

be able to work with us and the other side and develop the necessary language. I hope we do not have to continue this parliamentary maneuvering, but we will, if necessary. I hope all understand that this is the importance of this issue.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I call up the VA-HUD appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am indeed quite happy and proud to present the Senate with the VA-HUD and independent agencies appropriations for fiscal year 2002.

I thank Chairman BYRD and Senator STEVENS for working with the subcommittee in order to give us an allocation that made the bill workable. The funding level falls within the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation. I also thank Senator BOND and his staff for their bipartisanship and cooperation in support of this bill.

This subcommittee has had a history of bipartisanship. That tradition continues today.

When we began the 107th Congress, Senator BOND chaired this subcommittee. It is one of the most important because it funds so many of the agencies that meet compelling human need as well as the long-range needs of the United States of America.

When the transition came, it came in an orderly, seamless, and collegial way. I hope that will also be the general tenor of our debate, that we can move forward on this bill on a bipartisan basis.

I believe this bill is balanced, fair and meets the needs of the American people.

My guiding principles in drafting this bill were simple: keep the promises to our veterans; meet the compelling day-to-day needs of working poor; rebuild our neighborhoods and communities; and, invest in science and technology to create jobs today and jobs tomorrow.

Based on the President's budget proposal and our subcommittee's allocation, we had to focus on restoring cuts in the President's budget and avoiding riders.

Our overriding goal was to make sure that the core programs in veterans and

housing were taken care of first, and we did that.

We could not increase spending for any programs until our core programs for veterans and the poor were taken care of.

While I wish the subcommittee had more resources for science, we did the best we could do given our allocation.

I remain fully committed to doubling the budget for NSF over the next 5 years, but without the support of the administration, the authorizing committees, and the Budget Committees, the appropriators can not do it alone.

Finally, we did not break new ground this year. We are staying the course because this is a year of transition both in the administration and in the Senate.

For our Nation's veterans, we have increased VA healthcare by \$1.1 billion over last year, for a total of \$21.4 billion. This is \$400 million more than the President's request. This will allow the VA healthcare system to serve 4 million patients in 2002 through 172 medical centers, 876 outpatient clinics, 135 nursing homes and 43 domiciliaries.

VA continues to shift from an inpatient focus to outpatient care to serve more veterans in their communities. The funding in this bill will allow VA to open more community based outpatient clinics to better serve our Nation's veterans. This bill provides funding for VA to open 33 new outpatient clinics in fiscal year 2002.

This marks the second year in a row that we have had billion-dollar-plus increase for veterans healthcare.

We have also increased funding for VA medical research by \$40 million over last year and \$30 million above the President's request. This funding level will allow VA to continue progress in the treatment of chronic diseases; diagnoses and treatment of degenerative brain diseases, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and; research involving special populations, especially those who suffer from spinal cord injury, stroke, nervous system diseases, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

VA is also a training ground for doctors, nurses, and physician assistants.

VA medical care and research is a national asset that benefits both veterans and non-veterans.

We have also maintained our commitment to the VA State home construction program. As our veterans age in place, their needs and the needs of their families are changing. Outpatient clinics and State veterans homes bring the delivery of healthcare and healthcare services closer to our veterans and their families. This approach reduces costs for the VA and improves the quality of services for the veterans.

We have also provided funding to speed the processing of veterans claims. From the time a veteran files a claim, to the time he or she receives a decision, takes an average of 205 days or nearly 7 months. This bill includes \$46 million to hire additional claims processors to help reduce waiting times to 100 days by the summer of 2003.

For the Department of Housing and Urban Development, we had two overall goals: expand housing opportunities for the poor, and rebuild our neighborhoods and communities; and help special needs populations.

First, we have fully funded the renewal of all section 8 housing vouchers by funding the housing certificate fund at \$15.6 billion. This is \$1.7 billion more than last year.

This amount includes an advance appropriation of \$4.2 billion, for fiscal year 2003.

This advance appropriation was included as part of the concurrent budget resolution for fiscal year 2002 adopted earlier this year. We have carried this advance appropriation for the last several years and continue it this year.

Within the section 8 account, we have provided funding for 17,000 new or "incremental" vouchers to provide more vouchers for people waiting for section 8 assistance.

We have restored the cuts proposed by the President to critical the public housing capital account.

The Public Housing Capital Program provides funds to public housing authorities to repair and renovate public housing units to update heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems. Funds can also be used to construct new public housing, as well as renovating existing units.

We have provided \$2.9 billion for public housing capital which is just below last year's level.

We have restored funding for the Drug Elimination Grant Program to fight crime and drugs in public housing.

We have provided \$300 million for the Drug Elimination Program, just below last year's funding level. President Bush eliminated this program in his budget.

We cannot stop or delay our fight against drugs and crime in public housing. HUD needs to be a force for stability in the neighborhoods that surround public housing.

We increased funding for the CDBG program by \$200 million over last year, to just over \$5 billion in FY 2002. The CDBG program is one of the most effective tools for local economic development efforts. It gives our State and local officials flexibility to use Federal funds to meet local needs.

For other HUD programs, we have continued funding at last year's levels for: empowerment zones; brownfields; homeless grants; and housing for the elderly and disabled. We would like to have increased funding for these programs this year, but our allocation was simply not high enough to provide across-the-board increases.

We have included language to raise the FHA loan limits for multi-family housing by 25 percent this year—the first increase in many years.

This proposal was included as part of the administration's budget request, and we included it as part of our bill. Raising the loan limits will help increase the supply of multi-family housing in this country.

I wish we could do more for housing production. We cannot voucher our way out of our housing crisis. We need a new production program.

I look forward to the recommendations of the Millennial Housing Commission and the Commission on Senior Housing. These two congressionally chartered commissions will give the Congress a blueprint for addressing the crisis in affordable housing. Once we receive those recommendations, I hope the Congress can take a step forward in solving this crisis.

In the area of predatory lending and flipping, we are providing HUD with expanded legal authority to deny FHA insurance to lenders who have high default rates to help fight flipping and predatory lending.

Earlier this year, I held a field hearing in Baltimore on the subject of flipping. Unfortunately, despite some progress, this despicable practice continues.

To give HUD more resources to fight this problem, we have provided the Inspector General's office with \$10 million specifically targeted to anti-predatory lending activities.

In the area of community development, one of my highest priorities has been to help this country cross the digital divide. In this bill, we provide \$80 million to help create computer learning centers in low-income neighborhoods through competitive grants to local governments and non-profits.

For EPA, we provide \$7.75 billion, an increase of \$435 million above the President's request.

We ensure that Federal enforcement of environmental laws remains strong by restoring the 270 enforcement jobs cut by the President's request.

The President proposed a major shift in policy this year. He proposed to cut 270 environmental "cops on the beat" and shift enforcement to the States through a new \$25 million State enforcement grant program.

But major concerns have been raised about this approach. The EPA inspector general has found numerous examples of weaknesses in State enforcement programs. This is a very important issue, and we need to hear from our authorizers about how we should allocate our resources before we make a major policy shift. So we did not break new ground in this area, and we maintained the status quo for Federal enforcement.

This bill also keeps our commitment to clean and safe water by fully funding the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund at \$1.35 billion.

The Nation is facing an enormous backlog of funding for water infrastructure projects—some estimates say as high as \$23 billion per year. The committee acknowledges the validity of the problems faced by large cities and small communities alike in upgrading sewer and drinking water systems.

Unfortunately, the administration chose to fund the new Combined Sewer

Grant Program at the expense of the Clean Water State Loan Fund. This approach was opposed by our authorizers, and GAO told us it was a bad idea because it would weaken the Clean Water Fund.

We regret that the administration took this approach and that we cannot provide the \$450 million requested for the sewer grant program.

We hope that in the future, the President's request will be more adequate to meet the needs of our communities.

For the Federal Emergency Management Agency, our bill provides a total of \$3.3 billion. Of this total, \$2.3 billion is designated for the disaster relief account to be available in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

I should note for my colleagues that of the \$2.3 billion designated for disaster relief, \$2.0 billion is designated as an emergency under the terms of the Budget Act.

Tropical Storm Allison had a devastating impact on Texas, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania. We need to replenish the disaster account so the funds continue to be available for the victims of Allison and future disasters we may face.

We restore \$25 million for Project Impact, an important effort that helps to raise visibility and public awareness for the need for pre-disaster mitigation.

We also increase the FEMA fire grant program to \$150 million. In the first year of this program, FEMA received over 30,000 applications requesting nearly \$3 billion for fire fighting equipment, vehicles, and protective clothing.

After seeing what our firefighters in Baltimore went through to deal with the Howard Street tunnel fire, the least we can do for these brave men and women is help give them the equipment and support they need to deal with the hazardous, life threatening situations they constantly confront on our behalf.

We have also provided the FEMA Director with support to establish and run the new office of national preparedness as requested by the President. This new office will coordinate all the various Federal programs dealing with consequence management resulting from weapons of mass destruction. This is a very important initiative; so much so that the Appropriations Committee held 3 days of hearings earlier this year on the President's action plan.

And we provide nearly \$140 million for the emergency food and shelter and over \$20 million to help FEMA modernize their flood mapping operation.

We provide \$14.6 billion for NASA programs, \$50 million over the President's request and \$300 million over last year.

This was one of the more difficult parts of the appropriations bill to put together. We found ourselves dealing with a \$4 billion plus overrun on the international space station.

Let me say that while I am disappointed and appalled at the mis-

management of the space station, I am still committed to seeing the space station completed.

