



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003

No. 52

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent Resolution providing for the acceptance of a statue of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, presented by the people of Kansas, for placement in the Capitol, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 318. An act to provide emergency assistance to nonfarm-related small business concerns that have suffered substantial economic harm from drought.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

KEEP SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS NARROWLY FOCUSED

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has no greater responsibility than to protect and defend the American people. While defending our freedoms half a world away, this administration is just as focused on the security needs right here in our homeland. These dual priorities

are expressed in the President's supplemental budget request.

This war budget will meet America's needs directly arising from Operation Iraqi Freedom and our ongoing war against terror, including \$63 billion for military operations, \$5 billion in assistance to help our brave coalition partners and \$4 billion for the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to address the immediate and emerging threats to American soil.

Predictably, detractors are surfacing to criticize the President's request. It should come as no surprise that many of the people criticizing this war budget are the same ones who have criticized all along the bold policies it would pay for.

The war in Iraq and the war on terror are vital to the national security of the United States. The Secretaries of Defense, State and Homeland Security and the Attorney General have assessed their needs and asked the President for the funds necessary to meet those needs. This supplemental then reflects the informed opinions of the experts on President Bush's national security and homeland security teams. Yet the pseudo-experts say it is not enough.

The ballooning of spending bills seems to be an annual ritual here in Washington, D.C., but before we are tempted to spend money for projects unrelated to our pressing security needs, we should all remember what it is we are doing here. This is not a normal appropriations bill. Its purpose is to fight and win the war in Iraq, to liberate an oppressed people from a brutal dictator. Its purpose is to fight and win the war on terror and defend our Nation from those who would revisit on us the horrors of 9/11.

Let us keep in mind the seriousness of the times and the cool deliberation required of our homeland security experts to determine our needs. We must give our national and homeland secu-

rity agencies the money that they need to protect us, and we must make sure every dime we spend in the supplemental goes to that purpose, and that purpose alone.

VETERANS' NEEDS GOING UNMET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHUSTER). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we can afford to meet the funding needs of the Veterans Administration. We have the money. But the Republicans, in spite of the comments from my colleague from Texas, have other priorities. They are going to award the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans a tax cut. The top 1 percent of Americans are people who make an average of \$968,000 a year. Half the tax cut goes to that 1 percent.

The total cost of that tax cut for the top 1 percent, those making on the average \$968,000 a year, the total cost of that tax cut is larger than the entire budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Most veterans are not millionaires, but their contributions to this country are immeasurable. If they do not qualify for the President's tax cut, then they must sacrifice. That is the way that people around here are thinking.

We cannot begin to place a value on the sacrifices they have made. But apparently President Bush and House Republicans are putting a value than their contribution, and, under the budget my friend from Texas just mentioned, they think that veterans can stand to lose \$28 billion in services. Republicans believe it is more important to focus on millionaires who qualify for tax cuts than on the men and women who served this country and qualified for veterans benefits.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Tax cuts for millionaires; \$28 billion in cuts for veterans benefits. It is outrageous. Veterans have been asked already to shoulder the burden of costs that the Bush administration has failed to provide. Last year funding provided under the continuing resolution represented a cut of \$659 million from the amount needed simply to keep pace with veterans benefits in the 2002 budget. We all know that 2002 funding was inadequate. Undercutting it is devastating.

Republicans have a new policy when it comes to veterans health care. It is called abandonment. Let me give you some examples.

First, the President and House Republicans are cutting Veterans Administration outreach. The VA already has halted outreach typically done to alert veterans to the services they are eligible for. It is the Republicans' way to save money. If you do not tell veterans about the benefits, then you do not have to provide benefits and services they were promised in gratitude for serving our country.

Second, President Bush proposed raising the prescription drug copay. Last year, veterans paid \$2 per month per drug. Living on \$1,100 or \$1,200 per month for a retired veteran is not an easy thing, so that \$2 copay per drug per month was very important. Come January, the President raised that to \$7 per drug per month for veterans. Now the President proposes raising it to \$15 per drug per prescription per month for every veteran.

Veterans live on fixed incomes and simply cannot afford the 250 percent increase in the cost of their medications, and now the President wants to even more than double it. Ignoring that burden, doubling their copay, is insulting to veterans, especially in a time of war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that 700,000 more veterans will receive VA care in 2003 than had been projected. They may be eligible for health care services, but \$1.5 billion in cuts will undermine the VA's ability to deliver this care.

