority. Old projects will be dusted off and resubmitted—we will lose wetlands that our Nation cannot afford to lose—we will lose wetlands that our Nation cannot afford to lose.

TRAVIS VA MEDICAL CENTER

I am deeply disappointed that the bill does not include funding to complete construction on the proposed VA hospital at Travis Air Force Base, in Fairfield, CA.

In 1991, a severe earthquake damaged northern California's only VA hospital in Martinez. That facility served over 400,000 veterans, and its closure forced many to drive up to 8 hours to receive medical care. The Bush administration recognized the tremendous need created by the Martinez closure and promised the community that a replacement facility would be constructed in Fairfield, at Travis Air Force Base. The conferees' action breaks that 4-year-old promise to the veterans of northern California.

Last year, Congress appropriated \$7 million to complete design and begin

construction on the Tavis-VA medical center. Nearly \$20 million has been spent on the project to date, and more than a year ago, Vice President GORE broke ground. Construction is now underway.

For fiscal year 1996, President Clinton requested the funds needed to complete construction, \$188 million. Congress' refusal to fund the project seriously jeopardizes the prospect that the hospital will ever be built. The outpatient clinic proposed as an alternative by the conferees is entirely unacceptable to the veterans of northern California.

The decision not to fund the Travis-VA medical center breaks faith with California's veterans, and violates promises made by the past two Presidential administrations.

For the reasons I have stated above and many others, I have no choice but to oppose this conference report, and I will urge the President to veto this bill.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I am voting for this legislation with a number of reservations. This bill provides funding for important programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs [VA], Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] and the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]. I supported this legislation when it passed the Senate in September, with the understanding that Senate negotiators would maintain funding for our Nation's veterans, maintain adequate levels for housing, protect funding for the EPA and oppose the 17 anti-environment legislative riders included in the House version of this bill.

After the most recent conference on this legislation between the Senate and House, it is my belief that the bill has emerged better than both the original House and Senate passed versions. Funding for veterans' health is now higher than last year's levels. EPA spending levels, originally slated for a 33 percent cut in the House bill, have been increased, resulting in only a 14 percent reduction. A number of other important programs and agencies received a similar reduction this year. Finally, almost all of the environmental legislative riders I found most objectionable have been dropped.

Mr. President, I believe the managers hands were tied in this situation. The allocation for this entire account was reduced to such an extent that they were forced to make some difficult choices. The overall allocation was reduced by close to 10 percent from fiscal year 1995. The fact that EPA received a 14 percent cut is very unfortunate but understandable considering the overall reduction for this bill. I hope that the ongoing budget negotiations will yield more funding for environmental protection.

I agree that Congress must reduce Federal spending in order to gain control of our growing budget deficit. We must reorder our spending priorities and makes every effort to cut wasteful

expenditures throughout the Federal budget. Although savings can be found in the Department of Energy, Department of Interior and EPA budgets, I will strongly oppose a complete gutting of the funding for important environmental programs.

Finally, included in this legislation is an amendment which will remove EPA from the process of protecting many of our Nation's wetlands and rivers under section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Last year, under this section of the Clean Water Act, EPA assisted the State of Vermont in protecting one of our State's most valuable river ecosystems. I remain hopeful that during future consideration of funding for EPA we not further weaken EPA's ability to protect our Nation's rivers and wetlands.

Mr. President, I am voting for this legislation in order to move the process forward. In the event that the legislation is vetoed by the President, I would hope my colleagues would seriously consider some the few concerns I have raised here.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, this appropriation is a very good one for veterans. It fully funds veterans' benefits payments. And, unlike many of the non-veteran programs funded by this bill, veterans' health care funding would actually increase.

Mr. President, there is one provision in this conference report which affects a small sum of dollars, but which is important to VA and to America's veterans. Funding for staffing and travel in the office of the Secretary has been reduced.

Mr. President. I support that reduction.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has left no tub unpounded, no stump without a speech, in a campaign of propaganda misrepresenting the actions of this Congress. I tire of that.

He has continued to talk about budget "cuts." Even when he knows so well that the budget is actually being increased.

He continues to talk about declines in VA health care services even after personally sitting through a hearing where the increases were quantified and illustrated by charts.

He took a discredited advocacy "study" from a liberal lobby group and tried to give it the stature of a "government" report. That action was an attempt to "use"—yes that is the term—veterans as the point men in a political campaign to defeat reforms needed to preserve the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

In short, Secretary Brown has confused the responsibilities of a Cabinet Secretary with the role of a political lobbyist.

He has assumed the zealous mission of a political advocate without remembering the requirement to lead and administer his Department.

And, as an article in today's Washington Post makes clear, he is wholly unrepentant in his course.

Yes, the conference report will restrict his political activities. But, and hear this, and hear clearly, it will not restrict his ability to lead his Department. In fact, if it causes him to stay right here in Washington and focus hard on the many heretofore unaddressed challenges facing the Department of Veterans Affairs, the reduced funding level could actually improve his stewardship over the Department.

The issue is not "freedom of speech." That is pure bunkum. Those who make that argument are not really arguing that the Secretary has a right to speak. They are instead arguing that the taxpayers have an obligation to pay for whatever he wants to say. That is, or course, surely not the case.

Mr. President, this is not a perfect bill. No bill is. But the members of the subcommittee have done a very good job in protecting funding for veterans' programs.

I think it would be tragic if the President were to use funding levels for nonveteran programs as an excuse to veto a bill that increases veterans' medical spending and fully funds their benefits.

I am sure that my friend from Missouri will confirm that it will be very hard to craft a bill as favorable to veterans as this one and which also increases funding for other programs.

I commend Senators BOND and MIKULSKI. They work well together as managers of the bill. I thank them for their yeoman work and I do hope the Senate will join me in support of the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks about H.R. 2099, the VA—HUD appropriations conference report. I want to commend the distinguished ranking member and the distinguished manager of the bill for their efforts in reaching an agreement on this measure.

The conferees had to make some tough choices, and I am pleased that they listened to the American people and decided to drop the controversial environmental riders in the House-passed bill. I am also delighted that the conference report provides the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] with a higher level of funding than either the House or Senate bills.

Although the conferees eliminated most of the objectionable legislative riders, I am still troubled by two key provisions in the conference report. First of all, the conferees have decided to maintain the rider in the Senate bill that bars EPA from using any fiscal year 1996 funds to implement section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Since its enactment in 1972, section 404 of the Clean Water Act has played an integral role in the progress we have made toward achieving the act's central objective, which is "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." Section 404(c) authorizes EPA to prohibit a disposal of dredged or fill

material into U.S. waters, including wetlands, if such a disposal would have an unacceptable adverse effect on certain especially important resources.

The rider in the conference report would preclude EPA from ensuring against unacceptable adverse effects on these valuable resources for a full year. An article written by John Cushman in Tuesday's edition of the *New York Times* is especially instructive: It points out the many of the unknown adverse consequences this rider could have for our most valuable wetlands resources.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article printed in the December 12, 1995, *New York Times* be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the *New York Times*, Dec. 12, 1995]

BRIEF CLAUSE IN BILL WOULD CURB U.S.
POWER TO PROTECT WETLANDS

(By John H. Cushman, Jr.)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11.—Buried deep in a spending bill now before Congress are two sentences that could give clear sailing to a highway project in New Hampshire, harbor dredging in South Carolina, a mine in Montana and many other projects around the country that have been threatened by the Government's environmental objections.

The terse provision would take away one of the Environmental Protection Agency's major tools for protecting the country's wetlands: the veto that the agency is allowed to cast against permits that the Army Corps of Engineers issues to developers for wetlands projects.