NASA is currently having an outside review team conduct a thorough independent evaluation of the space station. That will give us a new road map for the station. Although we do make a slight reduction to the overall space station budget, we did not make any major decisions regarding the future of the station. We want to wait and see what the administration will do later this year and in their 2003 budget.

Unfortunately, this is not the first cost overrun we have had with the space station. Since 1993 we have seen at least six different revised cost estimates that have taken the station's cost from \$17.4 billion up to a staggering \$28.3 billion—a stunning 61 percent increase.

The committee is adamant that this has to stop. We are committed to completing the space station and that it be the world class research facility it was also supposed to be. But the culture at NASA has got to change so that NASA management gets these costs under control.

The committee is not going to let NASA raid other important space programs to pay for these space station management failures. So here's what we do.

First, we provide \$1.7 billion for continued construction of the international space station. We redirect \$50 million to the shuttle for safety upgrades. Protecting our astronauts is one of the most important priorities within the committee.

Second, we cap total space station costs over the next 4 years at a total of \$6.7 billion. Any proposal to exceed this cap must come with a presidential certification that it is needed and the additional costs are well known.

Third, to ensure the station is in fact a world-class research facility, we add \$50 million to the life and microgravity research program, which takes the program up to \$333.6 million for fiscal year 2002. Then we transfer space station research out of the human space flight account into the science account where we protect it from being used any further to pay for space station overruns.

Finally, we want NASA to create an independent review committee to develop options that will increase the amount of time crew members will have to conduct research on board the station.

If this is going to a world-class research facility, we have to be sure the personnel on board have the time and support to carry out a viable research program.

Over in the Science, Aeronautics and Technology account, we provide \$7.7 billion. This is \$478 million more than the President's request and is driven primarily by the transfer of the biological and physical sciences research program out of the space station account and into the science account to improve aviation safety and commercial competitiveness.

For the National Science Foundation, we provide a total of \$4.7 billion for research and education. This is an increase of \$256 million or 6 percent over last year.

We had hoped to provide more. Senator BOND and I—and a large number of our Senate colleagues—believe it is in the national interest to double the NSF budget over the next 5 years.

This recommendation represents a downpayment on that policy objective.

We reject the administration's proposal to cut the NSF research programs and instead, we increase them by \$187.5 million over the request.

We provide nearly \$500 million for nanotechnology and information technology—two critically important research activities related to the Nation's economic competitiveness; \$150 million to help meet the needs of developing institutions and States with \$110 million for EPSCoR, Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, \$25 million specifically for instrumentation at smaller institutions, and \$15 million for innovation partnerships between smaller schools and local industry.

We provide \$55 million for supercomputing hardware: \$45 million for an earthquake research network, and \$12.5 million to continue constructing a new radio telescope, called ALMA.

We link hi-tech economic development with out academic centers of excellence through a new \$10 million regional innovation clusters initiative designed to bring universities, industries and local government together to map out and carry out strategic R&D and economic development plans.

Math and science education programs increase by nearly \$90 million or 11%—to over \$870 million, \$872.4 million. We provide \$190 million for the President's Math and Science Partnership program, \$130 million in this bill; additional \$60 million through hi-tech visa fees. We increase the stipends for graduate students in science and engineering by nearly 20 percent (or \$3,500) to \$21,500 per year. We provide \$20 million for a new undergraduate workforce initiative. We increase support for programs related to historically black colleges and universities and other under-represented groups to \$100 million.

This is a Science Foundation budget that emphasizes three critical goals:

(1) support for people—from the scientist to the grad student to our elementary and secondary school teachers of science and math;

(2) support for the basic research enterprise of this country in strategic areas as well as to core disciplines in science and engineering; and

(3) support for tools—the cutting edge equipment and instrumentation that is so crucial to move science forward.

We have funded National Service at \$420 million, which is \$4 million more than the President's request, to keep National Service strong.

Volunteerism is our national trademark. It highlights what is best about America.

Volunteer programs are the backbone of our communities. They help preserve the safety net for seniors, keep our communities safe and clean, and get our kids ready to learn.

The 2002 VA-HUD bill maintains our commitment to AmeriCorps by providing funding to support 50,000 members to continue our spirit of providing community service, reducing student debt, and to creating "habits of the heart."

We also continue our promise to bridging the digital divide. We provide \$25 million to teach-the-teachers, to bring technology skills to those who have been left out or left behind in our digital economy.

The bill meets compelling human needs and invests for our future.

I would like to have been able to do more for science, technology and housing production, but this is the best we can do under our allocation and satisfy the priorities of our Members.

To reiterate, this committee reported the bill and it compromises \$84 billion in discretionary budget authority and \$88 billion in outlays. The bill is balanced and fair and meets the needs of the American people. Our job was to meet certain compelling issues.

My guiding principles were, No. 1, to keep our promises to the veterans for them to have the health care they need and not stand in line when they have to apply for their pensions; to work in the area of housing and urban development, that we would develop the programs and policies that would empower the poor to be able to move to a better life as well as rebuilding our neighborhoods and our community; also to stand up and protect the environment and invest in science and technology to create jobs today and jobs tomorrow.

Based on the President's budget proposal and the subcommittee allocation, we had to focus on restoring cuts in the President's budget and, of course, we worked very hard to avoid riders. Our overriding goal was to make sure that core programs in veterans and housing and the environment were taken care of. We did that. We could not increase the funding for every program that was meritorious, but we could meet the basic needs of our responsibilities.

One of the areas that we were sorry we could not increase funding to the level we wanted was in doubling the budget for the National Science Foundation over the next 5 years.

I want to talk about what we have done for veterans. We increased VA health care by over \$1 billion. This is \$400 million more than the President's request. It will allow the VA health care system to serve 4 million patients through 2002, 172 medical centers, 876 outpatient clinics, and over 135 nursing homes. VA continues to shift from inpatient focus to outpatient care. The funding in this bill will allow VA to open more community-based clinics.

This marks also the second year in a row that we have increased funding for veterans health care. We have also in-

creased funding for VA medical research by \$40 million over last year.

This funding level will allow VA to continue its progress in the treatment of chronic diseases, also the diagnosis and treatment of degenerative brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and special populations, often those who bear the permanent wounds of war, that of spinal cord injury and post-traumatic stress.

VA is a training ground for health care providers, and we have been able to keep our programs that encourage scholarships and other grant programs to do this.

The other area we worked on was to increase the speed of processing for veteran claims. Right now, when a veteran files for a claim, it takes 205 days or nearly 7 months. We don't think veterans should have to stand in line to get this consideration. This bill includes \$46 million to improve technology and hire additional processors.

In the area of HUD, for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, we had two overall goals: expand housing opportunities for the poor, but in an empowerment way, rebuild our neighborhoods and communities; and also help special needs populations.

First, we fully fund the renewal of all section 8 housing vouchers by funding the housing certificate fund at \$15.6 billion. This is \$1.7 billion more than last year. This amount also includes an advance appropriation of \$4.2 billion. This advanced appropriation was included in the concurrent budget resolution.

Within the section 8 account, we provided funding for 17,000 new or incremental vouchers. We also restored the cuts proposed by the President to the public housing capital account. The public housing capital program provides funds to public housing authorities to repair and renovate public housing units, to update heating, ventilation, and plumbing.

These are absolutely essential. We should not be a slum landlord. We have to raise those standards. Also, we have provided \$300 million in the drug elimination program. President Bush eliminated this program, and we have very serious question about what is the best way to proceed.

This year we didn't want to break new ground in terms of our general policies, so we have kept in the \$300 million for drug elimination. We asked the authorizers to hold hearings on what is the best way we can keep drugs out of public housing and make sure that drug dealers don't use public housing as small business incubators for their deals.

We also increased funding for CDBG by \$200 million, taking it to just over \$5 billion.

We continued funding empowerment zones, brownfields, homeless grants, and housing for the elderly and disabled. We would surely like to have increased funding for these programs, but our allocation was not enough to do this. We hope that in next year's budget, we could take a look at it because

these certainly are very meritorious. We have also included language to raise the FHA loan limit for multiple family housing by 25 percent. This is the first increase in many years. This proposal was included in the administration's budget request. Raising the loan limit will increase the supply of multiple family housing in this country. We need more affordable apartments. Rents are going sky high. We cannot voucher our way out of a housing crisis. We also need it for the middle class.

Also, again, on a bipartisan basis, we know we need a new production program. We are looking forward to the recommendations of the housing commission and the Commission on Senior Housing so that we could then get a framework for proceeding.

Also, my senior colleague, Senator PAUL SARBANES, chairing the Housing and Banking Committee, has been leading the fight against predatory lending. We started that fight in this committee under Senator BOND, and we are going to continue that. We have added funds in the inspector general's office to target the antipredatory lending activities.

Also, we have provided in this bill \$80 million to create computer learning centers in low-income neighborhoods. These will be competitive grants to nonprofits and to local governments. I prefer to keep it to nonprofits. This will help cross the digital divide and, we believe, can be used for job training during the day, structured afterschool activities in the afternoon, and essentially be one of the important empowerment tools.

Let's move on to the environment. For EPA, we provide \$7.5 billion, an increase of \$435 million above the President's request. We ensure that the Federal enforcement of environmental programs remains strong. We restore 270 enforcement jobs cut by the President. The President proposed a major shift in policy this year. These 270 jobs are like our environmental cops on the beat. The President wanted to shift this to a grants program of \$25 million. We again felt we were breaking new ground without the authorizers taking a look at what is the best way to enforce the environmental laws. We know it needs to be a Federal-State partnership. But we didn't want to eliminate our current framework until we had really a very clear, well-thought-through process.

The EPA inspector general found numerous examples of weaknesses in State enforcement programs. That is why we had so many yellow flashing lights.

This bill keeps our commitment to clean and safe water by fully funding the clean water State revolving loan fund at \$1.35 billion. This Nation is facing an enormous backlog of funding for water infrastructure projects—some estimate as high as \$23 billion per year. Out of all the requests we got for congressionally designated projects, prob-

ably the largest number and those that just cried out for a response were in water and sewer, from very small rural communities that are on the brink of disaster to large metropolitan water supplies where the water and sewer was built over 100 years ago and are on the verge of collapse.

Mr. President, we really hope that it will be a major initiative of the authorizing committee to look at our infrastructure needs. I think this is very important in terms of a public investment for our communities.

Let's go to FEMA. Our bill provides, for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, \$3.3 billion. Of this total, \$2.3 billion is designated for the disaster relief account to be available in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

I should note for my colleagues that of the \$2.3 billion designated for disaster relief, \$2 billion is designated as an emergency under the terms of the Budget Act. Tropical Storm Allison had a devastating impact on Texas, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania. We have to replenish this disaster account and at the same time have a cushion for these impending disasters. We restore \$25 million for Project Impact and increase the FEMA fire grant program to \$150 million. I will be saying more about that in the course of the bill.

Mr. President, I want to move on to NASA. We provided \$1.46 billion for NASA programs—\$50 million over the President's request—and \$300 million over last year. This was one of the more difficult parts of our appropriations. We found ourselves dealing with a \$4 billion-plus overrun on the international space station. I will say that again. We found ourselves dealing with a \$4 billion overrun on the international space station. I am very disappointed and dismayed at the way the space station is being managed. I am going to be very clear on the record. I am absolutely committed to the space station, and I am going to do all I can to see that it is completed. But NASA needs to get its act together on the space station and deal with these cost overruns.

We really want to ensure that we do complete the space station but not at the expense of cannibalizing other programs or reducing the space station to only three astronauts. You cannot do the space station science for which this whole project was completed with three astronauts. We also need to be sure that our astronauts can return safely. We need to focus on the safety of our astronauts, and this is one of the other reasons we are working on shuttle upgrades.

On the National Science Foundation, know that Senator BOND and I wanted to double it, but we could not. We did increase it by \$256 million. We hope to provide more. Senator BOND and I, and a large number of colleagues, think it is in our national interest to do so. This recommendation represents a downpayment on that policy objective.

We provide nearly \$500 million for nonotechnology and information technology, and \$150 million to meet the needs of institutions and States. We also are increasing math and science education, as well as supercomputing hardware.

The Science Foundation budget will emphasize three goals: Support for people—from the scientist to the graduate student; to develop support for the basic research enterprise of this country; and also support for the tools we need for future science and technology.

Let me go into national service. We funded national service at \$420 million. This keeps national service strong. Voluntarism is our trademark and it highlights the best of America. What we did here was provide \$25 million to teach-the-teachers in technology. We have included that in the bill to encourage veterans to volunteer with our young people. Again, we could have done more, but we just didn't have the money. I think what we did do meets these needs.

This speech is kind of boring because it is about numbers and data—\$500 million over here, \$300 million this, and the President's that, and our requests, et cetera. But when you get down to it, what this money represents is really a commitment to honoring our veterans, building our communities, housing and urban development, protecting our environment, and investing in space in the National Science Foundation so that we have the new ideas to come up with the new products, encouraging voluntarism.

We also provide that in the event any community is hit by a national disaster, while they have to go through the records, they would not have to forage for funds to pay for it.

I thank Senator BOND and his very capable staff for their most collegial and cooperative efforts in moving this bill forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I am very pleased to stand wholeheartedly in enthusiastic support of S. 1216, the VA-HUD fiscal year 2002 appropriations bill as reported from the Committee on Appropriations.

My compliments to Senator MIKULSKI as the new chair of the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee for her hard work and her commitment to making this bill a balanced piece of legislation for all Members, for the administration and, most of all, for the people who are served by it—and they are many—as the Senator has so eloquently outlined.

I could not ask for a better chair and, previous to the transmogrification, a better ranking member. I know that some identify us as one of the more collegial teams in this Chamber. I am proud of that. I think we make a good team.

After extensive, hard work on the very important and difficult and complex issues in this bill, we agree on the

policy outlines and on the specific allocation included in this bill for the VA-HUD fiscal year 2002 bill. I think the bill is grounded both in good policy and fiscal responsibility. As the Senator from Maryland has discussed, the legislation is within our 302(b) discretionary funding allocation of \$84 billion-plus in budget authority and some \$88 billion in outlays.

In addition, while no bill is perfect or addresses every Member's concerns—and certainly we had many hundreds and thousands of concerns—I think the bill strikes the right balance in funding both the Members' priorities and the administration's priorities.

In particular, despite our tight allocation, we have done our best to satisfy the priorities of Senators who made special requests for economic development grants, water infrastructure improvements, as well as requests for other State and local priorities. Such requests numbered over 1,600 individual requests, totaling over \$22 billion, which illustrates the level of interest and demand for assistance in the bill. That means, on the average, each Senator submitted 16 requests, costing a total of \$220 million for our humble little bill. We obviously could not address all of these requests, but we have tried hard to address as many of the most pressing needs as we could.

We have also met most of the administration's funding priorities. I compliment the administration for not looking to create a series of new programs, but instead focusing on—with some exceptions—maintaining existing program levels and reforming program implementation to ensure that the agency can deliver the needed assistance under existing program requirements.

Again, I emphasize that we don't need a lot of new programs in this bill. We do need to ensure that existing programs are managed well and effectively and the people who are to be served receive the benefits that are intended in the bill.

I will be relatively brief in my review of the bill because the VA and veterans' needs remain the highest priority, and funding decisions in the bill are designed to ensure the best quality of medical care for our veterans, to keep the best doctors in the VA system. To achieve this, we have funded VA medical care at \$21.4 billion, an increase of some \$400 million over the President's request, and over \$1.1 billion over the 2001 level.

I know some Members believe the funds are inadequate, but I emphasize we have increased this account every year and have worked hard to ensure there are adequate funds for the medical needs of our veterans. In fairness, we can spend only so many funds efficiently and effectively. I believe we have done the best we can.

Moreover, Senator MIKULSKI and I are committed to meeting the medical needs of veterans, and we are working with VA to ensure successful imple-

mentation of the new CARES process that will result in better VA facilities, the better targeting of services and medical care throughout the country, assuring we do not waste money that is meant for veterans medical care on maintaining unneeded or excessive capacity buildings.

The 2002 VA-HUD Senate appropriations bill provides \$31 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which is \$443 million over the budget request and \$2.5 billion over last year's level. This includes funding needed to renew all expiring section 8 contracts and also provides funds for 17,000 incremental vouchers.

I personally remain deeply concerned that vouchers do not work well in many housing markets. We need to develop new production programs that assist extremely low-income families in particular.

We have also included \$650 million for the Public Housing Capital Fund over and above the President's budget request, and have added \$300 million for the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, a program the administration sought to eliminate in its budget. These are both important programs, and the VA-HUD bill essentially preserves last year's funding levels.

In particular, I emphasize my support for the public housing capital funding, which is critically needed to address some \$20 billion in outstanding public housing capital needs. We must ensure those people who live in assisted housing have decent housing in which to live and to raise their families. As a civilized and developed nation, we owe the least of our citizens, in terms of economic wealth, at least that much.

In addition, we maintain funding for both the CDGB and HOME programs at the 2001 level, while rejecting an administration set-aside of \$200 million in home funds for a new downpayment program. The set-aside is unnecessary, in our view, since this activity is already eligible under the HOME program. I stress my support for both HOME and CDBG because they rely on decisionmaking guided by local choice and need. We are asking the people who are there on the ground, in the community, to determine how best to use funds for community development and to meet the housing needs of the population in their communities.

I hope and trust these funds are used by States and localities as an investment in housing production to meet the increasing housing needs of low-income and extremely low-income families.

In addition, the bill funds section 202 elderly housing at \$783 million; section 811 housing for disabled at \$217.7 million. These funding levels are the administration's requests and approximately the same as the 2001 level. The bill includes over \$1 billion for homeless funding, with a separate account of almost \$100 million for the renewal of the expiring shelter plus care contract. Again, these funding levels reflect the

administration's request at last year's funding levels.

As for the Environmental Protection Agency, the bill includes \$7.75 billion, which is some \$435 million over the 2002 budget request. It includes \$25 million for State information systems as requested by the administration.

We did reject the administration's request to transfer some \$25 million for State EPA and enforcement efforts, keeping these funds at EPA. I support that premise. As one who was a Governor, I ran environmental protection programs in my State. I have a great regard and a great respect for the work done at the State level, but the proposed transfer of enforcement responsibilities from EPA to the States may be premature. It appears to us a number of States may need to upgrade their enforcement capacity before a transfer of EPA enforcement responsibilities to States is warranted.

In addition, the bill maintains funding of the clean water State revolving fund at \$1.35 billion instead of reducing this amount by \$500 million for the funding of a new sewer overflow grants program.

Funding of this new sewer overflow program is premature without additional funding. Both the clean water and drinking water State revolving funds are key to building and rebuilding our Nation's water infrastructure systems and should not be compromised with new programs without significant new funding.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of continuing to maintain funding for these State revolving funds. For clean water infrastructure financing alone, there is a need for some \$200 billion over the next 20 years, excluding replacement costs and operations and maintenance.

