

The Army has a growing training land shortfall that will reach 5 million acres across the entire country by 2011. Fort Carson is not the only base with projected training land shortfalls, but not all bases have an opportunity to expand to remedy to the problem. The Army has the ability to address some of the overall training land shortfall by acquiring land at PCMS. If the Army is legislatively prevented from expanding PCMS, it will harm the Army's ability to provide necessary and realistic training to units stationed at Fort Carson, as well as Active, Reserve, and Guard units training there.

The Army firmly opposes legislation to limit the Army's proposed expansion of PCMS. Indeed, the Army may need to expand other installations around the country, and such legislation could create a dangerous precedent that the Army will forever be locked into its current training and maneuver space footprint regardless of any future changes to organization, technology, doctrine, or threats.

Thank you for your consideration of the Army's views as you complete your work on S. 1645.

Sincerely,

PETE GEREN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. What is the pending business and the amount of time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is still in a period of morning business, and the majority controls 5 minutes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for up to 2 minutes of that time, followed by Senator BROWN for the remainder.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I want to make sure we don't have Republican colleagues who have a need to speak further in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican side has 40 seconds remaining in their allotted time.

Mr. ALLARD. Very good. I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Colorado for his views on this amendment. I also thank him for the work we do together in support of our military installations which we consider to be part of the crown jewel of the Nation's defense and homeland security, and we often work on those matters together.

I will take exception with respect to a characterization concerning my amendment in that there is some inconsistency between what we did in the 2005 BRAC recommendations, which we all supported, and this particular amendment.

The fact is, the BRAC, in its findings, said we would move the additional brigades into Fort Carson, that there was sufficient capacity to provide all the training that was required there at Fort Carson, and that is because Fort Carson has over 100,000 acres on its own site and 235,000 acres of additional land. Now the Army wants to acquire land that is going to make the Army's hold-

ings at Piñon Canyon greater than the size of the entire State of Rhode Island. My question is, What has changed from January of 2005 until today? What has changed is that all of a sudden the Army has decided that it needs all this additional land.

I go back to my initial argument, which is, if we care about private property rights, if we care about the ranchers in southeast Colorado, if we care about national security and making sure we are investing taxpayer dollars wisely, then it is important we do a timeout, which is all that my amendment does.

I urge my Republican and Democratic colleagues to support my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

VA OUTSOURCING

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, the amendment I will be calling up later this morning does not change current law. It simply reminds the Veterans' Administration to abide by current law. All Federal agencies are bound by certain rules when they outsource jobs. While the Department of Defense has its own set of rules, every other Federal agency, including the Veterans' Administration, is required to take the same straightforward steps to ensure that when outsourcing occurs, which sometimes it needs to, it actually improves upon the status quo, not outsourcing for the sake of outsourcing or to feed private contractors but outsourcing to serve taxpayers and, in the case of the VA, veterans better. If any Federal agency should be required to show a good reason before displacing Government workers, it should be the Veterans' Administration. That is because so many VA employees are actually veterans themselves. Arbitrarily firing veterans is not only wrong, it is shortsighted. The obstacles to employment are steep enough for veterans in too many cases without throwing unjustifiable outsourcing into the mix.

Even if we put that aside, taxpayers are not well served when Government contracts are handed out without regard to the costs or benefits that result. That is one of the many lessons we should have learned from Katrina. It is a lesson we are learning over and over from Iraq. These lessons don't seem to be sinking in with the administration. The VA is firing many of its blue-collar workers and replacing them with private contractors without going through the competition process that Congress has called for again and again. It is bad enough that the VA is moving forward without actually figuring out what is in the best interest of taxpayers. Sometimes outsourcing jobs makes sense. More often than not, as we have found, it doesn't. But that question should be asked before any outsourcing is done in every single case.

Making matters worse, four-fifths of the blue-color jobs targeted for outsourcing were held by veterans. So the Veterans' Administration is outsourcing Government jobs held by veterans to go to private contractors without proving that it is actually saving money. This is more than a paycheck or a path to independence. Sidestepping the rules to eliminate their jobs is bad business and bad policy.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2642, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2642) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

AMENDMENT NO. 2687

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong opposition to the Coleman amendment No. 2687. The amendment requires the use of emergency Federal funds paid by taxpayers from every State for security at the 2008 Presidential political party conventions in Minneapolis and Denver. If the amendment passes, both the Republican and Democratic political party conventions will each receive \$50 million additional in Federal taxpayer dollars for State and local law enforcement costs associated with hosting the conventions. The \$50 million for the Minneapolis convention is on top of the \$12.5 million in Federal funds the State also will receive in the current version of the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill. This is all on top of \$70 million each party receives to host their conventions and run their political campaigns.

Spending an additional \$100 million in taxpayer funds for political conventions in Minneapolis and Denver is pretty outrageous to me. States that bid to host political conventions know that winning the bid also means a high cost for security comes with it. Sure, the cost of security after September 11 has gone up, but States and cities that bid on the 2008 conventions knew that burden at the get-go.