The change is set forth in one obscure passage in a vast \$80 billion appropriations bill paying for veterans, housing, environmental and other programs in the current fiscal year. The bill passed the House on Thursday and is expected to come to the Senate floor shortly. President Clinton, objecting to many of its provisions, has said he will veto it.

Although it is hard to predict whether the wetlands clause will become law, the prospect worries conservationists, who call the continuing loss of wetlands a threat to water quality and wildlife. The provision would prohibit the E.P.A. from spending anything in the current fiscal year to exercise its power under the Clean Water Act to review and veto wetlands permits. Any vetoes that are pending would be nullified, giving the Corps of Engineers the final say.

The bill's 73 words on wetlands have rated only the briefest mention during a raging Congressional debate over Federal environmental priorities. But the effect of the provision could be felt nationwide.

Most immediately, the change may resurrect plans for a \$200 million highway sweeping around Nashua, N.H. Last August, the state reluctantly agreed to scale back the project when threatened with a veto by the E.P.A. The reduced plans spare more than 40 acres of wetlands and other undeveloped wildlife habitat near the Merrimack River. James Rivers, a spokesman for Gov. Stephen Merrill, said that although the state plans to proceed with the scaled-back project for now, it would consider expanding it in the future if the Federal law is changed.

In Charleston, S.C., E.P.A. officials have warned the corps against dredging shipping channels near a paper plant because of possible dioxin contamination. But if the new law is passed, the E.P.A. would lose its legal

leverage to persuade the corps to adopt an alternative for clearing shipping channels.

Similarly, the corps alone would rule on wetlands permits for the New World Mine in Montana, a disputed project that conservationist say would endanger the ecosystem in and around Yellowstone National Park, just two and a half miles away.

The wetlands review process has its roots in the 1970's, when lawmakers believed the corps, whose approval is needed for any construction that can affect navigable waters, was more interested in protecting navigation than the environment. But today it is the E.P.A. that is out of favor on Capitol Hill, where preserving wetlands is among the most unpopular of causes.

Although the E.P.A. has vetoed wetlands permits only 11 times, both sides in the dispute agree that the agency can greatly influence the scale of development projects by merely threatening a veto. Environmental groups cited case after case in which projects were scaled back to meet the agency's demands. Many of those projects were shelved indefinitely, raising the possibility that some might be revived if the legislation is enacted.

Carol M. Browner, the Administrator of the E.P.A., said her agency, not the corps, has both the expertise and the statutory authority to protect wetlands, which play a crucial role in minimizing floods, filtering water and providing wildlife habitat.

"The E.P.A. is the body that Congress has given the authority to deal with clean water issues," she said. "The role we play is associated with the broader role of protecting the water quality of the people of this country."

Despite the importance of this legislation, there has scarcely been any testimony or comment on the House or Senate floor about how it would affect specific construction projects or wetlands.

Even the provision's author, Senator Christopher S. Bond, a Missouri Republican, said in an interview that he had "no idea" what projects might be affected.

He said his objective was not to affect one project or another, but to make the Government more efficient by consolidating power over wetlands permits in a single agency.

"If there is one thing that constituents in my state are fed up with, it is being told two different things by two different Federal agencies," Senator Bond said on the Senate floor in September. "They expect the Federal agencies who serve them to give them one answer and to give them the right answer."

Administration officials and environmental groups say the E.P.A.'s authority is essential to the protection of wetlands, especially since many projects affecting those areas are carried out by the corps itself.

"The Army Corps of Engineers authorizes itself to discharge millions of cubic yards of dredge or fill material into the waters of the United States each year," said John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, in a letter urging President Clinton not to sign the bill. "Absent E.P.A.'s involvement in the review of the corps' water development projects, the corps would be in the untenable position of exercising sole regulatory review of its own development projects."

Senator Bond and his staff respond that their proposal leaves much of the E.P.A.'s authority intact. The agency would continue to write the environmental guidelines for the corps.

But the E.P.A.'s questions about the dredging of navigation channels proposed by the corps around Georgetown Harbor near Charleston, one of the biggest commercial ports on the East Coast, show why the E.P.A. is fighting to keep its authority. The corps would extensively dredge sediments from the

harbor bottom, including near the private berth of the International Paper Company, and then dump that refuse on shore and in nearby shallows.

Local E.P.A. officials, according to an agency document, are concerned that the project carries environmental risks. They fear that the sediment at the paper plant could be contaminated with dioxin, a toxin that could be spread in the Sampit River and the Upper Winyah Bay.

Sediments at the paper company's berth have not been tested for dioxin, but several years ago the paper plant's waste water was found to have among the highest dioxin levels of more than a hundred plants surveyed, and the state detected dioxins in sediment and fish tissues in the nearby Sampit River in 1989, leading to advisories against eating locally caught fish.

The agency is urging the corps to consider less damaging alternatives and better impoundments of the dredged wastes.

There are many other cases, like the Nashua highway, where the E.P.A.'s views prevailed over those of the corps and of local officials. The E.P.A. fought that project for 10 years, but the corps and the state approved it anyway. Only after the E.P.A. regional administrator, John DeVillars, warned of a veto did New Hampshire agree to a scaled-back highway.

New Hampshire's top environmental official said in an interview this week that he was pleased with the E.P.A.'s rule in the highway project and with other wetlands reviews by the Federal agency.

"My experience with the process has been that the concerns that have been raised have been reasonable concerns, that they are asking the right questions and forcing analysis of alternatives that otherwise would not be done," said Robert Varnum, the state's Environment Commissioner. He was appointed twice by Republican Governors, both of whom strongly favored the highway project that the E.P.A. blocked.

"I feel that E.P.A.'s mission is to protect the environment, and in this case to avoid unnecessary impacts to our wetlands resources," he said. "They take that job very seriously, and have put in a great deal of time and effort, and stuck their necks out, to protect the environment, and I think that is a role they need to play. I think the general public expects nothing else."

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, to those who say that EPA's 404(c) authority reflects a significant waste of government resources, I point to the fact that the agency has used this authority only 12 times during the past 23 years.

One of these instances occurred in Attleboro, MA. A developer's plan to build a large shopping mall at a site called Sweeden's Swamp in Attleboro would have destroyed 45 acres of wetlands. Had EPA not stepped in to prevent the permit from going forward, the area would have lost a rich habitat for many birds, mammals, and amphibians. Mr. President, we simply cannot afford to relinquish the protection of critical natural resources afforded by 404(c).

I am also deeply concerned with the conferees' decision to provide only \$12 million for the Montreal Protocol Facilitation Fund—a full 50 percent less than both the administration's request and the House approved figure of \$24 million.

The Montreal Protocol, approved in 1987 during the Reagan administration,

addresses the damaging effect of chlorofluorocarbons—of CFC's—on the ozone layer. A statement made by President Reagan on April 5, 1988, demonstrates the significance of the program:

The Montreal Protocol is a model of cooperation. It is a product of the recognition and international consensus that ozone depletion is a global problem, both in terms of its causes and effects. The protocol is the result of an extraordinary process of scientific study, negotiations among representatives of the business and environmental communities, and international diplomacy. It is a monumental achievement.

The treaty, now ratified by 150 nations, represents a consensus on the dangers of ozone depletion and provides for the eventual ban of CFC production. We later agreed to amendments to strengthen the ban in 1990, as part of the Clean Air Act, and again, in 1992, under the terms of the Montreal Protocol.