For FEMA, the bill appropriates an additional \$2 billion in disaster relief. The chairman and I intend to offer an amendment to make these funds available upon enactment. We feel strongly these additional funds should be available as soon as possible in the event we face disasters beyond the normal expectations during the remainder of this fiscal year. If we do not have that money, then this body is going to be put in a real bind to try to respond to a disaster which might occur in any of our States. I believe every Member should support this program because almost everyone represents a State which has benefited recently from the availability of these important disaster assistance funds in the face of some unexpected and unfortunate disaster in their States.

We need to ensure FEMA has the necessary funds to meet all possible emergency contingencies during this fiscal year and the next fiscal year. The VA-HUD appropriations bill also funds NASA at \$14.56 billion. This is an increase of \$307.5 million over last year. It is \$50 million above the budget request. This includes \$6.87 billion for human space flight, while capping the

funds available for the international space station at \$1.78 billion.

Senator MIKULSKI and I share huge concerns over the current status of the space station, as she has so forcefully and eloquently noted, especially when cost overruns currently exceed \$4 billion this year alone. There also appears to be a total loss of management control by NASA with regard to the space station.

In the current configuration, the space station must depend upon the Russian Soyuz for any emergency escape capacity from the station, and there continues to be inadequate habitation space that is needed for science research, the primary justification for the construction of this station.

Right now, they can only hold three astronauts in the space station. The time of two and a half of them is required to operate the station. That means we go through all the work and trouble of sending up a space shuttle, sending up astronauts, and we get one-half of one FTE working on science. That is a disaster, and it is and should be an embarrassment for NASA.

Not to be too bleak, however, NASA is making great strides in other areas of research, including space and Earth science. Remote sensing is becoming a viable and important technology and many of our space science missions are unlocking the mysteries of the universe.

In addition, the bill continues our commitment to the space launch initiative, the SLI. This is a critical program that should provide for the development of alternative technologies for access to space. Nevertheless, I have heard some reports that NASA may be losing control of the SLI program. Again, NASA needs to keep a tight focus on technologies being proposed and the funding which is approved.

In addition, the bill reaffirms our commitment to aeronautics, and NASA's leadership role is part of the Government-industry partnership to develop breakthrough technologies for the aviation community.

Finally, I restate emphatically my support for the National Science Foundation, again in total agreement with my friend and chair of the subcommittee. Because of our budget allocation limitations, we were only able to provide \$4.67 billion for the National Science Foundation for the coming year, a \$256 million increase to the budget. This is still a \$200 million increase over the President's budget, but it is not nearly as much as we want.

I believe this funding level is the best we can do under the circumstances without jeopardizing the needs of our Nation's veterans, our commitment to EPA, and our investment in affordable housing for low-income families.

Let me be clear. I am committed to working with Senator MIKULSKI and our House counterparts to find more funds for NSF in conference. I am committed to doubling the Foundation's budget over 5 years and will do every-

thing I can to keep us on that important path.

I call on my colleagues who believe the future of the United States depends upon our continuing to make great strides in the field of science and engineering to join with us to make solid the commitment of this body to doubling the funding.

We have seen in the past great strides made in the National Institutes of Health. They are developing wonderful new cures, but they tell us that the work of NIH depends upon continuing work and development by the National Science Foundation. If you talk with people in the field of scientific endeavor, they will tell you that we are way out of balance because we have not done enough to keep up with basic science and making sure we continue to be the leader in the world in all forms of technology and science, not limited to space and health, but to biotechnology, nanotechnology, and the many other exciting issues on which the National Science Foundation is working.

I am not always sure everyone understands our investment in science and technology greatly influences the future of our Nation's economy and our quality of life. How goes the funding goes the future.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI's staff and my staff for the many long and hard hours they spent advising us and working on legislation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my strong support for the fiscal year 2002 HUD/VA appropriations bill. Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Senator BOND have done an exemplary job of providing HUD with the resources it needs, even while working within a very tight allocation for all of the agencies within their jurisdiction.

The administration's budget request for HUD, the agency that provides housing assistance to this Nation's poorest families and funding for community development and revitalization, was sorely inadequate. The administration's proposal would not even have provided the funding necessary to maintain HUD programs at current levels. Instead of fighting to expand housing opportunities to meet growing needs, the Administration's budget request has put us in the unfortunate position of fighting just to retain current program levels.

We have a severe housing crisis in this country, and the need for housing assistance continues to grow. There are almost 5 million very low-income households in this country who have worst case housing needs, either paying more than half of their income towards rent or living in severely substandard housing. Another 2 million people will experience homelessness this year. At a time when so many families are in need of housing assistance, housing programs need additional funding.

One area of great concern are the proposed cuts in public housing, a pro-

gram that provides housing to over 1.3 million of this Nation's poorest households.

Senators MIKULSKI and BOND realized that a significant number of families would be affected if they went along with the proposal to cut over \$1 billion in funding for public housing programs. The administration proposed cutting \$700 million, or 25 percent, from the Capital Fund, the fund used to repair and modernize public housing. There is a significant need for these funds. HUD estimates that there is currently a \$22 billion backlog in needed capital repairs in public housing. A cut of this magnitude would have led to further deterioration of this Nation's public housing stock. The administration's budget says that this program can withstand such a cut because there are unexpended balances in the Capital Fund that can be used to fill in the gaps left by the budget cut. However, this is not the case. HUD's own data show that Capital Funds are being spent well within the legal time-frames established in a bipartisan manner just a few short years ago. Fortunately, the bill before us today provides almost \$3 billion for the Capital Fund, helping us to maintain a much needed resource and to ensure that the federal investment in this housing is protected. This is an important accomplishment of the Appropriations Committee.

In addition, this bill restores funding for the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, which supports anti-crime and anti-drug activities in public housing. The administration's proposed elimination of this program would have resulted in housing authority police officers being laid off, after-school centers being shut down, and safety improvements not being made. The bill before us today provides \$300 million for this important program that helps to improve the lives of public housing residents.

Unfortunately, the administration's budget did away with other important programs as well, including the Rural Housing and Economic Development Program, which provides funding for housing and economic development in rural areas. This program helps to greatly enhance the capacity of rural non-profits to fund innovative efforts to supply housing and develop rural areas. HUD's own budget justifications state that "The previous rounds of funding recognize that rural communities face different socio-economic challenges than do cities . . . Many rural areas have been by-passed by employment, and low, stagnating wages. It is imperative that rural regions have greater access to community and economic development funds that would foster investment in economic opportunities." I am pleased that the bill before us today provides \$25 million in funding for this program which allows rural America to access essential resources.

While most of this bill helps to further the goals of ensuring that all

Americans have access to decent, safe and affordable housing, I have a number of concerns with provisions in the bill related to Section 8 vouchers.

This bill only provides funding for an additional 17,000 section 8 vouchers. This is only half the vouchers requested by the administration, and less than a quarter of the 79,000 new vouchers Congress funded last year. I recognize that the committee is concerned with voucher utilization and the effectiveness of the program, as am I. However, section 8 vouchers work in most areas of the country, allowing families to choose where to reside while lowering their rent burdens. I agree that there are improvements that must be made to strengthen this program and to ensure that all families who receive vouchers are able to find adequate housing. However, I strongly believe that we must continue to expand the voucher program so that we can meet the needs of the many poor families waiting to receive housing assistance.

In addition to the decrease in section 8 vouchers, the administration has proposed cutting section 8 reserves by \$640 million, from two months to one month. These reserves are used in the event of higher program costs so that the section 8 program can continue to serve the same number of families. The administration is correct that some of these funds may not be necessary; however, HUD must have the flexibility to meet the needs of PHAs that must access more than one month of reserves in order to continue serving the families who currently receive vouchers. The House appropriations bill, which does not give HUD this flexibility, will lead to a reduction in the number of poor families who receive housing assistance. I am pleased that the Senate did not adopt the flawed approach taken by the House, and I hope that the conference report will give HUD the flexibility to provide more than one month of reserves to housing authorities that will otherwise be forced to cut their section 8 programs.

I am also concerned by language in this bill that has the potential to reduce funding for critical housing programs by diverting funds from HUD to other agencies. I appreciate and support the efforts of the chair and ranking member to protect funds allocated to the subcommittee. However, I am concerned that, as drafted, this provision could inadvertently result in funds being transferred from already strapped housing programs and hinder the effective functioning of the voucher program. I hope that the final legislation will ensure that all of the funds allocated to housing are used to meet the growing housing needs in this country.

As a whole, I support this bill, and commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for reporting out a bill that affirms our commitment to housing this Nation's poor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise to offer for the record the Budget Com-

mittee's official scoring for S. 1216, the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2002.

Including an advance appropriation into 2002 of \$4.2 billion, the Senate bill provides \$84.052 billion in non-emergency discretionary budget authority, of which \$138 million is for defense spending. The \$84 billion in budget authority will result in new outlays in 2002 of \$40.489 billion. When outlays from prior-year budget authority are taken into account, discretionary outlays for the Senate bill total \$88.463 billion in 2002. The Senate bill is at its section 302(b) allocation for both budget authority and outlays.

In addition, the Senate bill provides new emergency spending authority of \$2 billion to the Federal emergency Management Agency for Disaster Relief, which is not estimated to result in any outlays in 2002. In accordance with standard budget practice, the budget committee will adjust the appropriations committee's allocation for emergency spending at the end of conference. The bill also provides an advance appropriation for section 8 renewals of \$4.2 billion for 2003. That advance is allowed under the budget resolution adopted for 2002.

I again commend Chairman BYRD and Senator STEVENS, as well as Senators MIKULSKI and BOND, for their bipartisan effort in moving this and other appropriations bills quickly to make up for the late start in this year's appropriations process.

