

FY 2012	2,737.578
(3) Budget Outlays:	
FY 2007	2,294.862
FY 2008	2,471.548
FY 2009	2,573.005
FY 2010	2,609.873
FY 2011	2,702.839
FY 2012	2,716.392

Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008—S. Con. Res. 21; Further Revisions to the Conference Agreement Pursuant to Section 307 Deficit-Neutral Reserve Fund for the Farm Bill

[In millions of dollars]

Current Allocation to Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	14,284
FY 2007 Outlays	14,056
FY 2008 Budget Authority	17,424
FY 2008 Outlays	14,374
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	74,591
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	65,545
Adjustments:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	0
FY 2007 Outlays	0
FY 2008 Budget Authority	–336
FY 2008 Outlays	255
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	2,290
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	5,504
Revised Allocation to Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	14,284
FY 2007 Outlays	14,056
FY 2008 Budget Authority	17,088
FY 2008 Outlays	14,629
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	76,881
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	71,049

SCHOOL SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in the 8 months since the horrific incident at Virginia Tech that resulted in the tragic deaths of 32 students, we have witnessed a barrage of new incidents involving threatening conduct and, too often, deadly acts of violence at our schools and college campuses nationwide.

Just this past Saturday, police arrested a student at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles on suspicion of posting an anonymous online threat to kill people on campus. The threat appeared on a blog used primarily by college students. It said: "I am going to shoot and kill as many people as I can until which time I am incapacitated or killed by police." Fortunately, police got to this troubled student before he could make good on his threat. But I urge the Senate not to sit back and wait until the next time, when police may not be able to stop a deadly event before it occurs. We must act now to protect our schools and college campuses.

Those who perpetrate these terrible crimes know no boundaries. No targets are off limits. This past Sunday, a man killed two people in Arvada, CO, after being refused lodging at a Christian missionary center. Later that day, in Colorado Springs, the same man opened fire outside the New Life Church, taking the lives of two teen-aged sisters and leaving a third victim in critical condition. These recent inci-

dents make clear yet again that we must do all we can to ensure that law enforcement is prepared and equipped to respond to such incidents.

I urge Congress to take prompt action to help stem this tide of violence. The full Senate can begin to address this terrible and recurring problem by taking up and passing the School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act of 2007, a legislative package that responds to the Virginia Tech tragedy and the ongoing problem of violence in our schools and in our communities.

The Judiciary Committee passed this important bill out of committee over 4 months ago. In passing the bill out of the Judiciary Committee this past September, the committee attempted to show deference to Governor Kaine and the task forces at work in Virginia and to complement their work and recommendations. Working with several Senators, including Senators BOXER, REED, SPECTER, FEINGOLD, SCHUMER, and DURBIN, the committee originated this bill and reported it before the start of the academic year in the hope that the full Senate could pass these critical school safety improvements this fall.

Regrettably, the bill has been stalled on the Senate floor. I urge those holding up its passage to consider that this administration has spent more than \$15 billion to equip, train, and build facilities for the Iraqi security forces. Surely Congress can stand up for American kids who face unrelenting school violence by authorizing just a fraction of this money to reduce deadly violence in our schools and communities right here at home.

I do not think the Senate should continue to stand by and wait for the next horrific school tragedy to make the critical changes necessary to insure safety in our schools and on our college campuses. The risk of school violence will not go away just because Congress may shift its focus. Since this bill passed out of committee, we have seen tragedy at Delaware State, University of Memphis, SuccessTech Academy in Cleveland, OH, as well as incidents in California, New York, Pennsylvania, and Oregon, to name just a few. I urge the Senate to move aggressively with the comprehensive school safety legislation. It includes background check improvements, together with other sensible yet effective safety improvement measures supported by law enforcement across the country. If we are prohibited by objection from doing so by unanimous consent, then let us move to it and let those with objections seek to amend those provisions to which they object.

There are too many incidents at too many colleges and schools nationwide. This terrorizes students and their parents. We should be doing what we can to help.