Plus, the States will receive an enormous benefit from hosting the conventions. I have not heard one person say that the States or cities hosting the

conventions will go bankrupt from holding them. One estimate shows that Minneapolis will receive more than \$150 million in benefits from hosting the convention. Denver will likely receive a similar financial benefit. The millions of dollars in benefits is the main reason cities bid to host conventions in the first place. That is why every 4 years many cities bid to host each of the conventions. This windfall comes from thousands of people staying at the hotels, eating at the restaurants, and shopping in the stores in Denver and Minneapolis. That will result in a lot of sales tax revenue and hotel tax revenue that will stay in each of those cities and States.

Paying for security definitely should not put States in the red. It is definitely not an unfunded mandate on the States or cities by the Federal Government. So if the States are receiving this huge benefit, why are taxpayers footing over \$100 million additional in Federal funding for these political conventions? And how did we determine that figure of \$50 million that was needed for each of these cities and States? Was this thoroughly researched? By whom? And what will the actual need be for Minneapolis? What will it be for Denver? Why has no Member of this body made this case?

At the 2004 convention in New York City that I attended, they spent about \$58 million in security. Will Minneapolis and Denver, which are not as big as New York and not a major port city, need the same amount of funding? It seems we are just throwing taxpayer money needlessly around without seriously looking at the situation.

The legislation before us today provides over \$109 billion for veterans and military construction projects all across the Nation. This legislation is supposed to help support our troops who are risking their lives overseas and to help the veteran men and women who so bravely fought for our country. With this in mind, I ask, why are we funding political conventions in this VA-Military Construction appropriations bill? What do political conventions have to do with the military? This is a combination of oil and water, and the Coleman amendment is trying to put them together. It doesn't mix.

I also have extreme concerns with the use of emergency Federal spending to pay for political party conventions—emergency Federal spending. This is just a budget gimmick to get around the need to offset the funds. I keep saying this over and over, but emergency spending should only be for just that—emergencies. Usually emergency funding goes to things such as the Iraq war, the Afghanistan war, or victims of Hurricane Katrina, and other major disasters that occur in the United States. It should not go toward nonemergency funding such as the conventions. Come on. Everybody knew, once the winning conventions city and State bids were announced, that security would have to be somehow funded. Holding conven-

tions takes advance planning from States and cities and their political parties. All this does not add up to an emergency situation requiring emergency Federal funding.

The fiscal year 2008 budget resolution allows for a point of order against amendments such as this that are not true emergency spending. It sets criteria for emergency spending which I do not think this amendment meets. Emergency spending must be only used for essential, sudden, and urgent matters that are unforeseen and not permanent. By my calculations, this amendment meets only one of those requirements, and none of the four other requirements. Because I think the overwhelming majority of the Senate will vote for this amendment, I will not raise the point of order against it.

I have been to every Republican convention since 1980. I want to make it clear I think security is as important for the Republican and Democratic conventions, but my objections to this amendment concern who should foot the bill for the security. I believe those States and cities hosting the conventions should provide that funding. That means those planning the conventions and those benefiting from the conventions in Denver and Minneapolis should pick up the security tab, not Federal taxpayers across the country.

For all these reasons, I oppose the Coleman amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same. This amendment will pass, but we need to reevaluate how we finance political conventions in the future. When cities make bids to host these conventions, they should also make preparations to pay for security and include this information in their bids.

This emergency funding method, using Federal taxpayers' dollars for political conventions, is not in the best interest or the best way to proceed, and that is why I oppose this amendment. If we think about this, this is the way the old Soviet Union used to fund their conventions, which were phony. But the state paid for the whole thing. I do not think we should have the same thing happening here in the United States of America.

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

Will the Chair state how much time I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 18 minutes.

Mr. BUNNING. Eighteen minutes. Mr. President, I will allow the Senator from Minnesota to use 5 of those minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, my friend from Kentucky.

I want to respond to a couple of concerns he raised.

First, I am in total accord with my friend that we need to reevaluate how we fund conventions in the future.

There is absolutely no question about that. In a post-9/11 world, these conventions are targets for terrorism. These conventions, by the way, are designated as national special security events, which means the Federal Government actually has overall responsibility for the security, through the Department of Homeland Security, Secret Service. They then direct the folks at the local level. But we need to figure out, in the future when these conventions are bid for: How are we going to pay for security?

In this case, there are three things that should be responded to. First, there are appropriations in some other bills, but the total sought here is \$100 million, and that anything else in any other bill will not be pursued, will be dropped. So the figure—and I think we should be in agreement on that—is \$100 million, which is what it was in New York and Boston; but we are 4 years later, \$50 million for each of the cities.

I should also note all funds will be audited. That has not been the case in the past. All funds will be audited. We will find out. I think we need to do that for the future to know what are the security needs, and, again, to make sure—I have been very insistent to ensure—we have an auditing mechanism which we have not had in place before.

Third, it is an emergency because the planning for security has to begin now. We have not dealt with it up to this point in time. I would note that the city of St. Paul—and I was the mayor of St. Paul—I believe their entire budget is \$500 million. Their overall budget for police in the course of a year—law enforcement—I think is about \$68 million.