Mr. President, I ask for unanimous consent that a table displaying the budget committee scoring of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1216, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES, 2002; SPENDING COMPARISONS—SENATE-REPORTED BILL

(In millions of dollars)

| | General purpose | Defense | Mandatory | Total |
|--|-----------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Senate-reported bill: | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 83,915 | 138 | 26,898 | 110,951 |
| Outlays | 88,327 | 136 | 26,662 | 115,125 |
| Senate 302(b) allocation: ¹ | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 83,915 | 138 | 26,898 | 110,951 |
| Outlays | 88,463 | 0 | 26,662 | 115,125 |
| House-reported: | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 83,995 | 138 | 26,898 | 111,031 |
| Outlays | 87,933 | 136 | 26,662 | 114,731 |
| President's request: | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 83,221 | 138 | 26,898 | 110,257 |
| Outlays | 87,827 | 136 | 26,662 | 114,625 |
| SENATE-REPORTED BILL COMPARED TO | | | | |
| Senate 302(b) allocation: ¹ | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Outlays | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| House-reported: | | | | |
| Budget Authority | (80) | 0 | 0 | (80) |
| Outlays | 394 | 0 | 0 | 394 |
| President's request: | | | | |
| Budget Authority | 694 | 0 | 0 | 694 |
| Outlays | 500 | 0 | 0 | 500 |

¹ The 2002 budget resolution includes a "firewall" in the Senate between defense and nondefense spending that will become effective once a bill is enacted increasing the discretionary spending limit for 2002. Because the firewall is for budget authority only, the appropriations committee did not provide a separate allocation for defense outlays. This table combines defense and nondefense outlays together as "general purpose" for purposes of comparing the Senate-reported outlays with the subcommittee's allocation.

Notes.—Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency, including removal of emergency funds (\$2 billion in BA, \$0 in outlays) and inclusion of a 2002 advance appropriation (\$4.2 billion in BA, \$2.52 billion in outlays). The Senate Budget Committee increases the committee's 302(a) allocation for emergencies when a bill is reported out of conference. For enforcement purposes, the Budget Committee compares the Senate-reported bill to the Senate 302(b) allocation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The Senator from Maryland.

AMENDMENT NO. 1214

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 1214.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], for herself and Mr. BOND, proposes an amendment numbered 1214.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

AMENDMENT NO. 1217 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1214

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I have an amendment I send to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], for herself and Mr. BOND, proposes an amendment numbered 1217 to amendment No. 1214.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: to make \$2,000,000,000 for FEMA disaster relief available upon enactment)

On page 81, line 2 of the amendment after "2,000,000,000," insert: "to be available immediately upon the enactment of this Act, and".

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this amendment is simple and straightforward. It provides that FEMA disaster funding shall be available upon enactment of this bill. It means that when the President signs the VA-HUD conference report, which we hope will be in September, disaster funding will become immediately available without waiting until October 1.

Why is this important? FEMA is down to \$168 million as of yesterday that has not been allocated or distributed. Normally FEMA has a cushion of \$1 billion during hurricane season.

This is a very tough time of the year for many parts of our States for natural disasters. Coastal States are hurricane prone. We know the prairie States are prone to tornadoes now, and our Western States are prone to terrible fires. We want to be sure there is enough money for FEMA to respond. Therefore, in this bill we want to have a cushion.

Yesterday, President Bush announced he was releasing \$583 million

to cover the cost of recovering from tropical storm Allison. We sure support that. As a result, there is now almost a zero balance in the contingency fund. This is far below what we need to prepare and respond. This is why Senator BOND and I are offering this amendment. We cannot be left unprepared, and upon completion of the remarks of my colleague, I will urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, this is an extremely important amendment. It should be an important amendment for every Member of this body. Unfortunately, we do not know for which Members it will be important because we do not know where the next disaster will strike.

Based on our past experience, as the chair has mentioned, there are problems along the coast. We have tornadoes, we have hurricanes, we also have fires in the West, and we still do floods, and wherever these disasters strike, FEMA must be ready to respond. If we do not have a problem, then the money is not spent.

With the release of the \$583 million in contingent disaster relief for previously declared disasters, including the assistance of victims of tropical storm Allison, several States of recent storms, flooding in Montana, Texas, West Virginia, and Virginia, and other declared disasters, there are no additional funds available for release this year. FEMA is perilously close to a situation where it does not have enough disaster funds for the rest of the year.

We do not know where or when or what kind of disaster will strike, but we do know we should not roll the dice and be without this funding available to FEMA should it be needed.

FEMA provides critical assistance in times of emergency. We want to be sure they have this emergency assistance available. I join with my colleague in asking it be adopted.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we know of no one who wishes to speak against this amendment. This is not a money amendment; it is a timing amendment. We have the support of our colleagues. Knowing there is no one else who wishes to speak on it, I urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, without objection, the amendment is adopted.

The amendment (No. 1217) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the bill, of course, is open to amendment by any Member. We know our colleague, Senator WELLSTONE, has an amendment, and after that, we know our colleague, Senator BOXER, will also be offering amendments. Then hopefully after that, Senator KYL will have

an amendment. If everybody comes to the Chamber and cooperates the way Senator WELLSTONE immediately came to the floor, it is conceivable we can finish this bill this evening, a record time.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 1218 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1214

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I say through the chair to the Senator from Maryland, I am cooperating. She has a way of eliciting cooperation. I made sure I got to the Chamber and cooperated with the Senator from Maryland and, of course, the Senator from Missouri.

I send my amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 1218 to amendment No. 1214.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase the amount available for medical care for veterans by \$650,000,000)

On page 7, line 19, strike "\$21,379,742,000" and insert "\$22,029,742,000".

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I can describe this amendment for colleagues. This amendment will add \$650 million to the funding that is contained in this bill for veterans health care.

I will go through the numbers carefully because Senators have voted for more than this amount of additional funding in prior votes. First I will speak in a general way and then more specifically.

I thank both the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Missouri for their fine work on this bill and their fine work on behalf of veterans. I know, and they know, there is not nearly enough funding in medical or housing needs. I propose this amendment to bump up the funding. It does not get all the way there. I am not trying to do any showcasing. I have been involved in these amendments year after year after year, sometimes with success, sometimes without success. I will continue to force the issue when it comes to the funding because I know, and I am sure other Senators know as well, in the most concrete personal way just from our office in Minnesota and the number of people calling.

I admit to every Senator in the Senate that I was completely naive about this when I was elected. I never thought a large part of my work would end up being veterans work. I didn't think that would be what I would be doing. This all came about because our office is fortunate to have great people: Josh Syrjamaki and Mike Siebenaler

are heroes in the veterans community. They come through for people. The better we do for an individual person, the more the word gets around, and other people come for help.

We helped a Vietnam vet. His daughter wrote me a poem about her dad. She said, my dad was fine, and one day he took a shower, he came out of the shower, and he had a complete mental breakdown, posttraumatic stress breakdown. It was a plea for help.

I will not use names because I don't know if families approve. I think Tim Gilmore's family would not mind. Tim was struggling with Agent Orange and still not getting the compensation he needed. If he did not get it and he passed away before receiving it, the family would not get benefits. He was not thinking about himself any longer—he knew he would die—but he didn't know whether his family would get any help.

When helping people such as these, with good people in your office—and I have the best—more and more people come for help. It turns out this has been a lot of the work we do. People fall between the cracks.

Quite frankly, this appropriations bill is way under what we should provide. I will add it up in a moment with concrete numbers. The medical inflation alone, counted at 4 percent a year, gets close to \$1 billion. Look at the commitment we made to treat veterans with hepatitis C. Look at the Millennium Program and the commitment we are supposed to be making to an ever-aging veterans community and the kind of help we will give them, or we say we will give them, and look at the whole scandal of the number of homeless veterans. I venture to say probably a third of adult men who are homeless in this country are veterans, many of them Vietnam veterans, many of them struggling with mental health issues, with substance abuse issues. Look at the commitment we are supposed to be making toward expanding mental health services, and look at the long delays it takes for people to get the care they are supposed to receive from our VA medical system because we do not have the systems in place or we do not have enough of the personnel, and then look at the crisis in nursing. This is no way to say thank you to veterans.

This amendment has the support of the Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW; the American Legion supports this amendment. A lot of the American service organizations support this amendment for good reason.

Now the specifics. During the debate on the budget resolution—I want Senators or staff to please listen because I am determined to pass this amendment—the Senate passed by a vote of 53-46 an amendment to fully fund veterans health care. This amendment, which I introduced, added \$1.7 billion to veterans health care above the President's request. This was based on

the work of veterans organizations which put together an independent budget. We said to veterans organizations, we are tired of hearing you tell us what you are against. Tell us what you favor.

A variety of different veterans organizations did careful research and said, this is what we need to make this veterans health care budget work. They put together this budget and, based on their work, I introduced this amendment. It came out of the tax cut.

This amendment brought us to a level of funding recommended by the independent budget—I didn't pick it out of thin air—which was the \$2.6 billion over fiscal year 2001.

The Senate then adopted an amendment offered by Senator BOND that added an additional \$900 million above the \$1.7 billion. That passed 99-0. So the amendment I am offering today for an additional \$650 million is only a quarter of the amount the Senate has gone on record in favor of adding to the President's request.

Members can't vote for the budget resolutions and say they are for this and, when the rubber meets the road, vote against the additional appropriation. I feel strongly about this. The budget amendments were a test of our priorities. Some Senators would not agree with this, and it doesn't matter; I think you should vote for this amendment out of a commitment to veterans. I never saw the sense in spending so darn much money on the tax cuts. Too much of it I thought was Robin Hood in reverse, too much going to the very top of the population.

