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Mr. Speaker, I should note that over the past 2 years, funding for veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent. Let me repeat: Funding for veterans medical care has increased over the past 2 years by 18 percent. The conference provides a particular victory for veterans back home in northwest Georgia, my district, and across the Nation. This bill does not, and I repeat, does not, contain any new fees for veterans medical services or prescription drugs. This conference report provides \$6.2 billion for military construction, \$5.1 billion for Active Duty construction, and \$1.1 billion for Reserve components.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my statement by acknowledging Subcommittee Chairman WALSH and Chairman LEWIS for their overall vision and dedication to completing this bill, both here in the House and in the conference, for the sake of our servicemen and women, past and present.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this debate. I encourage my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first conference report that the House will consider as a military quality of life-VA appropriations bill. As we all know, as a result of the subcommittee realignment adopted earlier this year by the Appropriations Committee, military construction, Defense Department health programs and all veterans programs are now contained in this one appropriations bill. I want to express my respect and voice my praise for the work of Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member EDWARDS for their work on this bipartisan-supported conference report.

This final conference report is a significant improvement over the earlier House-passed bill, especially in the areas of medical care and benefits for our veterans. Veterans medical services are funded at \$22.5 billion, which has long been the position on this side of the aisle as the minimum amount of funding required to meet our veterans health needs. This total is \$575 million above the President's budget request and \$1.7 billion more than last year.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 years, the funding amount needed to meet veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent, so while I welcome this increase in veterans medical services, I remain concerned about the total amount of funds that will actually be required over the coming year. I predict that we will still need to find additional funds next year to meet the fiscal year 2006 medical needs of our veterans.

Other important actions taken by the conferees are the specific targeting of \$2.2 billion for specialty mental health care for our veterans and fully funding the requested amounts for posttraumatic stress disorders. In addition, this bill creates three Centers of Excellence for mental health and PTSD medical care.

Mr. Speaker, last week I was at a forum in western Massachusetts, and I met a Massachusetts father whose son had served in Iraq. He told me about the difficulty his son had attempting to reintegrate himself back into civilian life following his tour of duty. One night during a conversation, his son broke down in tears and laid his head in his father's lap and cried. The father told me at that forum that the next time he held his son's head in his lap was a couple of weeks later when he cut the rope that his son had used to hang himself in their basement.

Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize the vast need, the urgent and increasing need, for counseling services for the men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The New England Journal of Medicine reported earlier this year that one in five of the soldiers leaving the Iraq war are suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental health problems. We have to make their ability to receive counseling and support simple and seamless. We have to make sure that they do not run into bureaucratic walls or receive the runaround just when they need help the most.

I know that this is something that the chairman and ranking member think about a great deal, and I simply want to express my support for their efforts to confront this growing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report also increases the amount of funding for military construction and housing over the President's request and over the amount in the House-passed bill. Even so, at this level of funding, it will take nearly eight decades to meet the needs currently identified by the Pentagon for military housing and modern basing and training facilities.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Congress talks about how we support our troops and how we honor their service and sacrifice, but year after year we fail to meet the needs of our veterans, the old and the new, and we fail to provide the funds to provide our uniformed men and women the housing and training facilities that they need in order to prepare for the deadly duties we demand of them.

This is a matter of priorities. This is a statement of values and principles about whether and how we really do believe our troops and our veterans merit the very best this Nation can provide. We just cannot stand here year after year and praise the conferees for doing the best they could within the budget allocation they were given. It is the Congress that determines the amount of that budget allocation for our veterans, for our military housing and

construction, for our military's quality of life. As my good friend and colleague from Illinois JESSE JACKSON, JR., said yesterday on the floor of this House, it's like a farmer saying the summer harvest is bad when he failed to plant seeds in the spring.

Mr. Speaker, like all of my House colleagues, I will be supporting this conference report, but we simply have to do better in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to close this morning by saluting those men and women who so proudly and bravely serve our country. Their sacrifices and their families' sacrifices are beyond the average American's comprehension. We must acknowledge that without these individuals, the rest of us could not enjoy the freedoms we so often discuss in this Chamber.