Cities do not have the capacity to meet the security needs that are being imposed on them by the Federal Government, by the Federal authorities. Where I disagree with my friend is, I see this as an unfunded mandate. The Department of Homeland Security or the Secret Service tell local law enforcement: You have to do A, B, C, or D, and that is the Federal Government telling folks at the local level to do something without giving them the resources. Those are unfunded mandates.

We live in a world where conventions are natural targets for those who wish to do us harm. As we saw in Germany, the threats are very real. We have a situation where security is the first responsibility of Government. That is what this is about. It is about security. It is the primary responsibility of Government. National conventions are events that if we are going to continue to have them—and I think we should have them; we could do away with them, if that is what some are suggesting, and I don't think they are—but if we are, we have to have security at a level that ensures those who are there—the President will be there, elected officials, citizens, and they are targets.

They have been designated national special security events and, therefore,

we have to fund them. This will fund the conventions. I will work with my friend from Kentucky as we work forward in the future to make sure we address up front the cost of security. But it is not reasonable to argue the city of Denver or the cities of St. Paul-Minneapolis would have the capacity to institute the security they are required to do. So we stepped forward at the first post-9/11 convention in New York. We had security there. The Federal Government played a role. We will continue to play a role in the future. It is the right thing to do. I think it is the responsibility of Government.

Again, as a former local elected official, were I sitting in the mayor's office, there is no doubt I would be saying, yes, we have this opportunity, but we need to make sure, in the end, it can be funded. This is clearly a Federal responsibility. The States and cities will do their part, but we have a part to play also.

With that, Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Kentucky and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I wish to respond to my friend from Minnesota.

First of all, it was only \$25 million put in the New York security bill for the 2004 convention in New York, which I attended. My concern and my wonder is: Why did Minneapolis-St. Paul in Minnesota, bid at all for the convention, or Denver, CO? Why did they bid? Did they bid to lose money? Did they bid to attract people into their States so they could make money on the conventions?

I was on the Republican National Committee for 8 years and was involved in three national conventions. We went to Detroit, Dallas, and New Orleans. All of those cities were pre-9/11, but all of those cities were responsible for the security.

Now, after 9/11, the people who are bidding—and there were more than just those two cities bidding. In fact, there were five that were narrowed down to three, and, finally, Minneapolis-St. Paul was chosen by the Republicans. The same thing occurred on the Democratic side, where there were five, and then down to three, and then down to one in Denver, CO.

Now, they knew there was going to be a cost for security after 9/11. They had to build that security cost into their bid for the convention. If they did not do that, they were poor planners. The mandates that come from the Federal Government were known prior to the bids being made because we had already experienced a New York convention which was held in a much bigger city with many more ports and many more people and many more police than there are now in Minneapolis-St. Paul or Denver, CO.

So it does not wash, the fact that this is an unfunded mandate from the Federal Government, because all of

these cities that bid knew there were going to be additional costs for security if they were successful in hosting the convention.

The way it is done with emergency spending is a farce. We do this when we cannot pay for it in the normal budgeted manner. It is a gimmick used in budgeting when you do not want to pay for something in the year that you spend the money. I am shocked this is going to pass by the margin it will pass. I sincerely believe we need our conventions and we need to nominate whomever we nominate for President and Vice President on both the Democratic and Republican side, but I almost am at a loss for words we would use emergency spending for the conventions and for something that should have been planned for by the cities and States that are going to host the current conventions in 2008.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, and seeing no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2687

Mr. COLEMAN. I call up my amendment No. 2687. It should be at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. COLEMAN] proposes an amendment numbered 2687.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide funding for security associated with the national party conventions)

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. _____. For an additional amount \$100,000,000, with \$50,000,000 each to the Cities of Denver, Colorado, and St. Paul, Minnesota, shall be available to the Department of Homeland Security for State and local law enforcement entities for security and related costs, including overtime, associated with the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention in 2008. The Department of Homeland Security shall provide for an audit of all amounts made available under this section, including expenditures by State and local law enforcement entities. Amounts provided by this section are designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 204 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress).

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Let me suggest the absence of a quorum before I do that, just to inform the other side, and then we can proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw amendment No. 2666 by Senator McCONNELL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment has not actually been proposed.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. The amendment was on the unanimous consent request list last night.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the order will be so modified.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I do want to say in regard to amendment No. 2666, the McConnell amendment, which if it has not been formally proposed, I want to say it is regarding the Chemical Demilitarization Program that is in the Department of Defense. I just want to assure the Senator from Kentucky that this committee will work with the Armed Services Committee to ensure that the program stays on schedule. It is a very important program. The Department of Defense does want to continue the program, and we will work with the Armed Services Committee to assure that.

I would certainly ask the chairman of the committee if that is his wish as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, Senator McCONNELL is proposing additional resources for the Bluegrass chemical demilitarization facility. It is a very important project. It is one we funded already in the bill. I can assure the Senator from Texas that I will work with my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to allow additional resources going forward, perhaps through reprogramming, so that we can achieve Senator McCONNELL's goal, which is to as quickly as possible put this facility into operation to begin to eliminate some of these chemical weapons we have had in our inventory for many years.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the chairman of the subcommittee, and I appreciate very much his cooperation. I agree with him completely and with the Senator from Kentucky that we need to continue this program, and we will all work together to assure that the funding is there.