I thought there were other needs: Of course, education; children; we will be talking about defense later on; we are going to be talking about prescription drug benefits, affordable prescription drug benefits. What about veterans and veterans health care?

When it came to the vote, the Senate rose to the occasion in a positive vote for more money than I am now asking, to make veterans a priority. Unfortunately, the budget resolution that the Congress ultimately adopted, which was basically the President's budget, shortchanged veterans by requesting a \$700 million increase for health care. In other words, to put this number in context, last year's requested increase for the VA health care system alone was \$1.4 billion.

The simple inflation rate, 4.3 percent in the VA health care system, would mean approximately \$900 million would just go to cover medical inflation; \$900 million is already gone. So the administration's proposed budget barely covered the cost of medical inflation.

The House did a little bit better than the administration, and the Senate appropriators did better still. I give credit where credit is due. The Senate VA-HUD has a \$1.1 billion increase over last year's level for health care. That is \$400 million more than the President. The appropriators got us part of the way there but nowhere near all the

way. The independent budget produced by AMVETS and the VFW and the Disabled American Veterans and the Paralyzed Veterans demonstrates that the VA will face approximately \$2.6 billion more in health care costs in fiscal year 2002 than we face in the current fiscal year. So \$1.1 billion is nowhere close to \$2.6 billion.

Here is what we are talking about: Uncontrollable costs such as medical inflation and salaries, \$1.3 billion; Millennium Act long-term care initiative, \$800 million; and other initiatives, including mental health care, pharmacy benefits for new patients, and I also argue, again, some assistance for homeless vets.

I just think this amendment could not be more reasonable, frankly, in terms of what we ought to do.

As a Senator from Minnesota, I think long-term care ought to be one of our highest priorities. Last year we passed landmark legislation called the Veterans Millennium Healthcare and Benefits Act which significantly increased noninstitutional long-term care. For the first time it would be available to all veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system. The legislation is costly, if we are going to really back it with resources, but it is critical for veterans and their families.

I say to the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Nebraska, I learned about this in a very personal way, and every Senator probably has had the same experience. We have a wonderful VA medical center, a flagship, really, in Minneapolis. I will go and visit veterans. If you should spend a little bit of time with their spouses—say, for example, you are visiting her husband and he is a World War II veteran or Korean War veteran. Then maybe you can get away from where her husband is and you go out into the lounge and you sit down on the couch and maybe have a cup of coffee and you talk. She is terrified because she does not have the slightest clue what she is going to do when he gets home because she cannot take care of him any longer, not by herself.

I went through this with my mom and dad. My dad had advanced Parkinson's disease. I know exactly what this is about.

Do you know what. More and more veterans—just more and more Americans, thank God—are living to be 80 and 85 and 90 years of age. We have our collective heads in the sand when it comes to veterans health care if we are not going to back our rhetoric with resources and put some resources into this Millennium Health Care Act. It is not done on the cheap. Long-term care is not done on the cheap. Enabling a veteran to live at home in as near normal circumstances as possible, with dignity—which is what we should do—is not done on the cheap.

Currently, we have 9 million veterans who are 65 years of age or older. Over the next decade, half of the veteran population is going to be 65 years of

age or older. According to the Federal Advisory Commission on the Future of VA Long Term Care, about 610,000 veterans a day need some form of long-term care. That was in 1997, that study.

As the veterans population ages, long-term services are an increasingly important part of our commitment to health care for veterans, and we are not funding it. We are not providing the necessary funding.

The Millennium Act also ensures emergency care coverage for veterans who do not have any other health insurance options. This is costly. It is another thing that has to be covered, but it is necessary. Nearly 1 million veterans enrolled with the VA are uninsured, and they are in poorer health than the general population.

Furthermore, we made the commitment to treating hepatitis C, we have other complex diseases such as HIV infection, and we have made the commitment to provide care for veterans, but we do not have the adequate funding.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that full implementation of the Millennium Act would cost over \$1 billion in 2001—\$1 billion alone. This is on top of the other initiatives, \$500 million for initiatives such as mental health, the homeless reintegration program, and treatment for hepatitis C.

When you take all the challenges and all the costs that the VA health care system is going to face, including long-term care, emergency care, essential treatments, and medical inflation, a budget increase of \$2.6 billion is needed. That is the independent veterans budget. We are not even halfway there with what we have done, and I am now saying at least let's add an additional \$650 million.

The last 2 years have been a downpayment to the veterans health care budget, enabling the VA to get back on course in delivering world class service that is rightfully due to our Nation's veterans. I thank, again, the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Missouri for their work. These funding increases have been welcome. But the problem is they have not erased the prior years of flat funding. We all know what that means. Year after year, we had flat funding where we did not at all increase any of the appropriations, the money the veterans needed. Over the last decade, the VA health care budget has experienced deep cuts in real dollar terms, at a time when it should have been addressing an aging and increasingly health-care-dependent veterans population. That is the "why" of this amendment.

Let me repeat that because it is the unpleasant truth. Over the last decade, all together, in real dollar terms, because of these flat budgets, actually the VA health care budget was experiencing deep cuts, in real terms, at the same time we had more and more veterans who were aging, more and more veterans with health care needs.

Based on VA statistics from January 2001, the national average waiting time

for a routine next-available appointment for primary care medicine is 64 days. Do you hear me? Sixty-four days, with a range of between 36 and 80 days. For specialty care, the statistics are even worse. Eye care average waiting time, 94 days; cardiology, average waiting time, 53 days; orthopedics, average waiting time, 47 days; urology, average waiting time, 79 days. Some veterans are waiting up to 18 months to get care from the VA in Minnesota, and Minnesota is not alone, and that is not acceptable. There should be support for this amendment.

In an era of budget surpluses, these stories are outrageous. I could go on and on. I will not because I know my colleagues want to move the legislation forward. I do not think that veterans, America's veterans, Minnesota's veterans, Nebraska's veterans, Missouri's veterans, understand why, with the Federal coffers overflowing, their budget is nowhere near fully funded.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric lately about returning the surplus to taxpayers. We have been told the Federal coffers are overflowing and we should return the excess. Certainly some of the tax cuts were in order. But in all due respect, if you listen to the veterans community, if you visit VA facilities, if you talk with the staff, it is clear that part of the surplus we have been enjoying has been paid for on the backs of American veterans. That is why there should be support for this moderate amendment that just bumps up the funding so we can do a little bit better.

I have about 5 more minutes to conclude my statement. I will wait for my colleague's response.

The counterargument is: Wait a minute. This goes beyond the spending caps.

I want Senators to listen to this. It is true that this amendment is not offset. I could have tried to pay for this amendment by cutting into housing programs in this appropriations bill. But the truth is, housing is underfunded. In fact, it is absolutely unbelievable that affordable housing is not made the top priority in the Senate. It is going to soon become the crisis issue in the country. It is now. We just haven't faced up to it.

The opponents of the amendment are asking that we make a tradeoff—that I am supposed to ask more for veterans and take something away from affordable housing; that I am supposed to choose between science and veterans. I reject the tradeoff. I think Minnesotans reject the tradeoff. I think the American people reject the tradeoff. Colleagues, the Senate rejected the tradeoff when we debated the budget resolution. Let me go back to how you voted. Fifty-three Senators said: Let us do right by veterans and reduce the cost of the tax cut with this amendment. Ninety-nine Senators said: Let us add at least an additional \$900 million and just take it from the surplus with no offset. Ninety-nine Senators

voted for this. Ninety-nine Senators said: Let's add an additional \$900 million and just take it off the surplus with no offset. This amendment adds only \$650 million.

By the way, between these two amendments, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to add four times as much money to veterans health care as the amendment I am offering today. You are on record. We are on record. We didn't do our work. We did it because of the overwhelming need that is out there.

Let me simply say that I make no apology for the amendment. I think Senators should vote for it.

I just say this to colleagues. Some historian is going to look back at this vote in one way. We know darn well that we are going to go beyond the budget caps and limits when it comes to defense. We are going to do that. We already know it. We also know that we are not going to stick to the caps when it comes to education. Every Senator knows that, or should. We can't make the kind of investment that we have rhetorically committed to education within these existing caps. We can't make the kind of commitment that many have made to defense within these existing caps. We cannot honor the commitment that we made to veterans within these caps.

It is crystal clear to me that we are on record. Ninety-nine Senators said: Let's add an additional \$900 million and let's take it off surplus with no offset. I said: Let's ask for \$750 million. That is not even the \$900 million for which 99 Senators voted.

I finish on this point: The reason for all the support from all of these veterans organizations is this very real need. I come out here to speak about it. I feel strongly about it because I know we have to do better. I hope this amendment will pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to comment on Senator WELLSTONE's amendment. First of all, I have a great deal of admiration for my colleague from Minnesota. His advocacy for veterans has been longstanding from the day he walked into the Senate. He has been, first of all, a champion for health care for all Americans. He has also been particularly vigorous in the issues related to veterans health care. He has been one of the few to speak up for the so-called "atomic veterans"—those exposed to nuclear testing and nuclear radiation. He has spoken for the veterans who are homeless and mentally ill. I know he is very closely identified with the veterans service organizations, especially those that produce something called the independent budget where the veterans organizations themselves look at what the President is proposing. They gave commentary.

Senator BOND and I met with leaders of those veterans service organizations.

They made compelling cases. They told us stories from the waiting room about what our veterans were facing.

Senator BOND and I really would love to have increased veterans funding even more. But we had an allocation. The allocation enforced budget caps. This subcommittee intends to live within its budget caps.

This is why it is with great reluctance that I oppose Senator WELLSTONE's amendment, because it is an addition of \$650 million without an appropriate offset. This essentially breaks the caps.

What does breaking the caps mean? It puts us into deficit spending. And it could also result, because of other budget and tax break decisions, in putting us even up against the Medicare and Social Security trust funds.

I don't dispute many of the compelling arguments that my colleague made, but at the same time this subcommittee had the difficult task of balancing many needs—veterans health care, the need of housing, the need of low-income Americans to really try to deal with the terrible problems that children face with lead paint poisoning—I know that is something the Senator from Minnesota has championed—protecting the environment, and other issues that we have enumerated in the bill.

We have a very tight allocation. I think we did a good job. First of all, we did not abandon the veterans. We did not break any promises to the veterans. In fact, we added \$1 billion more in veterans health care than we had last year—\$1 billion more than last year. This is actually even \$400 million over what President Bush requested. It is over \$100 million more than what is in the House bill that they sent over to us.

We think we have put our promises into the Federal checkbook.

What does this bill do? This level of funding will allow VA to open at least 33 more community-based outpatient clinics. It also makes sure that we cut down on the waiting time for veterans to receive health care.

We have also increased funding in veterans medical research. There is \$390 million for VA medical and prosthetic research. What do we do there?

The Senator has spoken about the chronic problems of aging veterans. He is absolutely right. That is why we want to increase research for their treatment, and also to pay particular attention to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Also, our research program encourages even more breakthroughs in prostate cancer. At the same time, we provide funds to recruit and retain high-quality medical professionals.

We are in a war for talent. There is a shortage of nurses. We are in bidding wars to be able to get those nurses. While we keep the nurses, we have to try to recruit new ones. We are trying to create opportunities for nursing education so they can get their education

through VA so they will be there to maximize the care that veterans need.

I want to talk about claims processing, this whole issue of standing in line in order to get your claims processed. What are we talking about? We are talking about pensions. And we are talking about disability benefits that are service related, taking 205 days—7 months—to get the first decision. We think that is too long. We also think it is wrong. Therefore, working with our very able administrator, Mr. Principi, we have come up with funds to be able to hire and train more claims processors and improve technology and cut down that waiting time.

We also want to talk about long-term care. There is money in this bill for what we call GREC, G-R-E-C. What does that mean? It means that these are geriatric evaluation centers. What does a geriatric evaluation center do? It makes sure that veterans get appropriate care; that we do not abandon them; and that we do not warehouse them. But a geriatric evaluation gives a complete physical, a complete neurological and mental health evaluation, to determine why someone might be suffering a loss of memory or undergoing behavioral changes. It could be Alzheimer's or it could be a brain tumor; we want to know. It is really in veterans health care where we are providing pioneering work in doing those evaluations.

I must say, it is the only place in the Federal budget where anyone pays real attention to developing a cadre of geriatricians focusing primarily on veterans. So we meet those funds. Could we open more GRECs? You bet. Could we train more geriatricians? I wish we could. But I will promise you that each year we move further along, and we will continue to do that.

At the same time, our veterans often do face the need for long-term care. We like the partnerships between the Federal Government and the State governments. This is why we provide \$100 million for something called State Home Construction for the Care of Aging Veterans. This doubles the President's request and addresses the \$285 million backlog in high-priority needs. We do have a backlog, and the backlog is not a wish list, it is a priority list.

So we believe we have really met veterans' needs. Have we met them completely? No. Have we met them robustly? I believe yes. The total funding for the Veterans' Administration part of the VA-HUD bill is \$51 billion.

I would really commend to those on my side of the aisle to read the Democratic Policy Committee analysis of what the bill is. We hear numbers and statistics, and we can get lost in this. I hope they will take the time to see what we really did do for veterans in this bill, as well as improve construction projects—major and minor—and the processing of claims, et cetera, that we said.

So again, I acknowledge the outstanding advocacy of my colleague,

Senator WELLSTONE from Minnesota. I acknowledge the validity of many of the points he has made. I thank the veterans service organizations for their very keen analysis of the independent budget. I say to them, I wish we could do more; but without breaking the caps, without coming right up against the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, we could not do more.

So it is with great sadness but, nevertheless, fiscal responsibility to honor the budget caps that I will be opposing the Wellstone amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, it has been suggested that we find a time to be agreed upon for a vote on the motion to waive the point of order which will be raised. I wish to speak only about 5 minutes. I see the distinguished assistant majority leader in the Chamber.

Mr. President, I ask consent that there be 15 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Wellstone amendment No. 1218, with the time equally divided between Senators WELLSTONE, MIKULSKI, and BOND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I would ask my friend to amend that to say there would be no second-degree amendments in order.

Mr. BOND. And there would be no second-degree amendments in order.

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

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if the Senator would withhold just for a second, if I could just say, for the benefit of all Senators, there should be a vote on this at around 6 o'clock if everyone uses all their time. Senators should further be advised that following this vote, because of an order previously entered, there will be a vote on the Asa Hutchinson nomination to head the Drug Enforcement Administration that will immediately follow this vote. I should say, there is going to be some time allowed to talk about the Asa Hutchinson nomination, but it will be right after this vote.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, just to straighten this out, might I ask the Chair: I understood there had been time set aside for debate on the Hutchinson vote. So for my colleagues' edification, what is the time agreed to for debate on Hutchinson prior to the vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty minutes evenly divided.

Mr. BOND. It is a vote on the confirmation of the nomination of ASA HUTCHINSON?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BOND. I understand after this vote there will be 30 minutes equally divided on the nomination of Mr. HUTCHINSON prior to the confirmation vote on the nomination; is that correct?

Mr. REID. I have just spoken to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

He said he doubts he will use all of his time. So we will have a vote whenever they finish using whatever time they decide to use. And we will come back to this bill.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, now that we are thoroughly edified, may I return to the Wellstone amendment?

What my colleague, the chairman, has said is quite true. Veterans, veterans health care particularly, has been the top priority, and will be the top priority, of this committee. In a time of tight budgets, we provided a \$400 million increase over the President's request for VA medical care. This is \$1.1 billion over the current fiscal year.

This is why I say VA medical care is again our top priority in this bill. This continues our commitment to our Nation's veterans, to ensure that they receive the health care they deserve.

We have heard about flat funding. I can say that in the past several years this committee has worked very hard to increase, significantly over the President's budget request, the amount we apply for veterans health care. In the past 2 fiscal years, we added \$3 billion to the President's request for medical care in order to ensure no veterans would be turned away, no layoffs of critical medical staff would occur, and that funds needed for treating hepatitis C, the homeless, the mentally ill, and other critically important needs of veterans would be fully funded.

As a result, the VA has been treating more veterans in its medical program than ever. We intend to assure that they can continue to treat those veterans with the highest degree of medical care.

This budget would provide for additional substantial increases for hepatitis C screening, treatment, new long-term care programs, and for a continued increase in the number of veterans served by the VA medical system.

I believe everybody in this body wants to make sure we provide all of the funds we can possibly find and that can be well used by the VA.

I question, however, two points: No. 1, busting the budget agreement—spending more money than has been allocated to this committee—but, secondly, why we would wish to provide additional scarce resources to the veterans medical care account when the VA has advised us they will likely not be able to spend all those funds in fiscal year 2002—the funds we have just provided. In fact, according to VA's own budget, they already expect to have about \$1 billion in carryover funds in this current year going into the next fiscal year under their budget request. They could not spend more than the funds that are already provided in this bill for veterans health care, in addition to medical care funding, which we all agree is vitally important.

We have included a number of other significant funding items to improve the condition of our veterans. For example, we provided an increase of \$30

million over the President's request to fund medical research. We want to make sure that the health care provided to our veterans is the finest available and that we are doing research on the leading edge.

This places the VA medical research account at a record level of \$390 million. That is how we attract and maintain top quality researchers and health care providers in the system. We have also restored cuts to the State home construction program to increase the number of nursing home care facilities for veterans. Our funding would also support the opening of 33 more community-based outpatient clinics to improve access and service delivery.

As one who travels around my State, I find the community-based outpatient clinics to be the best innovation we have developed in the past 10 years to make sure that health care is readily available, convenient, accessible, and efficient for veterans.

When the time expires, I will raise a point of order. I will yield the floor now for any comments my colleagues wish to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me first say to both Senators, they have done a superb job within the allocation they had. My quarrel is with the allocation.

Again, the President's budget was about \$1 billion over what we had. It doesn't even deal with medical inflation which is over \$1 billion, a little over 4 percent per year. Everybody knows that. Then we added another \$400 million. That is terribly important.

If you look at inflation, for long-term care, home-based care for elderly veterans, hepatitis C, homeless veterans, mental health services, covering veterans now who were not covered before with emergency room care, we are nowhere near what we need to do. That is why every one of these veterans organizations supports this. That is why they did the independent budget.

My colleagues have done their best within this allocation. The problem is with the allocation. Frankly, I would have had an amendment—I say to both of my colleagues; I have such respect for them—I would have had an amendment that would have offset this from the tax cut. Then it would have been blue-slipped because it would not have originated from the House. I didn't want to mess things up for this bill. I couldn't do that.

Here is the only place of disagreement. All of what I have to say is praise. If I keep doing that, maybe I will even get your votes; you deserve it.

Actually, the truth is two- or three-fold. No. 1, there has not been one appropriations bill signed by the President. So actually this isn't busting the overall budget cap. We are early on in the process. It goes beyond this allocation with which I quarrel and you quar-

rel because you don't have the resources. If we are going to start saying that an additional \$600 million to help veterans health care all of a sudden is a raid on Social Security and Medicare, then watch out, everybody, because come this fall, that is exactly what is going to happen with the Pentagon budget. There is not one Senator here who does not know that. That is exactly what is going to happen with the education budget. I am talking about appropriations. There is not one Senator who doesn't know that.