The appropriation conference report that will be passed today should stand as a "thank you" to those who have worn the uniform of our Nation. Some will say the bill does not provide enough for those who are veterans of military service. Well, in a way, Mr. Speaker, I would agree with that. I honestly do not believe we can ever do enough to support our military men and women. They deserve so much more than we will ever be able to afford to give. It is truly an unbalanced relationship. They sacrifice everything for our liberties. We can only repay a small portion of that debt.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will finish my remarks simply by saying thank you to our troops, thank you to our veterans, and may God bless you and keep you safe.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WAVING POINTS OF ORDER  
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT  
ON H.R. 3058, TRANSPORTATION,  
TREASURY, HOUSING AND  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JU-  
DICARY, THE DISTRICT OF CO-  
LUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 565 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 565

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. All

points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 565 is a standard, traditional rule for consideration of the conference report for the fiscal year 2006 Departments of Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies appropriations conference report. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

The underlying legislation before us, Mr. Speaker, makes appropriations for the departments that I have mentioned. The bill is fiscally sound. It represents our commitment to provide the necessary resources for programs and projects throughout the Nation ranging from transportation to housing and the judiciary and the Executive Office of the President and the District of Columbia.

It is well-known that our transportation infrastructure is the backbone of the economy. Obviously, its continued strength is essential to economic growth, and the bill ensures that we continue to have a reliable and stable transportation infrastructure that will help the economy continue to grow.

The bill includes almost \$37 billion in funds for our highway system, an increase of \$1.6 billion. These funds will serve the American people by contributing to a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient highway system that meets the vital national interests and enhances the quality of life.

The underlying legislation includes \$13.8 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration. Included in this amount is \$25 million to hire and train 595 new air traffic controllers. This is a vitally important aspect of this legislation and is critical as air traffic controllers begin to retire, and, nevertheless, air traffic continues to increase.

Certainly in my district, home to Miami International Airport, the third largest international airport in the country, we are very well aware of how important the air traffic controllers are. Without an increase in the number of air traffic controllers, MIA would not be able to continue its projected growth to serve as really the hub of the Americas.

Housing and Urban Development is funded at \$34 billion. That is an in-

crease of \$2.1 billion over last year. The funds will permit the Department to administer programs that assist the public with housing needs, economic and community development, fair housing opportunities, and will also empower low- and moderate-income residents toward self-sufficiency. Under HUD, the bill includes funding for such important programs as Tenant Based Rental Assistance, also known as section 8, and other important programs.

H.R. 3058, Mr. Speaker, provides \$5.8 billion for the Judiciary. It is an increase of 6 percent. This will fully fund the Judiciary's request for security improvements at Federal facilities and will enable the courts, obviously, to continue to effectively carry out their duties to guarantee the rule of law.

This is a good bill, Mr. Speaker. I think it is essential to our continued commitment to our transportation needs and the needs obviously encompassed, dealt with, by the other departments that we are funding today.

I want to thank Chairman LEWIS, Chairman KNOLLENBERG and everybody who has worked so hard on this legislation. I know it has been a tough, tough bill, and it has required a lot of work. I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, we are considering a rule for H.R. 3058, which will appropriate funding for a broad section of the Federal Government, including the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, as well as the Federal judiciary and the District of Columbia. I commend all the conferees and particularly Chairman KNOLLENBERG and Ranking Member OLVER for their dedication to completing the conference report on this sprawling piece of legislation. It is a tremendous challenge to achieve consensus on such a broad range of priorities, and I believe this bill reflects outstanding leadership, considering the allotted resources for the job.

I was particularly pleased with the final funding for Amtrak, especially when you consider where we started. While the original House bill provided funds at a level that would have decimated the Nation's passenger rail system, the conference report funding level will allow Amtrak to continue running its current operations. In my hometown of Sacramento, Amtrak is heavily relied upon, and I know my constituents will be relieved that the conferees have provided this funding.

From the housing portion of the bill, I would like to highlight the importance of the Community Development

Block Grant Program. CDBG is a highly effective program that provides the resources to improve, energize and revitalize communities across the Nation. Like hundreds of cities across the country, in Sacramento CDBG has enabled transformative improvements to downtown and the rest of the city. I thank the appropriators for recognizing the vital nature of CDBG in providing this funding.

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Another vital community resource funded in this bill is the housing choice voucher program known as section 8. This program allows low-income families, senior citizens and citizens with disabilities to obtain affordable housing.

On several occasions, my constituents have told me that were it not for these vouchers, they would have faced the fear and uncertainty associated with not knowing if tomorrow you have someplace to call home. It is clear that this program makes a difference in people's lives. I hope that when we come back next year and start to put together the FY 2007 budget, we will remember the positive impact that these programs have on the lives of our constituents and all Americans.

Even though we will again face limited resources, I hope that when the time comes to construct the budget, we will begin by determining who truly needs the government's help the most and which programs are most effective at delivering positive results. If we make that our top priority, I am sure this Congress and the Nation will be satisfied with the results.

Again, I thank the appropriators for their hard work and leadership this year on this conference report and throughout the year. I hope my colleagues will support the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 307) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 307

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, November 18, 2005, or Saturday, November 19, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader*