

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Construction, Major Projects	Amount (in thousands)	Member
Pittsburgh, PA	\$40,000	The President/Mr. Casey/Mr. Specter
Denver, CO	61,300	The President/Mr. Allard/Ms. DeGette/Mr. Lamborn/Ms. Musgrave/Mr. Perlmutter/Mr. Ken Salazar/Mr. John Salazar/Mr. Tancredo/Mr. Udall, M
Orlando, FL	35,000	The President/Mr. Martinez/Mr. Bill Nelson/ Mr. Weldon
Las Vegas, NV	341,400	The President/Ms. Berkley/Mr. Ensign/Mr. Reid
Syracuse, NY	23,800	The President/Mrs. Clinton/Mr. Schumer/Mr. Walsh
Lee County, FL	9,900	The President/Mr. Martinez/Mr. Bill Nelson
Columbia/Greenville, SC-area	19,200	The President/Mr. Graham
Sarasota, FL-area	27,800	The President/Mr. Martinez/Mr. Bill Nelson
Jacksonville, FL-area	22,400	The President/Mr. Martinez/Mr. Bill Nelson
Southeastern, PA	29,600	The President/Mr. Casey/Mr. Specter
Birmingham, AL-area	18,500	The President/Mr. Sessions/Mr. Shelby
Bakersfield, CA-area	19,500	The President/Ms. Boxer/Mrs. Feinstein
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	29,400	The President/Mr. Cornyn/Mrs. Hutchison

CONFERENCE TOTAL—WITH COMPARISONS

The total new budget (obligational) authority for the fiscal year 2008 recommended by the Committee of Conference, with comparisons to the fiscal year 2007 amount, the 2008 budget estimates, and the House and Senate bills for 2008 follow:

[In thousands of dollars]

New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2007	\$97,630,909
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2008	105,231,766
House bill, fiscal year 2008	109,231,766
Senate bill, fiscal year 2008	109,332,250
Conference agreement, fiscal year 2008	109,232,250
Conference agreement compared with:	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2007	+11,601,341
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2008	+4,000,484
House bill, fiscal year 2008	+484
Senate bill, fiscal year 2008	-100,000

DAVID R. OBEY,
NITA M. LOWEY,
ROSA L. DELAURIO,
JESSE L. JACKSON,
PATRICK J. KENNEDY,
LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD,
BARBARA LEE,
TOM UDALL,
MICHAEL M. HONDA,
BETTY MCCOLLUM,
TIM RYAN,
JOHN P. MURTHA,
CHET EDWARDS,
Managers on the Part of the House.

TOM HARKIN,
DANIEL K. INOUYE,
HERB KOHL,
PATTY MURRAY,
MARY LANDRIEU,
RICHARD J. DURBIN,
JACK REED,
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG,
ROBERT C. BYRD,
ARLEN SPECTER,
THAD COCHRAN,
LARRY CRAIG,
KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
(Only if the Milcon/VA conference report is

separated from the LHHS conference report),

TED STEVENS

(Only if the Milcon/VA conference report is separated from the LHHS conference report),

RICHARD SHELBY,

PETE DOMENICI,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer a few thoughts as regarding the importance of National Bible Week as well. It has been thrilling to hear my colleagues from both sides of the aisle refer to the importance of Scripture, and especially encouraging to hear the distinguished Representative from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), who represents the district I was born in. I appreciate the sincerity of your message this evening.

As a pastor in a previous life myself, I can unequivocally say that the Bible has deeply influenced my life every day in every way. Sadly, I haven't followed it every day in every way. But when it has been followed, it has influenced to the good.

The Bible is the best selling book of all time. It is a book that has touched countless numbers of lives. Along with being the main influence, many decisions have been made of by the billion, most importantly and most personally, my life and my faith in my Savior.

In 1940, a group of business and professional leaders got together and founded the nonprofit, independent, educational National Bible Association. Their goal was to encourage Americans to read the Bible in every sector of society, regardless of religious or political distinction. Every year since 1941, the National Bible Association has sponsored National Bible Week as a time to remind us of the importance of the Bible in our daily life.

Our Nation's traditions lie in the principles set out in the Bible. In 1951, an amazing book was published by the National Education Association and it was entitled, "The American Citizens Handbook." The book's author and publisher said that "This volume should be in every home library and on every teacher's desk. It may well be used as a text or reference book in the schools," and it was.

In fact, in that book, it had a grade-by-grade chart that included the following:

Second graders were to memorize the Lord's prayer: "Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

Third graders were to memorize Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Seventh graders were to memorize the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the merciful, the hungry in spirit."

Ninth graders were to memorize Psalm 1, that beautiful Psalm that says, "Happy is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law he meditates day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in his season. His fruit shall not wither."

Those are principles that were put forth in this book. High school seniors were to memorize the entire chapter of Romans 12, which begins by saying, "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God."

Those were patterned after the Founders of our country. Fifty-two of the 55 signers of the Declaration of Independence were deeply committed Christians, and the other three believed in a God who personally intervened in the lives of mankind. The same Continental Congress formed the American Bible Society, of all things, and purchased 20,000 copies of Scripture for the people of the Nation.