Several weeks ago, a troubled student wearing a Fred Flintstone mask and carrying a rifle through campus was arrested at St. John's University

in Queens, NY, prompting authorities to lock down the campus for 3 hours. The day after that incident, an armed 17-year-old on the other side of the country in Oroville, CA, held students hostage at Las Plumas High School, also resulting in a lock-down. The incidents have continued with the arrest a few weeks ago of an armed student suspected of plotting a Columbine-style attack on fellow high school students in Norristown, PA. More recently, in Happy Valley, OR, police arrested a 10-year-old student who brought a semi-automatic weapon into his elementary school. The students in these situations were lucky and escaped without injury.

University of Memphis student Taylor Bradford was not so lucky. He was killed on campus on September 30 in what university officials believe was a targeted attack. He was 21 years old. Shalita Middleton was not so lucky. She died on October 23 from injuries she sustained during the Delaware State incident. She was 17 years old. Nathaniel Pew was not so lucky. He was wounded at Delaware State. High school teachers Michael Grassie and David Kachadourian and students Michael Peek and Darnell Rodgers—all of whom were wounded by a troubled student at SuccessTech Academy on October 10—were not so lucky.

The School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act responds directly to incidents like these by squarely addressing the problem of violence in our schools in several ways. The bill enlists the States as partners in the dissemination of critical information by making significant improvements to the National Instant Background Check System, known as the NICS system. The bill also authorizes Federal assistance for programs to improve the safety and security of our schools and institutions of higher education, provides equitable benefits to law enforcement serving those institutions including bulletproof vests, and funds pilot programs to develop cutting-edge prevention and intervention programs for our schools. The bill also clarifies and strengthens two existing statutes—the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act and the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act—which are designed to improve public safety.

Specifically, title I would improve the safety and security of students both at the elementary and secondary school level, and on college and university campuses. The K–12 improvements are drawn from a bill that Senator BOXER introduced in April, and I want to thank Senator BOXER for her hard work on this issue. The improvements include increased funding for much-needed infrastructure changes to improve security as well as the establishment of hotlines and tip-lines, which will enable students to report potentially dangerous situations to school administrators before they occur.

These improvements can save lives. After the four students and teachers

were wounded at SuccessTech Academy, the press reported that parents had been petitioning to get a metal detector installed and additional security personnel added, and that the guard who was previously assigned to the school had been removed 3 years ago. In fact, the entire city of Cleveland has just 10 metal detectors that are rotated throughout the city's more than 100 schools. Title I of the bill would enhance the ability of school district to apply for and receive grant money to fund the installation of metal detectors and the training and hiring of security personnel to keep our kids safe. Over the past 4 years, this administration has spent over \$15 billion to equip, train, and build facilities for the Iraqi security forces. Surely, Congress can stand up for American kids who face unrelenting school violence by supporting just a small fraction of this figure for much-needed school safety improvements.

To address the new realities of campus safety in the wake of Virginia Tech and more recent college incidents, title I also creates a matching grant program for campus safety and security to be administered out of the COPS Office of the Department of Justice. The grant program would allow institutions of higher education to apply, for the first time, directly for Federal funds to make school safety and security improvements. The program is authorized to be appropriated at \$50,000,000 for the next 2 fiscal years. While this amounts to just \$3 per student each year, it will enable schools to more effectively respond to dangerous situations on campus.

Title II of the bill seeks to improve the NICS system. The senseless loss of life at Virginia Tech revealed deep flaws in the transfer of information relevant to gun purchases between the States and the Federal Government. The defects in the current system permitted the perpetrator of this terrible crime to obtain a firearm even though a judge had declared him to be a danger to himself and thus ineligible under Federal law. Seung-Hui Cho was not eligible to buy a weapon given his mental health history, but he was still able to pass a background check because data was missing from the system. We are working to close gaps in the NICS system. Title II will correct these problems, and for the first time will create a legal regime in which disqualifying mental health records, both at the State and Federal level, would regularly be reported into the NICS system.

Title III would make sworn law enforcement officers who work for private institutions of higher education and rail carriers eligible for death and disability benefits, and for funds administered under the Byrne grant program and the bulletproof vest partnership grant program. Providing this equitable treatment is in the best interest of our Nation's educators and students and will serve to place the support of the Federal Government behind

the dedicated law enforcement officers who serve and protect private colleges and universities nationwide. I commend Senator JACK REED for his leadership in this area.