The Republicans in this body should be ashamed of those budget cuts to veterans. But it is not just this body. In the other body, the leader of the other body earlier this month pledged to support veterans concerned about President Bush's health care proposal, but he also said veterans and others will have to make sacrifices.

Here is what the leader of the other body said. "It applies to me in terms of domestic priorities and it applies to groups like the veterans today as they lobby."

In other words, we are going to go to war, but we are saying to veterans, so we can pay for the Bush \$726 billion tax cut, half of which goes to people making on the average \$968,000, the leader of the other body, the Republican leader of the other body is saying what the Republican leaders in this body are saying, and that is that we need the tax cut more than we need the veterans benefits.

Tax cuts for people making \$968,000 a year; \$28 billion in cuts in veterans services. What message does that send to our troops fighting in Iraq? Let us hope when it is their time to claim VA services that they have a different Congress, that they have a Congress that keeps its commitments to those who served this country. Let us hope that when it is their time, they are told "thank you" by a future Congress; not that it is your turn to sacrifice so we can pay for a tax cut, which is what the leaders in this Congress are telling them.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind Members to avoid improper references to the Senate or its Members.

STOP THIS WAR NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, stop the war now. As Baghdad will be encircled, this is the time to get the UN back in to inspect Baghdad and the rest of Iraq for biological and chemical weapons. Our troops should not have to be the ones who will find out in combat whether Iraq has such weapons. Why put our troops at greater risk? We can get the United Nations inspectors back in.

Stop the war now, before we send our troops into house-to-house combat in Baghdad, a city of 5 million people; before we ask our troops to take up the burden of shooting innocent civilians in the fog of war.

Stop the war now. This war has been advanced on lie upon lie. Iraq was not responsible for 9/11. Iraq was not responsible for any role al Qaeda may have had in 9/11. Iraq was not responsible for the anthrax attacks on this country. Iraq did not try to acquire nuclear weapon technologies from Niger. This war is built on falsehoods.

Stop the war now. We are not defending America in Iraq. Iraq did not attack this Nation. Iraq has no ability to attack this Nation. Each innocent civilian casualty represents a threat to America for years to come and will end up making our Nation less safe.

The \$75 billion supplemental needs to be challenged, because each dime we spend on this war makes America less safe. Only international cooperation will help us win the war on terror.

After 9/11, all Americans remember that we had the support and the sympathy of the world. Every nation was ready to be of assistance to the United States in meeting the challenge of terrorism, and yet with this war we have squandered the sympathy of the world. We have brought upon this Nation the anger of the world. We need the co-

operation of the world to find the terrorists before they come to our shores.

Stop this war now. \$75 billion more for war, three-quarters of a trillion dollars for tax cuts, but no money for veterans' benefits. Money for war, but no money for health care in America. Money for war, but no money for Social Security. But money for war.

We have money to blow up bridges over the Tigris and the Euphrates, but no money to build bridges in our own cities. We have money to ruin the health of the Iraqi children, but no money to repair the health of our own children and our educational programs.

Stop this war now. It is wrong, it is illegal, it is unjust, and it will come to no good for this country.

Stop this war now. Show our wisdom and our humanity to be able to stop it. Bring back the United Nations into the process. Rescue this moment. Rescue this Nation from a war which is wrong, which is unjust, which is immoral.

Stop this war now.

SUPPORTING OUR NATION'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this morning to pay tribute to our Nation's veterans and to talk about what the budget resolution of this House would mean for their quality of life and their health care over the course of the next 10 years.

I am sad to say that 2 weeks ago this House barely passed a budget resolution that would severely cut veterans' benefits, including cuts to health care, disability compensation, pensions and other important benefits.

I would not be here today, Mr. Speaker, if not for those brave veterans that liberated Guam in 1944. Therefore, I must speak out when I see our government being derelict in its duty to veterans. It is unthinkable that this House would even take such drastic action against our veterans during a time of war. This is the wrong time and the wrong message to be sending to our country.

This budget cuts \$14.6 billion in funding from mandatory veterans programs over 10 years to help pay for the \$1.35 of trillion of tax cuts in the budget. Over a 10-year period, the budget resolution that this House passed would cut almost \$9 billion alone in veterans' health care, an average of more than \$900 million less than the President has proposed per year.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker: Should these cuts prevail in conference, and we should not let that happen, this budget would mean serious problems for veterans' health care. New copayments and enrollment fees would no doubt be on the table and under consideration to keep the entire system afloat in the next fiscal year.