Mr. President, let me just ask a parliamentary inquiry now. We had told our colleagues we would start voting at 11 o'clock, and I was just going to ask the status of that information.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator COLEMAN and Senator BUNNING will divide 2 minutes on the Coleman amendment prior to the vote. We then will begin the first vote.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. And have the yeas and nays been called for?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. They have not.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on amendment No. 2687.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote to be taken in relation to amendment No. 2687 offered by the Senator from Minnesota.

The senior Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry before my time begins: Has the amendment been called up and read?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment has been called up, and it has been read. The Senator may proceed.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, first, two points of clarification.

Both New York and Boston received \$50 million each. There were apparently two separate appropriations, but they each received \$50 million, and that is what Denver and St. Paul-Minneapolis are seeking here.

The second point I wish to tell my colleagues is that all funds in here will be ordered. There is a specific ordering provision in this amendment that has not been in previous amendments or previous funding of conventions.

Third, the Department of Homeland Security has designated these conventions as national special security events. As such, the Secret Service will be directing the local units of government regarding security needs. Without Federal assistance, the security costs associated with these events are essentially unfunded mandates.

I urge my colleagues to ask themselves what are the consequences of not providing this critical emergency funding. The planning has to start now. We all know security risks are real. Look at what happened in Germany yesterday. It is our responsibility as Senators to make sure local law enforcement offices that will be working tirelessly to protect these events have the resources they need. Security is the first responsibility of Government. This funding is for security. Frankly, I wouldn't want to be standing on the Senate floor a year from now saying I wish we had done more.

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

Mr. COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, it is as though we didn't know 9/11 occurred, that the security risk for a convention in 2004 and 2008 would not be planned for in the bid by the hosting cities. Then for the Federal Government to step in and use emergency funding as a tool, a budget gimmick tool to fund this \$50 million extra because Min-

neapolis-St. Paul and Denver didn't plan well for their conventions—I don't think it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to budget this as an emergency spending bill, so I urge the defeat of the Coleman amendment.

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

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would vote "yea."

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WERNER).

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

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 313 Leg.]

YEAS—76

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Akaka | Durbin | Murkowski |
| Alexander | Ensign | Murray |
| Allard | Feinstein | Nelson (FL) |
| Baucus | Graham | Nelson (NE) |
| Bayh | Gregg | Pryor |
| Bennett | Hatch | Reed |
| Bond | Hutchison | Reid |
| Boxer | Inouye | Roberts |
| Brown | Isakson | Rockefeller |
| Burr | Johnson | Salazar |
| Byrd | Kennedy | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Klobuchar | Schumer |
| Cardin | Kohl | Shelby |
| Carper | Kyl | Smith |
| Casey | Landrieu | Snowe |
| Chambliss | Lautenberg | Specter |
| Clinton | Leahy | Stabenow |
| Cochran | Levin | Stevens |
| Coleman | Lieberman | Sununu |
| Collins | Lott | Tester |
| Conrad | Lugar | Vitter |
| Corker | Martinez | Webb |
| Cornyn | McCain | Whitehouse |
| Crapo | McConnell | Wyden |
| Dole | Menendez | |
| Dorgan | Mikulski | |

NAYS—15

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|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Barrasso | Enzi | Inhofe |
| Brownback | Feingold | McCaskill |
| Bunning | Grassley | Sessions |
| Coburn | Hagel | Thune |
| DeMint | Harkin | Voinovich |

NOT VOTING—9

| | | |
|----------|----------|---------|
| Biden | Dodd | Lincoln |
| Bingaman | Domenici | Obama |
| Craig | Kerry | Warner |

The amendment (No. 2687) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2664

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Sanders amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] proposes an amendment numbered 2664.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, with respect to increases in dollar amounts for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, from rounding down such dollar amounts to the next lower whole dollar)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used during fiscal year 2008 to round down dollar amounts to the next lower whole dollar for payments of the following:

(1) Disability compensation under section 1114 of 38, United States Code.

(2) Additional compensation for dependents under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) Clothing allowance under section 1162 of such title.

(4) Dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouse under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) Dependency and indemnity compensation to children under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to the vote in relation to the amendment.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Vermont is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the amendment I am offering has the support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and AMVETS, and it is cosponsored by Senator MENENDEZ.

In a \$109 billion piece of legislation, this \$20 million amendment is not significant from a monetary perspective. It is, however, very significant in terms of the message we send to veterans throughout our country, especially disabled veterans, the men and women who have lost arms and legs defending us, who move around in wheelchairs, who are blind and/or deaf.

In the 1990s, as a temporary measure, Congress initiated the so-called rounding down of veterans' disability benefits. Under this rounding-down process, a disabled veteran who is supposed to receive, for example, a check for \$200.99 has that 99 cents taken away from him and only gets the \$200.

A veteran in a wheelchair opens his envelope check every month and is reminded that the United States Government is saving 99 cents a month. What a message that sends to the veterans.

This is an important amendment. It should be adopted.

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

Who yields time?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, we yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2664.

The amendment (No. 2664) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2662

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the next amendment is the Salazar amendment. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment.