Title IV of the bill makes improvements to the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2003. These amendments to existing law will streamline the system by which qualified retired and active officers can be certified under LEOSA. It serves us all when we permit qualified officers, with a demonstrated commitment to law enforcement and no adverse employment history, to protect themselves, their families, and their fellow citizens wherever those officers may be.

Title V incorporates the PRECAUTION Act, which Senators FEINGOLD and SPECTER asked to have included. This provision authorizes grants to develop prevention and intervention programs for our schools.

Finally, Title VI incorporates the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act of 2007, at the request of Senator KENNEDY.

Let us go forward and act now on this important bill. The Virginia Tech Review Panel—a body commissioned by Governor Tim Kaine to study the Virginia Tech tragedy—recently issued its findings based on a 4-month long investigation of the incident and its aftermath. This bill would adopt a number of recommendations from the review panel aimed at improving school safety planning and reporting information to NICS. We must not miss this opportunity to implement these initiatives nationwide, and to take concrete steps to ensure the safety of our kids.

I recognize that there is no solution to fully end the sad phenomenon of school violence. But the recent tragedies should prompt us to respond in realistic and meaningful ways when we are presented with such challenges. I hope the Senate can promptly move this bill forward to invest in the safety of our students and better support law enforcement officers across the country.

FEDERAL CRACK COCAINE SENTENCING POLICY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, nothing is more fundamental to our system of justice than the tenet inscribed in Vermont marble on the supreme court building, that all people should receive "equal justice under law." For more than 20 years, however, our Nation has tolerated a Federal cocaine sentencing policy that treats crack offenders more harshly than cocaine offenders. This policy has unacceptably had a disparate impact on people of color and the poor—without any empirical justification.

Today, the U.S. Sentencing Commission took yet another important step in addressing the wide disparity in our Federal cocaine sentencing laws. By voting to change our Sentencing Guidelines to reduce the sentences of

crack offenders currently incarcerated, the Commission took a moderate but significant step to reduce unwarranted sentencing disparities in Federal crack and powder cocaine laws. Their unanimous vote is consistent with the goals of the Sentencing Reform Act, including "the need to avoid unwarranted sentence disparities among defendants with similar records who have been found guilty of similar conduct" and brings our Nation one step closer to a drug policy that is fair and equal for all Americans.

The good news does not stop there. Just yesterday, in the landmark ruling of *Kimbrough v. United States*, the Supreme Court of the United States expanded the power of our Federal trial courts to address the unfair disparity in our Federal sentencing laws between crack and powder cocaine. By a vote of 7 to 2, the Court ruled that Federal judges may, in their discretion, consider this disparity and depart from a guideline sentence where the punishment is "greater than necessary" to serve Congress's objectives.

Under current law, an offender apprehended with 5 grams of crack cocaine faces the same 5-year mandatory minimum sentence as an offender with 500 grams of powder cocaine. That means existing law gives the same sentence to a drug trafficker dealing crack cocaine as it would to one dealing 100 times more powder cocaine.

This year, the Sentencing Commission has taken historic actions to address the unfairness and injustice of this disparity. The Commission held hearings and, after extensive study of this issue, reiterated its long-held position that crack cocaine penalties continue to disproportionately impact minorities and undermine various congressional objectives set forth in the Sentencing Reform Act. Next, the Commission attempted to correct this disparity and provide some relief to some crack cocaine offenders by recommending that all crack penalties be lowered by two base offense levels. Last month, Congress allowed this new Commission amendment—the so-called "Crack Minus 2" amendment—to be enacted in the Sentencing Guidelines.

Today, the Sentencing Commission has taken yet another positive step.

This amendment is consistent with Congress's intent in creating a sentencing guideline system. In its report to Congress, the Commission said that the Crack Minus 2 amendment was needed to address its long-held finding that "the 100-to-1 drug quantity ratio (for crack cocaine) significantly undermines the various congressional objectives set forth in the Sentencing Reform Act." I agree. I join the chorus of our esteemed Federal judges, articulated in the Judicial Commission's testimony before the Sentencing Commission on this amendment, that fundamental fairness dictates that this amendment "equally applies to offenders who were sentenced in the past as well as offenders [who] will be sentenced in the future."