Throughout this effort there were those who called the ozone hole and the destruction of the ozone by CFC's a myth. However, several weeks ago, our actions were vindicated beyond question when the three scientists who first alerted us to the possibility that CFC's were destroying the ozone layer were awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

During the debate on the VA-HUD appropriations bill, I sponsored an amendment, along with Senator JEFFORDS and Senator BINGAMAN, that would have given the Administrator the discretion to spend more than the \$12 million now available under the conference report for the Montreal Protocol Fund. Although the amendment was approved by the Senate, it was not retained in conference. I must say I am disappointed. If our goal here is to encourage EPA to be mindful of good science, risk assessment, and management of scarce resources, then I cannot think of a more necessary endeavor than their efforts to reverse the destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to speak in opposition to the VA/ HUD appropriations conference report. There are many reasons why I believe that the report we have before us represents unhealthy priorities for the American public, and I am pleased that the President has expressed his intention to veto this bill should it pass the Senate.

First, this report provides \$400 million less than the President's budget request for the VA medical care account. This will have a serious impact on veterans' access to quality health care. While there may be some doubt as to the validity of VA projections of the precise impact of such a cut on veterans health care, there is no question that it would result in some combination of substantial reductions in the number of veterans treated both as outpatients and inpatients as the number of VA health care personnel shrink. The impact, according to the VA, would be equivalent to closing three

VA medical centers with an average of 300 beds each.

When these cuts are coupled with slashes in Medicare and Medicaid, many veterans could be faced with a triple whammy—forced out of Medicare and Medicaid while VA is unable to handle a large influx of new patients as the VA health care budget shrinks in real dollars. This will particularly have an impact on the soaring population of veterans over age 65 and veterans unable to afford private health insurance.

In the process of cutting funding for major medical construction projects, vital projects for renovating VA hospitals that do not meet community standards and are deteriorating are scrapped. How can we treat veterans who made sacrifices defending this country in facilities that do not meet fire and other safety standards? What a travesty this is. At a time when we are honoring the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and the veterans who risked their lives defending our freedom, the least we can do is to ensure that they receive the health care they are entitled to in a safe and dignified setting.

This report also eliminates funding for the Corporation for National Service [CNS], which was established by the bipartisan National Community Service and Trust Act of 1993. The Corporation for National Service administers such programs as AmeriCorps, the National Civilian Community Corps, and even former President Bush's Points of Light Foundation. President Clinton has requested \$817,476 million for CNS for fiscal year 1996. However, the report we have before us gives the National Corporation \$15 million for necessary expenses to terminate programs, activities, and initiatives under the National Community Service Act.

In order to understand the severity of this action, I would like to use the AmeriCorps program as an example. AmeriCorps, which is funded and run by CNS, helps students pay for college in exchange for their service to American communities. AmeriCorps is a program which needs to be preserved. National Service addresses beliefs we all share: getting things done, strengthening communities, encouraging personal responsibility, and expanding opportunity. Despite the ideals realized by AmeriCorps, both the House and Senate individually denied funds to the program in their VA/ HUD appropriations bills, and now the conference report kills the program outright. Fiscal year 1995 post/rescission funding was \$219,000 million for AmeriCorps grants. The President requested \$429,800 million for fiscal year 1996.

AmeriCorps has been a huge success. Members of law enforcement from police chiefs Willie Williams of Los Angeles to Carol Mehrling of Montgomery County, MD, (and many departments in between, have been unwavering in their support for the AmeriCorps Program. And this is a program which Republicans and Democrats alike support.

Members of Congress, Governors, mayors, and businesses such as IBM, General Electric and American Express know the value of AmeriCorps, and of the Corporation for National Service.

AmeriCorps has exceeded expectations about its efficiency. One study, validated by the GAO, found AmeriCorps produced \$1.60 to \$2.60 in benefits for every invested Federal dollar. And the AmeriCorps is not solely dependent on Federal dollars. During AmeriCorps first year it was directed by Congress to raise \$32 million. It actually raise three times that amount—\$91 million, 41 million of which came from the private sector. We should not be misled by its success, however. AmeriCorps cannot raise private and foundation funds without Federal seed support.

AmeriCorps provides a large bang for education dollars while simultaneously getting results for real needs, strengthening communities, and encouraging responsibility. Education. Public Safety. Human Needs. The Environment. AmeriCorps is a program designed to do what we in Congress talk about all the time: bringing people from all backgrounds together to solve problems at the local level.

In Minnesota, AmeriCorps members are extremely valuable. AmeriCorps members serving within the Minneapolis Public School provide activities to support the education of special needs youth. Members tutor, provide after school education activities, and recruit volunteers for support programming. Members work to secure affordable housing for low-income families, assist domestic violence victims, and coordinate projects to prevent and lessen homelessness. Minnesota has AmeriCorps members doing more different things than I have time to list here. Older Minnesotans work as foster grandparents, serving over 80,000 children statewide. Rural members teach pesticide safety. People work to restore our parks and trying to provide places for our children to play. Of course, Minnesota is not alone in its utilization of AmeriCorps volunteers. All of my colleagues come from States which benefit from them. All of us should continue to support their efforts, not tear them down.

I am also opposed to this conference report because of the devastating blow it delivers to funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

This conference report cuts EPA by 14 percent overall from what we appropriated last year. The conference report continues to contain a number of riders that aid special interests at the expense of the health and safety of the American people. These riders include one which would halt EPA efforts to expand one of our country's most successful Right-to-Know programs, the Toxic Release Inventory.

Already this fiscal year, temporary continuing resolutions have resulted in a drastic cut in EPA's funding. As a result, EPA has been forced to cancel a

number of inspections involving all sorts of environmental hazards. As Carol Browner said today in the Washington Post, "The environmental cop is not on the beat." The lack of inspections will only get worse under this conference report that cuts enforcement funding by 14.6 percent.

These funding cuts will make it impossible for EPA to carry out work that helps protect the health and safety of every American. This bill will make it more difficult, if not impossible, for EPA to carry out its responsibilities under the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. We cannot allow this to happen and I don't believe the American people want it to happen. At least, no Minnesotan has ever approached me to ask for dirtier air and water, and that is exactly what slashing EPA's budget this way will yield.

There are other reasons to oppose this conference report. While I support the President's commitment to streamline HUD's programs and I understand the importance of cutting funding for wasteful programs, I believe that the housing cuts in the VA-HUD conference report have gone too far.

Cuts to the section 8 program mean that homeless families or individuals will be without the assistance they need to move to either transitional or permanent housing.

Cuts to public housing modernization will mean that fewer housing units will receive necessary repairs and maintenance. This maintenance is essential to ensure the quality of life of public housing residents and its neighbors.

This bill also cuts funding for the Homeless Assistance Grant Program, Indian housing development, and the Housing Counseling Grant Program.

All of these housing cuts will disproportionately harm low-income persons, the elderly, native Americans, and persons with AIDS. This funding is a safety net and cuts in housing programs will mean only one thing—more people will be living on the streets. I think we are making a mistake if we pass this package.

Given all these reasons—the irresponsible cuts to veterans programs, the decimation of the Corporation for National Service, the damage done to environmental programs, and the attack on housing programs for the working poor, I will oppose the VA-HUD Conference Report, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep disappointment that funding for the Community Development Financial Institutions [CDFI] fund has been eliminated in the VA-HUD appropriations bill for fiscal year 1996.

The CDFI fund is an economic development initiative that was adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support several years ago. The program is a key priority for President Clinton, and an important investment tool for eco-

nomically distressed communities. Unfortunately, partisan gamesmanship and shortsighted budget cutting will deny organizations around the country the opportunity to use this tool to better their own communities.

In a time of dwindling Federal resources, programs like CDFI that leverage private investment and stretch every Federal dollar, are more important than ever. The Fund is a small but very innovative program. For a modest \$50 million budget, the fund could make a significant impact in communities struggling with unemployment and structural decline.

Investments from the fund would create new jobs, promote small business, restore neighborhoods, and generate tax revenues in towns desperate for community development. It is estimated that every \$1 of fund resources would leverage \$10 in non-Federal resources.