I would venture to say there is not one Senator who will come to the floor right now and challenge me on this point. We all know we are going to bust the cap. We all know we are going to spend additional money. And we should. I am just being honest about this in my advocacy for veterans.

I don't know why in the world right now we can't do this. There is nothing in the world that says you can't do it. As a matter of fact, again, 99 Senators voted for \$900 million in an amendment offered by Senator BOND—\$900 million additional. There was no offset for that.

Two or three points: This is a vote that is a test of our priorities. We should do the right thing for veterans, and we should do it now. At the end of the game, come this fall, we know darn well we are going to be investing additional resources in education and the Pentagon. We ought to do it for veterans. That is what this is about.

I say to every Senator, you are on record supporting this. It is not a game. It is to meet some very real needs. We all know we are going to have to make additional investments anyway, so it goes a little bit above the allocation.

Finally, what do we say to veterans who have waited a long time? What do we say to veterans who are desperate for some care so they can stay at home and not be in nursing homes? What do we say to veterans who are homeless veterans and we are not getting the care to them? I couldn't vote for it because it was in violation of an allocation? People don't understand that. We ought to do the right thing. I hope Senators will support this amendment.

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

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I don't know what we are going to do in the fall. I don't know what we are going to do in the Pentagon budget. I don't know what we are going to do on Labor-HHS appropriations related to busting the caps.

I do know what we have done on VA-HUD. We have met the needs of America's veterans. We have done it in very important areas, from actual care to long-term care, to recruiting new personnel, to creating educational opportunities, to improving our cemeteries and also improving both major and minor construction.

Make no mistake: When we vote on this bill, I need my colleagues to be

clear. It is not, are you for or against the veterans? That would pass 100 to nothing. Of course we are for our veterans. It is not, are you for or against veterans health care? We, of course, are for veterans health care. That is why we worked so hard on this committee to add \$1 billion more, \$400 million over what the President initially thought he needed.

This vote is, are you or are you not going to use the VA-HUD bill to break the budget caps. I don't want to get into geek-speak here about this cap or a feather in your cap. I am talking about ceilings that were placed on spending so that we could have fiscal responsibility, fiscal restraint, and at the same time move very important legislation and put much-needed funds in the Federal checkbook.

A vote for Wellstone is a vote to break the caps. People might want to do that, but I want them to be very clear that that is what that is. The consequence of breaking the cap means it will put us into deficit. It will also put us right smack up against having to dip into Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

I voted against the budget because I thought it was too tight. That was several months ago.

I voted against the tax bill because I thought it was too lavish. But this is the hand that was dealt to us. I voiced opposition, as I know the excellent colleague from Minnesota has done. But we had an allocation. What does an allocation mean? It means we get a 302(b). That is geek-speak for saying this is the amount of money you can spend. If you go over it, you plunge the Nation into deficit, and it is going to take 60 Senators to do that if we raise a point of order.

Let's be clear. This is not a vote about veterans health care. This is a vote about do we or do we not want to break the budget caps on this bill when, in fact, we have added a billion dollars more for veterans health care?

I really oppose the Wellstone amendment, not because it doesn't meet a need but because it will cause us to go into deficit and to dip into these trust funds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I second the very thoughtful comments of the Senator from Maryland. This is a very important and significant area. We have allocated as much as we can based on the needs as identified and the ability of the VA to spend money on medical care.

This amendment would spend money we do not have. We have to operate within guidelines. We do have a budget and we have an allocation that has been accorded to this committee.

I, therefore, raise a point of order that this amendment violates section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act and provides spending in excess of the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the motion to waive the Budget Act with regard to the Wellstone amendment to provide additional resources for veterans health care. We all recognize that the limits on discretionary spending contained in the budget resolution are totally inadequate. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee is doing its best to produce responsible bills that meet the needs of the American people. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BOND have done an excellent job in bringing the VA/HUD bill to the floor.

The pending bill provides \$21,379,742,000 for Veterans Health Care, an increase of \$1.1 billion or nearly 6 percent over fiscal year 2001 and \$400 million over the President's request. Given the tight spending limits in the budget resolution, this is a responsible level of funding.

I voted against the budget resolution because it provided for an irresponsible tax cut and inadequate discretionary spending limits; but now is not the time to break the budget. This bill meets the needs of America's veterans. I urge Senators to oppose the motion to waive the Budget Act.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I move to waive the relevant section of the Budget Act and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 25, nays 75, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 263 Leg.]

YEAS—25

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Bingaman | Harkin | Rockefeller |
| Boxer | Hutchinson | Smith (NH) |
| Carnahan | Jeffords | Snowe |
| Cleland | Johnson | Specter |
| Collins | Kennedy | Stabenow |
| Dayton | Landrieu | Warner |
| Dodd | McCain | Wellstone |
| Durbin | Nelson (FL) | |
| Grassley | Reid | |

NAYS—75

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Akaka | Domenici | Lincoln |
| Allard | Dorgan | Lott |
| Allen | Edwards | Lugar |
| Baucus | Ensign | McConnell |
| Bayh | Enzi | Mikulski |
| Bennett | Feingold | Miller |
| Biden | Feinstein | Murkowski |
| Bond | Fitzgerald | Murray |
| Breaux | Frist | Nelson (NE) |
| Brownback | Graham | Nickles |
| Bunning | Gramm | Reed |
| Burns | Gregg | Roberts |
| Byrd | Hagel | Santorum |
| Campbell | Hatch | Sarbanes |
| Cantwell | Helms | Schumer |
| Carper | Hollings | Sessions |
| Chafee | Hutchinson | Shelby |
| Clinton | Inhofe | Smith (OR) |
| Cochran | Inouye | Stevens |
| Conrad | Kerry | Thomas |
| Corzine | Kohl | Thompson |
| Craig | Kyl | Thurmond |
| Crapo | Leahy | Torricelli |
| Daschle | Levin | Voinovich |
| DeWine | Lieberman | Wyden |

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). On this vote, the yeas are 25, the nays are 75. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having

voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected. The point of order is sustained, and the amendment falls.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, what is the regular order? I understand we are to move temporarily off VA-HUD for the Hutchinson nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask for the regular order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ASA HUTCHINSON TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of ASA HUTCHINSON, of Arkansas, to be Administrator of Drug Enforcement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, is there a time agreement entered on this nomination?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are three Senators controlling 10 minutes each.

Mr. LEAHY. Normally as chairman of the authorizing committee I would go first, but I see the distinguished Senator from Arkansas. I yield first to him as a matter of courtesy, and then I will speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I will be very brief. I have risen with great pride to speak in favor of the nomination of my brother, ASA, to head the Drug Enforcement Administration. I thank all of my colleagues.

I express my appreciation today to all my colleagues who have treated ASA with such courtesy, such respect, through the confirmation process. I especially express my appreciation to Senator LEAHY, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and to Senator HATCH, for their willingness to be prompt in the hearings and, more than that, their kind comments about ASA and their support. I also express my appreciation to the leaders of the Senate: To Senator DASCHLE, for his support and for his willingness to move the nomination before the August recess, and for his cooperation, as well as Senator LOTT and his support.

I know ASA would express great appreciation to the Judiciary Committee. They voted 19-0, a unanimous vote. I have great pride in my brother and in his accomplishments, the service he

has rendered in the House of Representatives, his willingness to take on the greatest challenge of his life in leading this effort in the war on drugs, and leading this very large and very important agency. He has gained great respect for this institution, the Senate. He has gained great respect for the Members of this institution, and in the cases of so many who know him personally, he holds great affection and values those friendships.

I have been asked many times the question, Why? Why does he want this job? Why would he leave what is regarded by many as a safe seat in the House of Representatives? I don't have all the answers to that, but I know he has always wanted to take on a challenge. You could not have a greater challenge than this. More than a challenge, I know ASA has a very deep conviction on this issue. It goes back to his days as a U.S. attorney, and certainly it has been something in which he has been deeply involved, the issue in the House of Representatives serving on the Speaker's task force on the war on drugs.

I have great confidence that ASA will bring his abilities to bear with tremendous focus on this new challenge and this new job. He is going to be able to inspire, he will be able to manage, and he will be able to motivate this agency in a new way. I know he will bring greater energy to the task and a great vision for a drug-free America.

I thank my colleagues for their support for my brother and look forward to this vote.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Senator from Arkansas for his gracious comments. I am pleased to vote in favor of the nomination of ASA HUTCHINSON. As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I noticed a hearing for Representative HUTCHINSON only a very few days after the Senate was reorganized. I then held a hearing the following Tuesday, and scheduled a committee vote for the first Thursday that it was possible to do so. We were able to move so quickly because Representative HUTCHINSON has substantial bipartisan support, and because those of us on both sides of the aisle view our efforts to reduce drug abuse as a matter of great importance.

Mr. HUTCHINSON was not only recommended by the Bush Administration, and, of course, by his Republican colleagues in the House, but also by 14 of the Democrats whom he serves with on the House Judiciary Committee, who wrote to me in his favor. The ranking member, a Democrat, Representative CONYERS from the home State of the Presiding Officer, came and testified in favor of him.

Mr. HUTCHINSON's background is well-suited to his new position as DEA Administrator. He has been deeply involved in drug issues as both a United States Attorney in Arkansas in the 1980s and as a House member. In addition to serving on the House Judiciary Committee, he is a member of the Committee on Government Reform's