Who yields time? The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues in this Chamber, on the Republican side and the Democratic side, to vote yes on this amendment. In February of this year, the Army announced that it wanted to acquire an area the size of Rhode Island in the southeastern part of my State. I am not opposed to the possibility of expanding the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, but what we are asking for in our amendment is that we have a 1-year timeout for us to study the training capacity needs of the Army.

If my colleagues care about private property rights, vote for this amendment. If they care about the ranchers of America and the ranchers of southeastern Colorado, I ask for a "yes" vote. And if they care about national security and making sure we are fiscally responsible in how we invest our money, vote yes on this amendment. I ask for a "yes" vote.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I yield 30 seconds to the Senator from Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized for 30 seconds.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, this issue boils down to just a few important points. First and foremost, denying the Army the opportunity to explore expansion efforts at a time when the Army is facing a training land shortfall is not in our national security interests.

Second, this amendment will tie the hands of the Army. The language is so restrictive that it will prevent them from providing information, handouts, or holding community meetings to find common ground for conducting an environmental impact statement which will be important to the decision-making process.

Last, we do need to remember that property rights should be protected, and we are doing that through other amendments which the Army supports.

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

Mr. ALLARD. I ask for a "no" vote.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, the Secretary of the Army called me this morning and said if they cannot con-

tinue to plan for the expansion working with the community that it will hamper their efforts in training. It will require them to go to other places for training. It will cause the troops to have to train longer periods.

They absolutely are against this amendment, and they are against the precedent of having Congress say: You cannot continue with expansion plans that are on the books.

I urge a "no" vote.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I point out that a similar measure passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 383 to 35 on a bipartisan basis, strongly supported in the House.

Also, during the BRAC process, the Army determined the capacity of Fort Carson was adequate for the brigades stationed there.

I urge the adoption of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Salazar amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. SALAZAR] proposes an amendment numbered 2662.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to expand the boundaries or size of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado)

On page 50, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 408. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any action that is related to or promotes the expansion of the boundaries or size of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado.

Mr. BUNNING. I 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 amendment No. 2662. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would vote "yea."

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 314 Leg.]

YEAS—47

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Akaka | Feinstein | Nelson (FL) |
| Baucus | Harkin | Nelson (NE) |
| Bayh | Inouye | Pryor |
| Boxer | Johnson | Reed |
| Brown | Kennedy | Reid |
| Brownback | Klobuchar | Roberts |
| Byrd | Kohl | Rockefeller |
| Cantwell | Landrieu | Salazar |
| Cardin | Lautenberg | Sanders |
| Carper | Leahy | Schumer |
| Casey | Levin | Stabenow |
| Clinton | Lieberman | Tester |
| Conrad | McCaskill | Webb |
| Dorgan | Menendez | Whitehouse |
| Durbin | Mikulski | Wyden |
| Feingold | Murray | |

NAYS—45

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Alexander | DeMint | Martinez |
| Allard | Dole | McCain |
| Barrasso | Ensign | McConnell |
| Bennett | Emzi | Murkowski |
| Bond | Graham | Sessions |
| Bunning | Grassley | Shelby |
| Burr | Gregg | Smith |
| Chambliss | Hagel | Snowe |
| Coburn | Hatch | Specter |
| Cochran | Hutchison | Stevens |
| Coleman | Inhofe | Sununu |
| Collins | Isakson | Thune |
| Corker | Kyl | Vitter |
| Cornyn | Lott | Voinovich |
| Crapo | Lugar | Warner |

NOT VOTING—8

| | | |
|----------|----------|---------|
| Biden | Dodd | Lincoln |
| Bingaman | Domenici | Obama |
| Craig | Kerry | |

The amendment (No. 2662) was agreed to.

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CONRAD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 2673

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I call up amendment 2673, and I ask unanimous consent to add Senator WEBB as a co-sponsor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] proposes an amendment numbered 2673.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To limit the cases in which funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to convert to contractor performance an activity or function of the Department of Veterans Affairs that is performed by more than 10 Federal employees)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with—

(1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-115; 119 Stat. 2506); or

(2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There are now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the vote in relationship to the amendment.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, Congress again and again has called on Federal agencies to ensure that before work is contracted out we first see if Federal employees can perform their jobs as well as their private-sector counterparts. That is only fair to taxpayers as well as to employees. The VA is trying to contract out the work of its blue-collar employees, some four-fifths of whom are veterans themselves, without bothering to see if they can perform as well as their private competition.

This amendment, cosponsored with Senator WEBB, simply reiterates the language we have adopted before that there must be a public-private competition before work is contracted out. I hope we can adopt the amendment overwhelmingly to send a message to the VA that this isn't a Democratic-Republican issue, this is simply good government. It is the right thing for American taxpayers and the right thing for veterans—those being given care and those workers who are veterans who support that mission.

I yield back my remaining time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, this is an amendment that would tie the hands of the Veterans' Administration in trying to make the most and the best use of taxpayer dollars. It would prohibit contracting out if 10 Federal employees are doing a job.

We ought to be trying to promote the Veterans' Administration for being efficient. We should be promoting using taxpayer dollars wisely, not a protectionist amendment, where Congress would tie the hands of the Veterans Affairs Department. I hope we will defeat this amendment.

We already have the capability to affirm that it is in the best interest of the VA to contract out. The VA is required to come to Congress to say it is in the interest of the VA that the contracting out be done. But to say no contracting out if there are 10 Federal employees doing a job is absolutely wrong, and it is going in the wrong direction for efficiency of our taxpayer dollars.

I urge a "no" vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2673.

Mr. BROWN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) would each vote "yea."

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 315 Leg.]

YEAS—52

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Akaka | Feingold | Nelson (NE) |
| Baucus | Feinstein | Pryor |
| Bayh | Harkin | Reed |
| Bond | Inouye | Reid |
| Boxer | Johnson | Rockefeller |
| Brown | Kennedy | Salazar |
| Byrd | Klobuchar | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Kohl | Schumer |
| Cardin | Landrieu | Snowe |
| Carper | Lautenberg | Specter |
| Casey | Leahy | Stabenow |
| Chambliss | Levin | Stevens |
| Clinton | McCaskill | Tester |
| Collins | Menendez | Voinovich |
| Conrad | Mikulski | Whitehouse |
| Domenici | Murkowski | |
| Dorgan | Murray | Wyden |
| Durbin | Nelson (FL) | |

NAYS—39

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Alexander | DeMint | Lott |
| Allard | Dole | Lugar |
| Barrasso | Ensign | Martinez |
| Bennett | Enzi | McCain |
| Brownback | Graham | McConnell |
| Bunning | Grassley | Roberts |
| Burr | Gregg | Sessions |
| Coburn | Hagel | Shelby |
| Cochran | Hatch | Smith |
| Coleman | Hutchison | Sununu |
| Corker | Inhofe | Thune |
| Cornyn | Isakson | Vitter |
| Crapo | Kyl | Warner |

NOT VOTING—9

| | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| Biden | Dodd | Lincoln |
| Bingaman | Kerry | Obama |
| Craig | Lieberman | Webb |

The amendment (No. 2673) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 2642, the fiscal year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. This is an important bill, one that makes the necessary investments in caring for our veterans, in improving the quality of life for our military families, and in building and improving the facilities integral to our military's current and future mission and our national security. The legislation provides \$64.7 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$4 billion above the President's budget request. Frankly, the President's request was insufficient, so I support the Appropriations Committee's recommendation.

The bill offers substantial new investments in health care for America's veterans and takes into consideration

the unique needs of our service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. By increasing critical investments in medical services, which include treatment of traumatic brain injury, TBI, and post traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, providing the funding necessary to hire new claims processors to address the VA's backlog, and investing in VA repair and maintenance necessary to prevent another Walter Reed-type situation, the bill addresses key shortcomings in our veterans health care system.

The bill also addresses key quality-of-life and mission-related needs for all U.S. troops and their families. I am grateful it includes \$265 million for construction of facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Patuxent River, Suitland, Fort Detrick, and Fort Meade in recognition of the growing and critical role these Maryland installations play in our national defense.

As stated in the Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, Commission Report, the primary goal for the 2005 BRAC process was military transformation. While acknowledging the need to save money, the Commission went beyond a business model analysis, giving military value criteria priority consideration. Of critical importance to communities in Maryland and to citizens across the Nation, the bill provides \$8.17 billion for BRAC 2005 to implement the base closures and realignments that the Commission determined are critical to our military's current and future mission. This includes over \$700 million for the construction of crucial facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Indian Head, Andrews Air Force Base, Fort Meade, and the Bethesda National Naval Medical Center.

Given the critical nature of these appropriations, you can imagine my concern when I read the Statement of Administration Policy on this bill. President Bush, it seems, thinks that such investments in our veterans and our military infrastructure are "excessive." While he has indicated that he will not veto H.R. 2642, he has threatened to veto other appropriations bills unless we find ways to cut spending in those measures equal to the spending—\$4 billion—in this bill that exceeds his request.

This administration, which has consistently underestimated the resources it would take to fund our military and care for our veterans, promises that it is "closely tracking the ongoing cost of providing for our veterans." When it comes to bases, troops, and veterans, we shouldn't be cutting corners or scrambling later to make up for earlier mistakes. It is our duty to pass this bill and fully fund the veterans initiatives and military construction projects it contains.

I applaud Senators BYRD, COCHRAN, JOHNSON, HUTCHISON, and REED and my other colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for their excellent work and look forward to quick passage of this critical legislation.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I helped craft the 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill and I am proud of the priorities we set for our military.

There is no more important time than now to show our support for our troops. Nearly 200,000 American service men and women are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 1.5 million have served valiantly since these wars began. Of these, more than 33,000 servicemembers have come from New Jersey.

This legislation will provide critical funding to ensure that those in our military who sacrifice in defense of our country now and those who did so in the past are given the best care.

Overall veterans funding will increase 18 percent over last year's levels, supporting physical and mental care, the administration of the Veterans' Administration, VA, health system, and VA medical facilities.

The Veterans Health Administration will receive an increase of \$4.6 billion to help care for our wounded warriors, to treat both their physical injuries and increasingly common mental trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

This appropriations bill also aims to strengthen our military bases, providing \$21 billion for military construction efforts and infrastructure improvements at bases, including those in New Jersey, and to support projects related to the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act, BRAC, of 2005.

We are all proud of the work being done at military bases in our home States and nationwide, and it is vital that we support their missions now and in the future.

But I must take a moment to alert my colleagues to troubling information that has come to light since the Appropriations Committee completed work on this bill.

Fort Monmouth, based in New Jersey, is the Army's primary intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance facility. The Army's work at Fort Monmouth is critical to the safety of America's military men and women and to the success of their missions. The intelligence support it provides goes directly to our troops in the field, making them more effective fighters and protecting their lives and the lives of those around them.

Over the next 5 years, researchers at Fort Monmouth are slated to develop significant innovations for our Armed Forces, such as Warlock Jammers, which emit radio frequencies that interfere with the signals that set off improvised explosive devices—infamously known as IEDs.

The Jammer was engineered at Fort Monmouth and modified for use in Iraq. The military was able to deploy them within 60 days of their development, and they save American lives.

But despite the critical value of this and other innovations at the Fort, the

BRAC Commission in 2005 voted to close Fort Monmouth.

It goes without saying that no Senator wants to see a base close in his or her State. And it is not only New Jersey that will suffer a loss of jobs and economic activity because of the 2005 BRAC process.

But the situation with Fort Monmouth is unique and casts a shadow on the entire base closure process.

As we learn more information about the closure of Fort Monmouth, it becomes increasingly clear that this was a flawed process based on faulty estimates that must be thoroughly investigated.

The first and most pressing question is how this closure will affect our troops in the field, given the crucial work Fort Monmouth does for ongoing missions overseas.

Simply put, Fort Monmouth is strategically vital to our military and to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anticipating this alarming problem, the BRAC Commission specifically included a requirement for the Secretary of Defense to prove that closing Fort Monmouth will not harm troops in the field.

The caveat required the Pentagon to submit a report to Congress ensuring "that movement of organizations, functions, or activities from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground will be accomplished without disruption of their support to the Global War on Terrorism." The GAO is then expected to review and audit the report.

Yet more than 2 years after the BRAC Commission vote, the administration has failed to produce this report.

Even worse, the Army is trying to move personnel out of Fort Monmouth before it has even considered the effect on our military.

This is unacceptable. No personnel should leave Fort Monmouth and be transferred to Aberdeen, MD, before the Department of Defense reports to Congress that the closure of Fort Monmouth will not hurt our troops in the field.

But that is only one of the reasons why the BRAC decision to close Fort Monmouth is so controversial and so flawed.

It is becoming increasingly clear that only about 20 percent of the highly trained and highly skilled workforce who work at the Fort—from engineers to scientists—appear willing to move to Maryland.

This is far fewer than the rosy forecast of 75 percent that was provided to the BRAC Commission in 2005.

Again, we must ask how this shortage of expertise will affect the critical operations and technology that Fort Monmouth currently provides to our military.

Furthermore, the costs of closing Fort Monmouth are skyrocketing and call into question the very cost-savings rationale upon which BRAC decisions are made.

This argument was made by many in 2005, but the warnings were ignored. And as more facts come to light, it becomes apparent that the BRAC Commission was not given all of the information that it should have had to make its decision.

The original cost estimate for closing the fort was \$780 million.

But according to the Army's own budget request for the fiscal year 2008, that cost has now nearly doubled to \$1.5 billion.

We all know that the cost overruns are not limited to the closure of Fort Monmouth.

In fact, the Congressional Research Service has calculated that overall BRAC costs have increased from initial estimates of \$17 billion to a current projection of \$32 billion.

There are also signs that the true costs of closing Fort Monmouth may have been ignored in 2005. There is mounting evidence that the Pentagon knew, or should have known, that the cost estimates it gave the BRAC Commission related to the closure of Fort Monmouth were not correct. A July 2005 memo from Fort Monmouth officials detailed significant cost errors in the Pentagon's estimates, but the information in that memo was never received by the BRAC Commission.

For these reasons I, joined by Senator MENENDEZ and our colleagues in the House of Representatives, have asked both the Government Accountability Office and Defense Department's inspector general to investigate the decision to close Fort Monmouth.

There is over \$200 million in this bill for military construction at Aberdeen, MD.

While I understand this committee's desire to continue funding pursuant to the 2005 BRAC Commission decisions, I must caution that the closure of Fort Monmouth and the transfer of its critical operations needs to be reexamined in light of these facts and the investigations and reports that are underway.

I would also note that Senator MENENDEZ and I have introduced legislation to change the BRAC process by calling for a review of major base closures that result in excessive cost overruns of over 25 percent.

I hope my colleagues will see the wisdom of this legislation and support it in the coming months.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the question is on the engrossment of the amendment and third reading of the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that if present and voting, the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would each vote "yea."

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 316 Leg.]
YEAS—92

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Akaka | Durbin | Menendez |
| Alexander | Ensign | Mikulski |
| Allard | Enzi | Murkowski |
| Barrasso | Feingold | Murray |
| Baucus | Feinstein | Nelson (FL) |
| Bayh | Graham | Nelson (NE) |
| Bennett | Grassley | Pryor |
| Bond | Gregg | Reed |
| Boxer | Hagel | Reid |
| Brown | Harkin | Roberts |
| Brownback | Hatch | Rockefeller |
| Bunning | Hutchison | Salazar |
| Burr | Inhofe | Sanders |
| Byrd | Inouye | Schumer |
| Cantwell | Isakson | Sessions |
| Cardin | Johnson | Shelby |
| Carper | Kennedy | Smith |
| Casey | Klobuchar | Snowe |
| Chambliss | Kohl | Specter |
| Clinton | Kyl | Stabenow |
| Coburn | Landrieu | Stevens |
| Cochran | Lautenberg | Sununu |
| Coleman | Leahy | Tester |
| Collins | Levin | Thune |
| Conrad | Lieberman | Vitter |
| Corker | Lott | Voinovich |
| Cornyn | Lugar | Warner |
| Crapo | Martinez | Webb |
| Dole | McCain | Whitehouse |
| Domenici | McCaskill | Wyden |
| Dorgan | McConnell | |

NAYS—1

DeMint

NOT VOTING—7

| | | |
|----------|---------|-------|
| Biden | Dodd | Obama |
| Bingaman | Kerry | |
| Craig | Lincoln | |

The bill (H.R. 2642), as amended, was passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendment, requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the Chair appoints the following conferees on the part of the Senate.

The Acting President pro tempore appointed Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. INOUYE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BYRD, Mrs. MURRAY,

Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. COCHRAN conferees on the part of the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to thank so many people who were significant in the passage of this legislation. First, let me recognize Senator HUTCHISON, the ranking member, for her valuable contributions throughout. Also, and gladly, I not only welcome back Senator JOHNSON but recognize that as chairman of this committee, we communicated. He was very influential in the final outcome of the legislation. I not only welcome him back, but I gladly and joyfully give him the reins of the subcommittee so that the next time this bill comes to the floor, Senator TIM JOHNSON will be managing it, and I will be proud to be working with him.

I particularly want to thank staff members who made such a huge and critical contribution to this effort: Christina Evans, B.G. Wright, Chad Schulken, and Elizabeth King from my staff; and from the minority staff: Dennis Balkham, Chris Heggem, and Yvonne Stone.

I thank all my colleagues who cooperated so willingly and effectively.

I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2764, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND RELATED AGENCY DEPARTMENT OF STATE ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PROGRAMS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Department of State and the Foreign Service not otherwise provided for, including employment, without regard to civil service and classification laws, of persons on a temporary basis (not to exceed \$700,000 of this appropriation), as authorized by section 801 of the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948; representation to certain international organizations in which the United States participates pursuant to treaties ratified pursuant to the advice and

consent of the Senate or specific Acts of Congress; arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament activities as authorized; acquisition by exchange or purchase of passenger motor vehicles as authorized by law; and for expenses of general administration, \$3,885,375,000: Provided, That of the amount made available under this heading, not to exceed \$10,000,000 may be transferred to and merged with "Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service", to be available only for emergency evacuations and terrorism rewards: Provided further, That of the funds appropriated under this heading, \$8,131,000 shall be available for the Office of the Director of United States Foreign Assistance and \$1,000,000 shall not be obligated until consultations with the Congress, arising from the report submitted pursuant to section 653(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, have been completed: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, not less than \$364,905,000 shall be available only for public diplomacy international information programs: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading, \$5,000,000 shall be made available for a demonstration program to expand access to consular services: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading, \$40,000,000 shall be made available for passport operations, facilities, and systems: Provided further, That the funds appropriated by the previous proviso shall be in addition to amounts otherwise made available for such purposes: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading in this Act and in prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, export financing and related programs, up to \$200,000,000 may be transferred to, and merged with, funds appropriated under the heading "Millennium Challenge Corporation", subject to section 615 of this Act: Provided further, That of the funds appropriated under this heading, \$6,000,000 shall be made available for the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation of which \$1,500,000 shall be for grants of not less than \$500,000 for significant historic preservation projects: Provided further, That there shall be one additional senior permanent position at United States Embassy Moscow whose sole responsibilities shall be to monitor human rights and the implementation of Russian laws relating to nongovernmental organizations, communicate United States support for human rights defenders and journalists who are harassed and arrested, and support the work of civil society groups: Provided further, That funds available under this heading may be made available for a United States Government interagency task force to examine, coordinate and oversee United States participation in the United Nations headquarters renovation project: Provided further, That funds appropriated under this heading are available, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1108(g), for the field examination of programs and activities in the United States funded from any account in this title.

In addition, not to exceed \$1,558,390 shall be derived from fees collected from other executive agencies for lease or use of facilities located at the International Center in accordance with section 4 of the International Center Act; in addition, as authorized by section 5 of such Act, \$490,000, to be derived from the reserve authorized by that section, to be used for the purposes set out in that section; in addition, as authorized by section 810 of the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act, not to exceed \$6,000,000, to remain available until expended, may be credited to this appropriation from fees or other payments received from English teaching, library, motion pictures, and publication programs and from fees from educational advising and counseling and exchange visitor programs; and, in addition, not to exceed