Patrick Henry's famous "give me liberty or give me death" speech actually

came at the end of this statement, where he said, "An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left us. But we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God that presides over the destinies of nations. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone. Is life so dear or peace so sweet to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, almighty God." Patrick Henry understood the power and the content of Scripture.

Jonathan Whitherspoon, who was a minister and signed the Declaration of Independence, said "A republic, once equally poised, must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty." Jonathan Whitherspoon knew that that virtue came from the Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

This Chamber and all the institutions of this great Republic are surrounded by images and phrases from Scripture. In this very Chamber is a portrait of Moses, the first lawgiver. The Supreme Court also holds several images of Moses. The south frieze prominently displays Moses holding Ten Commandments. In the Library of Congress stands a large statue of Moses alongside a statue of the Apostle Paul. The Great Reading Room of the Library is filled with Scriptures.

So today, to be able to stand here in the Halls of Congress and to call attention to the impact of Biblical authority, what a great opportunity that is. I thank the God of Scripture for that opportunity, and I thank my colleagues for bringing this to the floor tonight.

TAKING CARE OF AMERICA'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it has been a great comfort to listen to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle talk about National Bible Week. The Bible can bring great comfort to all of us, especially in time of need. And when I look at the legislation that we have been trying to pass and legislation that is coming forward, I hope we can all remember the words of the Bible and take care of each other and not the almighty dollar.

Mr. Speaker, next week is November 11th. We remember those who answered the call when America needed them most. Honoring our veterans reminds us that our freedoms come at a cost and with liberty comes responsibility. Congress has a responsibility to take care of the men and women who are serving and who have served. This year we passed legislation to increase the VA budget by \$6.7 billion above last year's level. This is the largest single increase in veterans funding in the history of the VA. This increase will help better serve the health care needs of our veterans, both young and old, by providing over 1,000 new VA case-workers to reduce the unacceptable delays in receiving their benefits.

Our young veterans are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan with new injuries. We have seen a dramatic rise in traumatic brain injuries due to IEDs and roadside bombs. As of January, over 2,000 of our brave men and women have been diagnosed with TBI. These veterans need a high level of intensive care when they return from battle.

I understand the issues our soldiers who come home with TBI face. That is why I worked with Defense Subcommittee Chairman MURTHA to include language in the Department of Defense authorization that sets aside funding and support for TBI treatment.

We are in a new century and the members of our Armed Forces, our veterans and their loved ones, need a new GI Bill. A new GI Bill should increase funding for veterans' medical care; employment assistance for our homeless veterans throughout this country; increased pay for our active duty members, so they can actually have a family life; expand current benefits under the current Montgomery GI Bill.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 2702, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act. This legislation provides education assistance for our young veterans returning home from the war under the Montgomery GI Bill.

In addition to increased funding for a new GI Bill, there needs to be other substantive changes made to veterans care. There should be a guaranteed funding stream for veterans health care. Access to health care should improve and there should be increased funding for special VA programs such as posttraumatic stress disorder treatment, homelessness, long-term care.

We must also address the problem called concurrent receipt. Currently other Federal retirees get both disability and retirement pay. But we deny our veterans this privilege because of an outdated law.

Congress must authorize full payment of both retirement pay and disability compensation to more than hundreds of thousands of disabled veterans and military retirees.

What we need to do is keep the promises we made to our veterans. I am hoping Congress in the coming days, months, and years will take care of these promises. We owe this to the American people. We owe it to our young people that sign up to fight the wars that we are fighting. If we don't keep our promises, why should our young people join to keep this country secure?

I salute our veterans, thank them for their service, and say God bless America.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ADERHOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the greatest, most influential book known to man, the Holy Bible. November 18 through 25 is National Bible Week, and it fittingly coincides with Thanksgiving.

The Bible teaches us that we have very much to be thankful for. And although we ought to remind one another of this truth at all times, I am glad there is a time set aside for remembering our blessings.

The Holy Bible teaches that we are all created by God in His image. And as such, each individual has a certain dignity that should be respected. One John 4:7-11 is one of my favorite passages of scripture. It says: Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Elsewhere, in Matthew 16:24, Jesus tells his disciples that if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. I particularly like this verse because, coupled with the first passage from 1 John, it reminds me that I am to love God first, others second and myself third. How different would our personal interactions be if we took this to heart and sought to love others in the way that the Bible encourages us to?

It is a lesson worth learning, to love one another. In a city that oftentimes seems so bitterly divided, glimpses of true peace and genuine care seem so rare.

Holy Scripture, which served as guiding light for so many of our Founding Fathers, can also illuminate a path for us today. In spite of all of our differences, there are many things that we have in common: we have a common creator, a common desire to serve our country and a common inherent worth by virtue of being creations of the Almighty. As we go about our daily business, I think it would behoove us to remember that the Good Book teaches to love one another because we have been loved by God.

In all of the many chapters of my life, the Bible has served as a source of great wisdom, comfort and insight. Whether as a husband, a child, a father, a lawyer, or legislator, I have purposed to rely on the word of God to give direction in times of doubt. I applaud the efforts of my friends here in the people's House and around the country to recognize what is truly a treasure. I hope and pray that each Member of