Equally important, is the fact that these dollars are controlled at the local level by financial institutions in the community which understand area needs and resources. Local control stimulates local investment as well. Area banks and local private donors are more willing to contribute to economic development when they can see the results in their own communities.

The CDFI fund has caught the interest of many community development organizations across the Nation. Already, over 1,500 groups have requested information about the fund, and informational seminars that have been held or are planned are expected to attract over 600 potential applicants. This bill leaves those organizations out in the cold.

Slashing investment in jobs and infrastructure is no way to balance the budget. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this bill.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the conference agreement on H.R. 2099, the VA-HUD appropriations bill for 1996.

This bill provides new budget authority of \$80.4 billion and new outlays of \$46.2 billion to finance operations of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, and other independent agencies.

I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for producing a bill that is within the subcommittee's 602(b) allocation. When outlays from prior-year BA and other adjustments are taken into account, the bill totals \$80.4 billion in BA and \$92.1 billion in outlays. The total bill is under the Senate subcommittee's 602(b) non-defense allocation by \$420 million for budget authority and by \$7 million for outlays. The subcommittee is also at its defense allocation for BA and is under its outlay allocation by less than \$500,000.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the conference agreement on H.R. 2099.

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

VA-HUD SUBCOMMITTEE SPENDING TOTALS— CONFERENCE REPORT

(Fiscal year 1996, in millions of dollars)

	Budget authority	Outlays
Defense discretionary:		
Outlays from prior-year BA and other actions completed		78
H.R. 2099, Conference report	153	92
Scorekeeping adjustment		
Subtotal defense discretionary	153	170
Nondefense discretionary:		
Outlays from prior-year BA and other actions completed		45,550
H.R. 2099, conference report	61,113	28,603
Scorekeeping adjustment		
Subtotal nondefense discretionary	61,113	74,264
Mandatory:		
Outlays from prior-year BA and other actions completed		133
H.R. 2099, conference report	19,362	17,213
Adjustment to conform mandatory programs with Budget:		
Resolution assumptions	-224	341
Subtotal mandatory	19,138	17,688
Adjusted bill total	80,404	92,121
Senate Subcommittee 602(b) allocation:		
Subtotal defense discretionary	153	170
Nondefense discretionary	61,533	74,270
Violent crime reduction trust fund		
Mandatory	19,138	17,688
Total allocation	80,824	92,128
Adjusted bill total compared to Senate Subcommittee 602(b) allocation:		
Defense discretionary	0	-0
Nondefense discretionary	-420	-6
Violent crime reduction trust fund		
Mandatory		
Total allocation	-420	-7

Note.—Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency with current scorekeeping conventions.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I wish to comment on title I of the conference report on H.R. 2099, the fiscal year 1996 VA-HUD appropriation bill.

Mr. President, I realize that this has been a very difficult year for funding actions. I also know that, when compared to other agencies covered by this bill, VA is treated relatively well. Having said that, I have to say that this appropriation conference report is bad news for VA which, in turn, means bad news for America's veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

The medical care appropriation is \$16.56 billion. This is better than the level passed by the Senate, but nearly \$400 million below the amount proposed by the President. That amount is what VA needs to support the current level of health care services.

At the funding level in the conference report, VA will be forced to cut back on the level of services carried out in fiscal year 1995. In human terms, nearly 90,000 eligible veterans will be denied inpatient and outpatient care this year. The equivalent of three VA hospitals will have to be shut down, and 5,000 VA health care professionals will lose their jobs.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to focus on these repercussions. Too often we become numb when we just hear

such numbers and we lose sight of the human element in what we are doing. These are real people that will be affected—veterans who answered our country's call in her times of need, who now need real health care. They will be turned away from care or will be made to wait an inordinate period of time to receive the care they need—the care they deserve—the care they have earned.

In my State there are four VA medical centers. Each plays an important role in its community. Each furnishes vital care to veterans in the geographic region served. Funding cuts at the level contained in the conference report will lead to cuts in that service, and to a denial of service to my constituents who are veterans—some with disabilities from their service, others who managed to complete their service without injury, but who are now unable to afford health care. Such a result is wrongheaded. I deeply regret that we are about to accept and approve it.

I also find it disturbing that we are cutting VA below current services at the very time that cutbacks are being proposed in Medicare and Medicaid. There is every reason to suspect that, as individuals are pushed out of those programs by the changes being contemplated, veterans who have relied on either Medicare or Medicaid will turn to VA for needed care.

VA health care is at a crossroads, and many innovative and dynamic changes are happening within the system. It is possible—indeed likely—that some of the changes about to be enacted will yield some significant efficiencies in how VA furnishes health care in the years to come. I am deeply concerned, however, that these cuts in the funding needed by VA to furnish care in the coming fiscal year will actually undercut efforts that could allow VA to function more effectively in the future. This is the worst time to be making blind cuts in VA funding, with no appreciation of how such cuts can affect VA's future.

I have heard the suggestion that, since the number of veterans is declining, these cutbacks in VA health care are justified. While it is true that the overall veterans population is coming down—it is now just over 26 million—demand for VA care continues to increase, a phenomenon that is easy to understand when one realizes that, as the veterans population continues to age, the demand for health care services actually is on the rise. As our veterans age, we should not be allowing the promises a grateful Nation made to be undone in our headlong rush to balance the budget.

I am also deeply concerned about the cuts in the level of general operating expenses which fund the administration of the nonmedical activities of VA. While the Senate-passed level of \$880 million was over \$35 million below the President's request, it was significantly above the House-passed level and promised some opportunity for VA

to continue to reduce the terrible backlog of claims in the Veterans Benefits Administration. Unfortunately, the level of GOE funding in the conference report, \$843 million, will almost certainly mean that not only will VA fail to improve, the recent trend will be reversed and the backlog will grow.

I readily acknowledge that there are many problems that cannot be corrected by a simple infusion of funding. It is also true that VA's claims backlog is the result of far more than a simple lack of resources. However, it cannot be denied that the backlog problem can only worsen when there is insufficient funding to allow VA to meet the demand for services. The funding for GOE in the conference report is clearly insufficient, and I deeply regret that result.

I am very disappointed that the conference report includes onerous restrictions on overall funding and travel funding for the Office of the Secretary. I fear that this is little more than a petty assault on the person of the current secretary, Secretary Brown, and does not represent any reasoned policy decision. I think such an action in the context of an appropriations bill is unworthy of the Congress, and I deeply regret that conferees felt compelled to stoop to such a level.

The conference report includes funding for some construction projects which have not been authorized by the two Veterans' Affairs Committees. These include clinics at two sites—Brevard County, Florida, and Fairfield, California—where the Administration proposed to build medical centers, but the Appropriations Committees refused to fund them.

While the two medical centers were authorized, the freestanding clinics are not, and, pursuant to section 8104 of title 38, United States Code, VA cannot spend funds for these unauthorized projects. I am not clear what the intention of the conferees is on this issue, but I am confident that, without specific action by the Veterans' Affairs Committees to authorize these projects, VA will not be able to spend the funds appropriated in this bill.

I also note that, during a markup in the Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year, I offered an amendment which would have authorized all of the construction projects proposed in the President's budget, but my amendment was defeated.

I would be remiss if I failed to note one positive item in the conference report, namely, the absence of a provision passed by both Houses which would have limited compensation benefits to certain veterans disabled by mental illness. I fought very hard to have that provision dropped during Senate debate, and I am truly delighted that my goal was achieved in the conference.

As I noted at the outset, this is not a good bill for veterans. I am deeply concerned about its ramifications as we move forward in this fiscal year, and I

intend to monitor closely the effects of the limited funding on VA's ability to meet the needs of our Nation's veterans. I will not hesitate to seek additional funding for various VA activities as the need arises in the coming year. We have tough choices to make as we seek to balance the budget. Veterans must be accorded special attention and protection in that effort.

Mr. President, in closing, I express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, the ranking Democrat on the Senate VA-HUD Subcommittee, for her continued efforts with respect to veterans' programs. I truly appreciate the extraordinary spirit of cooperation between us, during the appropriations process and throughout the year. Consistently over the years, Senator MIKULSKI has shown strong, unwavering support for veterans' programs. Although she was not as successful as I know she wished to be this year, her advocacy never wavered. She is a true friend and champion of veterans.

Mr. LEAHY. I find a number of ironies this week as we consider the conference report on the appropriations bill for veterans programs.

As I speak, American troops are being deployed in Bosnia. They represent us in seeking to help secure the peace and put an end to the atrocities that have for too long plagued the people of that region. They serve to defend our national interest and to protect our liberties in a troubled part of the world.

Every Senator who came to this floor during our marathon session yesterday debating the deployment of our troops pledged support for them. That support should not end when they return out of harms' way. They deserve our continuing support and appreciation, just as the veterans of World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, and those who have been deployed on our behalf in conflicts and missions around the world deserve our respect and support. The troops being deployed in Bosnia will be tomorrow's veterans.

I am also struck by the fact that we are only now proceeding with our work on the funding for veterans' programs. Although we are now in December, well past all statutory deadlines for appropriations bills, two months' past the beginning of the fiscal year, and fast approaching the expiration of our second continuing resolution, we are still without an appropriations bill for veterans' programs.

I must note that when we considered that bill initially in the Senate, Senator ROCKEFELLER offered an amendment, which I cosponsored, to restore more than \$500 million that had been cut from the Veteran Administration's medical care account. The Senate rejected our effort. We tried, unsuccessfully, to protect exempt service-connected veterans benefits from further cuts to balance the budget. We wanted to preserve and protect the benefits we provide our veterans, who were there

when this Nation asked for their service.

We could not get support from enough of our Senate colleagues. If my colleagues are truly interested in our veterans, let them join us in our efforts to increase funding for veterans medical research. Let us provide the quality physicians needed in the veterans health care system. Let us fund the work that is so desperately needed in digestive diseases, prosthetics, lung cancer, diabetes and geriatrics. Last year, the President answered our call when, in response to a letter from me cosigned by 41 of my Senate colleagues, he increased his request for funds for veterans medical research to \$257 million.

Join us by restoring the two new Veteran Administration hospitals that are so needed in California and Florida, but that are eliminated in this conference report. Join us by melting the "freeze" on veterans programs that the Republican budget would enact and that would result in the closing of 35 veterans hospitals nationwide.

We all want to be patriotic and show respect for our veterans. Let us remember the words of Abraham Lincoln that are chiseled on a plaque at the Veterans Administration building just a few blocks from the Capitol: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." Let us use our votes when they really count on behalf of our veterans by restoring their benefits and protecting their medical services.

The final irony is that this is the week that we debated and voted upon a proposed constitutional amendment that would have restricted the Bill of Rights for the first time in our history. That effort failed and I detailed the reasons for my vote in a prior statement. For all those who voted in favor of the constitutional amendment on flag desecration and said that they did so in order to respond to the wishes of our veterans, I hope that they will show the respect and support that our veterans deserve by raising their voices and using their votes on behalf of our veterans by restoring their benefits and protecting their medical services.

Mr. LAUTENBERG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I understand, by previous order, that I have 10 minutes available?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I doubt I will use all the time but I do want to take some minutes to discuss the VA/HUD conference report and some of the problems that I have with this bill.

The Senator from Missouri, Senator BOND, the chairman, and the distinguished ranking member from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, deserve commendation for their hard work on this legislation. It is a complicated bill,

this one, because it contains several programs that could be described as critical by virtue of the respect and support that these programs have. When you talk about the Veterans Administration you talk environmental protection, you talk about housing—these are very, very important programs; FEMA, the disaster relief agency, and NASA. So, there is a lot of review. There is a lot of support for each one of the programs and the advocates fight hard for the programs that strike them as being the most important.

But it just does not do the job. It is not the fault of the chairman or the ranking member. They have done their best in a very tough situation, but they just do not have enough funding to do these important tasks. They also had to contend with demands from the House of Representatives which continues to insist on deep cuts in environmental programs and housing and other high-priority programs.

In the end, with regret, I am going to strongly oppose this conference report. It would cut funding at EPA by more than 20 percent. It is an area that I have done a lot of work in. Before the last election I was chairman of the Superfund committee, working on the environment, and I worked very hard on issues of clean air and clean water and various other environmental programs. The final bill reflects what, in my view, are skewed, grossly skewed priorities.

The majority has repeatedly argued that the balanced budget in some accounts, like Medicare and Medicaid, are not actually being cut. What is being cut, they say, is the rate of increase. In the case of EPA, these are real cuts that are being proposed, real decreases, real attempts to turn back the clock on environmental protection. This legislation would slash the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency by 21 percent. One-fifth of its budget just taken away. To me, it is very simple. The effects are dirtier air, dirtier water, fewer toxic waste sites being cleaned up.

I view the quality of our environment as a critical legacy for the generations that follow us: For my children, my grandchildren. If there is one thing I can do for them that will leave them a better America it is to help clear up the environment, to permit them to breathe the air that we take for granted and not be worried about contracting some respiratory condition; or drink the water and not jeopardize their health. To be able to fish in the streams and be able to swim in the ocean without debris floating all over the place. That is the way I see our environmental requirements. So, these are deep cuts that hurt.

And I also point out this legislation is just the tip of the iceberg. The Republican long-term budget plan would have a devastating impact on environmental protection over the next several years. It would destroy EPA's ability to protect our environment and the

public health. It would cripple enforcement of environmental laws. The one criticism that we hear constantly: Oh, that bureaucracy, they are all over us. They are all over business and they are all over citizens and they are all over communities.

The fact of the matter is that environmental laws have worked surprisingly well for us. In a period of roughly 20 years, from 1973-1974 until now, instead of 40 percent of our streams and tributaries being fishable and swimmable, we have gone up to 60 percent. And even in places like the Hudson River, which separates New York from New Jersey, we have begun to see some salmon coming back. We see some striped bass coming up the river. I do not know whether they are ready for eating, but they are there, and the populations are growing because the water is cleaner.

Given half a chance, nature fights back, and very vigorously. But it does not take a lot of neglect for nature to return to a decrepit condition. So, if you do not have enforcement to make sure that compliance is honest, then the laws that are on the books as we all know here are worthless.

The long-term budget plan would destroy EPA's ability to protect our environment and public health. It would severely set back the progress I just indicated we have made in recent decades, to protect and preserve our natural resources.

The bill before us cuts EPA's enforcement function so deeply that it will give polluters a holiday from complying with the law. We have seen stories in the newspapers about EPA's inability to conduct the surveys that they have to, to see whether people are complying with the rules, or with the laws. We have seen situations where Superfund programs, Superfund cleanups are going to stop dead in their tracks. Enforcement programs are targeted for a cut of 27 percent.

Mr. President, EPA is the environmental cop on the beat, and we would not cut law enforcement by a quarter, thank goodness. We would not cut FBI by a quarter, thank goodness. But this bill will cut the resources provided to stop environmental crimes by 27 percent. The question raised is how many children's health will be jeopardized as a result of those pollution laws not being enforced?

Mr. President, some Members of the other body seem to believe that EPA's enforcement office does nothing more than sue innocent landowners. But if these cuts are enacted, those Members are going to come in for a rude surprise because EPA's enforcement office performs many functions that are important—not only for environmental protection, but for the efficient operation of many businesses. Beyond investigating allegations of violations in carrying out inspections, enforcement funding is used to approve permits for companies to take particular actions and that cut in enforcement funding is

going to cause severe dislocations in the private sector as they wait and wait for permits to take up a new product or a new location.

When companies change the way they produce products, their pollution emissions often change as well. And, if so, they have to obtain a permit from EPA.

Mr. President, what is going to happen when EPA's enforcement staff is cut by 27 percent? We can easily tell what is going to happen. There are going to be major delays in issuing permits. That is going to have a negative impact on many companies' balance sheets.

Mr. President, if this kind of cut is enacted, it can almost be guaranteed that next year Senators will come to the floor and blame this problem on an inefficient EPA. But EPA is not going to be the culprit. The culprit will be the Congress and the resource that it supplied for these functions.

To get some feel for what a 27-percent cut will mean in terms of weakened environmental enforcement, consider what happened at EPA since the recently enacted continuing resolution reduced funding temporarily by a comparable amount. No new criminal investigations were started, and some of the ongoing investigations into criminal activity were delayed because the staff from EPA could not travel to these locations.

EPA stopped a major investigation into the fraudulent sale of adulterated gasoline in Texas, and will be forced to halt all mobile source inspections and investigations.

EPA canceled all inspections of laboratories designed to ensure the integrity of health effects data.

There is just no getting around the fact that cutting the enforcement budget will have serious negative impacts. It will mean more pollution. It will mean responsible companies that comply with the laws will be at a competitive disadvantage with their less honorable competitors. It will mean a less healthy environment for our children.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I ask the manager whether there are a couple more minutes available.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator controls 8 additional minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I yield an additional 3 minutes.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. That is very kind. I appreciate it. I will try to wrap up quicker than that because I also want to point out that this legislation will force State and local governments to bear extra burdens. The States will lose money that they badly need to protect the environment, and to comply with Federal requirements. Grants to clean up municipal sewage and industrial waste water emissions will be over \$665 million less than the Presi-

dent requested. The administration's request for funding of safe drinking water initiatives will be cut by \$225 million.

This bill also will make devastating cuts in programs that protect our citizens from the hazards of abandoned toxic waste. It would reduce funds for hazardous waste cleanups by 20 percent.

No new Superfund project starts would be allowed. Under this bill, toxic waste sites will be fenced and forgotten.

Cleanups are complete or underway at nearly 800 sites across this country, and the rate of site remediation has increased significantly over the last 3 years. This bill will halt this progress in its tracks, threatening the health of communities and increasing long-term cleanup costs. And surely this is not what the public wants.

Mr. President, when the House of Representatives initially approved this bill, it included 18 provisions designed to reverse or gut existing environmental law. The House has voted three times on these riders, ultimately reversing itself and removing these riders. It did so in the wake of a public outcry over the hijacking of this bill by special interests intent on weakening antipollution laws.

Yet, like the genie out of the bottle, some riders live on. They are back. There are eight of them in this bill, one that attempts to limit the reach of the community right-to-know law. Another reverses the language of the Clean Water Act to remove EPA's authority to protect wetlands. This wetlands amendment was the subject of a New York Times front page story on Tuesday.

Mr. President, our country has made enormous progress since the environmental movement was ignited by Earth Day in 1970.

It is with considerable regret that I urge my colleagues to reject this conference report, and if it is sent to the President and he vetoes it, as he said he would, I hope that we can muster enough votes to sustain his veto.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the adoption of the conference report occur at 6:45 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—I will not object—but if we reach the point, if I may ask this question of the distinguished manager through the Chair, where all time is not being requested, is it possible to even vote before the 6:45 period?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think the setting of a time certain was necessary to accommodate Members who had other commitments. While it may not be efficient, I think it may be easier to schedule other activities than to have to go on at this time of the evening. That is why I would suggest we stay with the 6:45 time.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think the Senator from Texas has been waiting to be recognized. She has 10 minutes under her control.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. President. I do not intend to take 10 minutes. I just wanted to respond to some of the things that were said by the distinguished Senator from Arkansas who has not supported the space station, and who raised a question about the Russian participation using some of the *Mir* hardware.

I think it is very important that we look at the importance of space research and the space station, and look at the contribution that it has made to our economy.

The Senator said that out of \$94 billion, \$90 billion is going to be put forward by America. In fact, the costs we are talking about are the development costs. That is what we are in now. The development costs are right at \$30 billion of which \$9 billion is being contributed by Europe, Japan, and Canada. Our Russian partners are contributing hardware for the *Mir* that works into the space station.

It is certainly true that they are looking at other proposals which, of course, we all want to look at to see if they are going to save money, and if it is going to be in everyone's best interest to do it. I think that is what NASA is certainly going to do, and it is the right thing for them to do. But I think it is important that we look at what the space station has contributed for our country.

First, it has been cut 35 percent from its original target budget. That has saved the taxpayers of America \$40 billion. They are working in an efficient way to do this space research that is so important for our future technology, and our future jobs in a way that the taxpayers can afford.

In fact, aerospace is the single strongest export sector of the United States economy. In 1993, exports topped \$40 billion. When we look at exactly what the space station is going to do, there are certain things that can only be done in microgravity conditions. You cannot duplicate microgravity conditions on Earth. You must be in space.

Senator MIKULSKI and I have been working on women's health issues, and it is women's health issues that will get the greatest gain from the microgravity research. They are going to be able to look into osteoporosis, bone mass loss, which particularly attacks women. And breast cancer cells are able to be duplicated and grown in the microgravity conditions. They find that is the very best way they are able to study breast cancer cells.

So I think we are looking at tremendous contributions to women's health

care by the use of the microgravity conditions that can only be done in space and not on Earth. You cannot duplicate microgravity on Earth no matter what you do. So this is a unique capability that is very important for our future.

This is the largest cooperative science program in history. We have 13 nations now participating in this science project. I think that is the wave of the future. If we are going to go into the big science technology and research, we should have other countries able to contribute, not only because it saves our taxpayer dollars, but these are things that should be shared with other countries so that we can get the most benefit from this kind of research.

So I think it is very important, as we close this debate, to say that space research produces \$2 for every \$1 invested—\$2 into our economy. That means 40,000 direct and indirect jobs that come from this. But most of all, Mr. President, it is a commitment to the future. It is a commitment that was made by President Kennedy because he could see that there was so much more technology and science available if we had the vehicle to go into space and collect it. In fact, he would never even have dreamed of the successes that we have had because he was willing to take that chance and put America in the forefront and leadership of technological research.

We cannot step back from that. It would not be in our best interest to do so. It would not allow us to stay at the forefront of creating jobs and creating new industries and new products that will keep our economy thriving and able to bring in people who are going to be growing into the job market.

So I am very pleased to support this project. I am pleased to support this conference report. I have worked with Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI to try to make sure that the space station does have what it needs to do the job that it must do. I am very impressed with the problems they had. Having VA and HUD and space, NASA research and all of the independent agencies and making the difficult choices was something to behold, and they did an excellent job.

This is probably going to be a close vote. I cannot imagine that they could have divided up a bill any more fairly than they did on this one.

So I commend them for their hard work. It was hard to get a consensus on these difficult issues. They did a terrific job, and I am pleased to support them.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I express my sincere thanks to the Senator from Texas. She has been a very articulate, very forceful spokesperson for space exploration.

Mr. President, I do not wish to prolong this debate, but I feel that it should be pointed out that the appropriation for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] represents a \$352 million reduction from the level provided in fiscal year 1995. This is an overall cut of 2.5 percent. The conference agreement, however, provides the full amount of the budget request to continue development of the space station: \$2.1 billion.

Despite the overall reduction in the NASA budget, and full funding of the space station, the committee was able to restore funding for a number of important space science programs, fully fund the space shuttle program, maintain the X-33 next generation launch vehicle development, and continue the Earth Observing System Program to study global climate change.

In addition, the conference agreement removed the fence on space station obligations which assures that there will be no funding disruptions during developmental activities during the balance of this fiscal year. The space station program is on track, on budget, and on time. Fabrication of large components of actual flight equipment have been completed. Each week more equipment is being produced, and is undergoing final engineering testing in preparation for launch and deployment beginning in November 1997.

No one should be confused on this point: We can and will proceed with development, and operation of this international space station. Through careful management, intense budgetary review, and hard-nosed priority setting, we will do it without impairing other vital science missions of NASA and other Federal agencies. And we will succeed in this bold initiative, despite our commitment and efforts to bring the Federal budget into balance.

This conference agreement is a clear and unequivocal demonstration that each of these important goals can and will be accomplished. Despite all the naysayers and doubters, the international space station program is succeeding, and shows that the United States is committed to maintaining its leadership in space.

I am pleased to yield the Senator from Alaska 2 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I want to thank Chairman BOND and the ranking member of the committee, Senator MIKULSKI, for their support on this bill. I come to the floor because a member of the Alaska State Senate has told me there is a rumor in Alaska that this bill is cutting the VA very severely and is going to cause reductions in the VA offices in Alaska.

I want to reassure him and other veterans that that is not the case. The truth is, as I understand this bill, it increases VA funding, it does not cut it. This is disturbing news that the VA is contemplating a major reorganization which would eliminate pension and benefits personnel in Alaska. That

would mean that our people would have to write or call or go to Reno, NV, or Phoenix, AZ, when trying to seek help on their pensions or their benefits. That is like asking the people of Maine to go down to Dallas, TX.

I think sometimes people forget the vast distances we deal with in my State. The bill does not require the elimination of VA offices in Alaska. I do hope to get more details on this plan, and I hope the Senate will join us in opposing moving functions from Alaska to what we call the lower 48 States, thousands of miles away from our veterans.

I want to congratulate my two friends, who managed this bill for, once again, including money for the rural water and sewer programs in Alaska. This is a program to eliminate the honey buckets in the villages of our State. There are 132 villages that lack modern facilities. We want to bring water and sewage facilities to them. This bill will help EPA continue to participate in that.

We have a provision in this bill that also prohibits the EPA from requiring the city of Fairbanks to use MTBE, the substance that goes into gasoline, to meet clean air targets under the Clean Air Act for the period of this bill.

It also includes \$2 million to initiate a new program to clean up leaking above-ground bulk-fuel storage tanks in rural Alaska. Most of those tanks, Mr. President, cannot be buried because of the permafrost, and people in the area do need a new system. We have to devise a new plan. This bill will start that plan.

I thank my friend and again congratulate the two managers of this bill. It is a good bill, and I hope the President will sign it. I thank my friend, Senator BOND.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, in wrapping up discussions on this measure, I just have to say, for my colleagues, I will be submitting for the RECORD the information on how this bill does meet our environmental needs.

As I predicted when I spoke earlier today, there has been a lot of vocal pollution about what this bill does. The Vice President and the Administrator of the EPA had a big news conference, and they cited these outlandish figures of a 27-percent cut in enforcement of environmental programs. Mr. President, that is 20 percent off of the pie-in-the-sky budget that the President proposed when he was asking for a \$300 billion deficit.

This is the biggest spending binge that the President could conceive of. And when we cut back to reach a balance, which the President now says he is willing to join us in reaching, there is no way that you can increase funding for everything as he wished. Let me make clear that the final amount in this bill for EPA is \$5.7 billion, a reduction of just about 4 percent from the

fiscal year 1995 postrescission funding level, just about \$235 million. The reductions which came about came from two areas: Superfund, a program mired in litigation, and bureaucracy, which must be fixed. There is money to start cleanups where human health is involved, and we directed them to do that.

Sewer treatment construction earmarks were reduced. That was the pork in last year's bill. This committee has followed the nonpartisan National Academy of Public Administration's directions to move more responsibility to the States, and 40 percent of the appropriation, \$2.3 billion, goes directly to the States for grants to meet environmental mandates.

The press release and the Senator from New Jersey say that this threatens the safety of water quality because it cuts by 45 percent State loan funds. That is just simply wrong, as were most of the other statements made about this bill.

It provides \$500 million for drinking water State revolving funds. Not a penny of the funds appropriated last year were spent. We stipulated that the remaining funds, \$225 million from last year, in addition to the new funds, totaling \$275 million go to the drinking water State revolving funds. If the fund is not authorized, the money will be used for waste water revolving funds. This is an insurance policy that the money appropriated will be utilized to ensure the health of our Nation's water bodies.

There are tremendous misstatements about this measure. I will correct those in the material I submit for the RECORD. I point out that if this bill is vetoed, as some on the other side wish, it will be an 11.5 percent cut below this bill under the continuing resolution. Environment will be much worse off if this bill is vetoed. For that reason, I would urge my colleagues, all of my colleagues on this side, to support the bill.

I hope that we can work together and have the support of some of our colleagues on the other side because, if additional funds are made available above our current 602(b) allocation, they may be added by a continuing resolution which I hope would be agreeable on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. President, I express my greatest thanks to my ranking member, the distinguished former chair of this committee, for her invaluable assistance. She and I wish that we had had more money available. But she has been extremely helpful and very capable and a great asset in moving this process forward.

Mr. President, I have spoken once today on how well we have treated EPA in this year's appropriation, despite overall budget reductions, and I will not repeat my entire statement. But I will say once again that the conference agreement makes clear that Republicans support protecting and cleaning up the environment—but that

we do not support duplicative, wasteful spending and micromanaging States' environmental efforts.

Despite the fact that the House had reduced EPA by one-third in its original VA-HUD bill, in conference we were able to find an additional \$49 million above the Senate-passed bill which had \$770 million more than the House for EPA.

The final amount for EPA is \$5.7 billion, a reduction of just \$235 million or 4 percent below the fiscal year 1995 post-rescission funding level.

The largest reductions below last year come from two key areas—Superfund—a program mired in litigation and bureaucracy which must be fixed, and sewer treatment construction earmarks, which were reduced by \$500 million below last year's level.

The committee's recommendation closely parallels recommendations made to this committee by the National Academy of Public Administration, and are intended to streamline the agency, eliminate duplication, ensure a flexible approach to working with industry, and full support to the States.

More than 40 percent of the appropriation—\$2.3 billion—goes directly to the States for grants to meet environmental mandates. This is an increase of approximately \$300 million over last year.

The largest programmatic reduction in the bill is from Superfund—a reduction of \$170 million below fiscal year 1995. There is no need to throw money at a program which virtually everyone agrees does not work. However, despite serious concerns about the program, we found \$160 million in conference above the House and Senate-passed spending levels for this program. This amount ensures that all projects in the pipeline receive funding and that risks to human health and the environment will be addressed.

Mr. President, compared to the current continuing resolution, this conference agreement provides a 11.5-percent increase. So I cannot understand why the President wants to veto this bill. I imagine a full year CR would be even tighter than the current one. Unfortunately, the White House has indicated an unwillingness to negotiate a reasonable compromise on the VA-HUD bill.

I made reference in this morning's floor statement about the press conference the Vice President and Ms. Browner would be holding later in the day. I have just received the press release from EPA and I am very troubled by the factual inaccuracies contained in it. Let me provide one example of how this administration is misrepresenting what this budget does.

The press release says the Republican budget threatens the safety of water quality because it cuts by 45 percent State loan funds that would help communities protect their drinking water. Mr. President, this just is not true.

This bill provides \$500 million for drinking water State revolving funds—

the President's full budget request. There were no dollars spent on this program last year because it was not authorized. Not a penny of the funds appropriated last year has been spent. We have stipulated in the bill that the amount remaining from last year's appropriation, \$225 million, in addition to new funds totaling \$275 million, go to drinking water State revolving funds if there is an authorization by June 1. And if not, those funds would be provided for wastewater State revolving funds. We've provided an insurance policy that if no authorization occurs, the States will still be able to spend these funds on water infrastructure to ensure the health of our Nation's water bodies.

In the previous two appropriations for drinking water State revolving funds, those funds were not available unless a drinking water bill was enacted.

Finally, let me mention the so-called riders. The conference agreement includes only six legislative riders for pertaining EPA, most of which are completely noncontroversial and several of which were included in previous VA-HUD bills authored by Democrats. In fact, the Senator from New Jersey was a supporter, I am told, of one of the so-called rider pertaining to radon in drinking water in previous years.

I think it is time we start talking straight and fairly about what this bill does and does not do to the environment. I urge those on the other side of the aisle once again to quit the grandstanding and factual inaccuracies.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I have nothing to add to all that has been said. My opening statement summarized everything. I yield back such time that I might have. Our side of the aisle is ready to vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The hour of 6:45 having arrived, the Senate will proceed to vote on agreeing to the conference report accompanying H.R. 2099. The yeas and nays having been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. LOTT. I announce that the Senator from Texas [Mr. GRAMM] is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 606 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Abraham	Dole	Jeffords
Ashcroft	Domenici	Johnston
Bennett	Faircloth	Kassebaum
Bond	Frist	Kempthorne
Burns	Gorton	Kerrey
Byrd	Grams	Kyl
Campbell	Grassley	Lott
Chafee	Gregg	Lugar
Coats	Hatch	Mack
Cochran	Hatfield	McCain
Coverdell	Heflin	McConnell
Craig	Helms	Moynihan
D'Amato	Hutchison	Murkowski
DeWine	Inhofe	Nickles

Pressler
Santorum
Shelby
Simpson

Smith
Snowe
Specter
Stevens

Thomas
Thompson
Thurmond
Warner

NAYS—44

Akaka
Baucus
Biden
Bingaman
Boxer
Bradley
Breaux
Brown
Bryan
Bumpers
Cohen
Conrad
Daschle
Dodd
Dorgan

Exon
Feingold
Feinstein
Ford
Glenn
Graham
Harkin
Hollings
Inouye
Kennedy
Kerry
Kohl
Lautenberg
Leahy
Levin

Lieberman
Mikulski
Moseley-Braun
Murray
Nunn
Pell
Pryor
Reid
Robb
Rockefeller
Roth
Sarbanes
Simon
Wellstone

NOT VOTING—1

Gramm

So, the conference report was agreed to.

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

Mr. D'AMATO. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate concurs in the House amendment to Senate amendment No. 63.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I want to thank those Members who supported us in this very difficult measure. I have already mentioned the absolutely vital assistance and support of the distinguished ranking member, the Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI. She has been most helpful.

I would say also that I am most appreciative of her staff, Rusty Mathews and Steve Crane, who have been of great assistance to us in this measure.

On my side, Stephen Kohashi, who is the lead clerk, Carrie Apostolou. We had the help of Steve Isakowitz on NASA matters, and of course Lashawnda Leftwich has worked with us. This was not a bill. This seemed to be more like a multiyear protect.

I express my sincere thanks to all of the people, the staff, who worked so hard on it. I express particular thanks to the people in the administration, particularly Dan Golden, James Lee Witt, and Henry Cisneros, who worked very cooperatively with us to help implement the very difficult decisions we had to make.

As I mentioned earlier, there has been a tremendous amount of misinformation and disinformation put out about this bill. I will be preparing a full explanation of some of the misstatements that were issued in the news conference held earlier today. It is regrettable that we cannot have an honest debate, using figures that are actual figures from last year and actual figures in this bill, but that, unfortunately, does not seem to be the rule.

Mr. President, I believe there is a remaining amendment which we need to dispose of?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no further amendment. It has been adopted.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, there seems to be no further comments from my ranking member.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

BOSNIA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, last night I voted in support of the Bosnia resolution offered by our distinguished majority leader, Senator DOLE, and President Clinton for putting their principles above politics. We have a great national tradition of bipartisanism in foreign policy. The world must know that, when it comes to America's role in the world, we stand together—Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike—as Americans. In that regard, Senator DOLE and President Clinton have served us very well.

While I have deep concerns about this country's Bosnia policy, I also believe it is our moral and patriotic duty to stand by our troops already on the ground in Bosnia. These brave men and women deserve a strong showing of support for their work and their mission. And that is exactly what an overwhelming and bipartisan majority of the Senate gave them last night. We owed them nothing less.

Yet I remain deeply concerned about the wording of Senator DOLE's resolution and our mission in the former Yugoslavia. First and foremost, our troops are being sent to Bosnia as peacekeepers. They are there to enforce the terms of the peace agreement negotiated in Dayton, OH. And I firmly believe—for their own safety and the success of this mission—they must remain neutral. They must not be perceived as taking sides in the regional and ethnic conflict that has torn the former Yugoslavia apart.

Unfortunately, I fear the resolution we voted on last night sends a message that our troops will not be neutral; that they will be called upon to help train and rearm the Bosnian Moslems; that they will be engaged in enterprise of nation building that failed so badly in Somalia. And if that happens—if our troops are anything more than neutral peacekeepers—this mission is destined to failure. We must not let that happen.

In closing, I urge the President and our military leaders to do everything possible to assure the safety, neutrality, and success of our troops and their mission in Bosnia. And I urge everyone to say a prayer that they make it home soon.

BOSNIA

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, yesterday I did not speak on the pending Bosnia

resolutions in order to permit the Senate to finish its consideration of this important matter prior to the formal signing of the Dayton Agreement in Paris early this morning.

However, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my thoughts on what transpired yesterday.

Yesterday, Mr. President, the Senate went on record as to whether this institution supports the President's decision to participate in the Bosnian peace initiative. In fact, I believe that we went on record on matters much broader and more significant than that. We went on record as to whether we in the United States Senate support peace in Bosnia or war? Whether we support the continuation of American leadership in the world or the abdication of that leadership? Whether we support a post-cold-war international order that is governed by the rule of law or the force of arms?

To some, this may seem a rather simplistic summary of what the debate over the last several days was all about. But, I would say to my colleagues, when you boil it all down, that is what we were really talking about.

The war that has raged in Bosnia for nearly 4 years has been one of unspeakable atrocities; of torture, internment, rape, execution, of ethnic cleansing and genocide. More than a quarter of a million people have lost their lives. Millions more have been made refugees—many within the borders of their own country. Once stable multiethnic towns and villages have become flaming infernos as opposing Moslem, Serb, and Bosnian forces have sought revenge against one other.

Regardless of one's views on the various resolutions we will vote on, I know that our shared hopes and prayers are that the Dayton peace accord—brokered by the United States, and agreed to by all the warring factions—will once and for all bring to a close this bloody chapter of Bosnia's history.

I believe that the Dayton peace agreement contains the essential ingredients to facilitate the writing of a new, hopefully brighter chapter for the people of Bosnia.

These elements include: Bosnia preserved as a single State, within its present internationally recognized borders; the country subdivided into two juridical entities—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska; an agreed cease-fire line, the separation of opposing forces on either side of this line, and the establishment of a demilitarization zone; the creation of a 60,000-person peace implementation force, under NATO command, to monitor and enforce the military aspects of the agreement; internationally supervised democratic elections for President and Parliament to be conducted within a year; freedom of movement of all Bosnian citizens; independent monitoring of human rights of all Bosnians; the establishment of an internationally trained civilian police force; and a commitment by all parties