

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate, at 8:25 p.m., vote, without any intervening action or debate, on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2206; that the time from 7:55 to 8:25 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders, with the majority leader in control of the last 15 minutes, and that no other amendments or motions be in order prior to the vote, with the time allocated as follows: Senator DURBIN, 5 minutes; Senator LEVIN, 5 minutes; Senator LANDRIEU, 5 minutes, and Senator BROWN, 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in a few moments, the Senate will vote on a funding bill for the war in Iraq.

It is a historic vote and a very important one over which many of us have agonized.

I come to this decision with sadness and anger—sadness that we are in the fifth year of this war, a war that has lasted longer than World War II; sadness that we have lost 3,435 of our bravest, our American soldiers; sadness that over 25,000 of these soldiers have been injured, 8,000 or 9,000 grievously injured; sadness that we spent over \$500 billion on a war that is second only to World War II in its cost to our Nation.

I also come to this floor with anger—anger that we do not have it in our power to make the will of the people of America the law of our land; anger that this President has vetoed a bipartisan bill carefully crafted to start bringing America's troops home; anger that we continue to bury our Nation's heroes every day while this Congress fails to muster the votes and some of the will to bring this war to an end.

In October of 2002, I stood on this Senate floor and joined 22 other Senators in casting my vote against this war. I felt then, and I believe today, that the invasion of Iraq was a serious mistake. I believe, as I stand here, it has been the most flawed and failed policy of any administration in our history.

That night when the vote was cast, this ornate Chamber was quiet. There was a lonely feel about it in the closing moments of the session. Those of us who lingered knew that regardless of what the White House said, this President would waste no time invading Iraq—regardless of the flawed intelligence, regardless of the lack of allies, regardless of a battle plan that left us in a position stronger after the invasion than before.

Today, 4½ years later, 4½ years after that vote and after this invasion, America is not safer, Iraq is in turmoil,

and our position as a nation in this world has been compromised by this tragic decision by this administration.

I said at the time, and I will stand by it with my vote this evening, that though I loathe this decision to go to war, I will not take my feelings out on the troops who are in the field. I will continue to provide the resources they need to be trained and equipped and rested and ready to go into battle and to come home safely.

The debate will continue over this policy, but our soldiers should never be bargaining chips in this political debate. That is why I will vote this evening for this bill. But I want to make it clear with this vote that this bill is not the end of the debate on the war in Iraq. This debate will continue until our Nation comes to its senses, until our troops come home, and until we put this sorry chapter in our Nation's history behind us.

We have summoned our friends on the Republican side of the aisle to join us in this effort. Two have had the courage to step forward. I hope that as they reflect on this war and its cost to America that more Republicans will join us, that we will not have to wait until President Bush walks out of the

White House to see an end to this war.

I pledge to you, Mr. President, this Senator and so many others will continue this debate beyond today, beyond tonight, every day until those troops come home safely. When we consider the Defense authorization bill in just a few weeks, we will return to this national debate. We will push for that timetable to bring these troops home. We will stand by our soldiers and show our devotion to them with our commitment to bringing them home safely, in an honorable way. The debate will continue until the soldiers are safe and until they are home.

I pray this will happen soon, happen before we lose more of these great men and women. This morning at my desk upstairs, I sat down and penned more notes to the grieving parents and spouses of fallen soldiers in my State of Illinois. I never dreamed 4½ years ago that I would still be writing those notes today. It is a sad testimony to what this failed policy has cost our Nation.

With this vote tonight, the debate will not end; the debate will continue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I continue to believe that Congress must act to change course in Iraq because the Bush administration will not. Congress needs to force the Iraqi political leaders to accept responsibility for their country's future. Four years of painful history have shown that the only way to accomplish that goal is to write into law a requirement that we reduce the number of U.S. troops in Iraq beginning in 120 days. That amount of time would give the Iraqi leaders the time to make the political settlements that

are the only hope of ending the sectarian fighting.

Setting that beginning point would also force the Iraqi leaders to face the reality that we will not be their endless security blanket. That approach got 51 votes in the Senate on March 29. It was sent to the President. The President vetoed it. But pressure continues to build for a change in course, even in the President's party.

We will renew the effort to force a change in course in June when we take up the Defense authorization bill currently scheduled for late June. The way we will do that is we will make and renew the effort to require the President to begin reducing American troops in Iraq within 120 days.

I voted against the authorization to attack Iraq 4 years ago, and I will continue to fight for a bill that forces the President to do the one thing which will successfully change course in Iraq. Reducing our presence starting in 120 days is a way of telling the Iraqi leaders that we cannot save them from themselves and that only they can make the decision as to whether they want an all-out civil war or they want a nation.

I cannot vote, however, to stop funding for our troops who are in harm's way. I simply cannot, and I will not do that. It is not the proper way we can bring this war to an end. It is not the proper way we can put pressure on the Iraqi leaders. It is a way of sending the wrong message to our troops because now that they are there, and now that they are in harm's way, I believe we must give them all of the support they need.

It is not only the absence from this bill of a beginning point for troop reductions, which is so troubling, I am also concerned about the benchmarks in this bill because they are not only toothless, they may actually be counterproductive. Benchmarks with no consequences for failure to achieve them will not put the necessary pressure on the Iraqi leaders to reach a political settlement. Only a law requiring the reduction of our troops can do that.

The benchmarks as written in this bill are doubly problematic because the schedule for reports, July 15 and September 15, could be used as a way of forestalling pressure on the administration and the Iraqi leaders since those reports are not due until after we are planning to take up the Defense authorization bill in June.

Perhaps the supporters of the current course in Iraq will say that those of us voting to fund the troops bill before us are also signing on to the toothless benchmarks with their arguably momentum-slowning requirements. So let me say plainly, I oppose the benchmarks and the reports as provided for in this bill.

Well, let me say plainly: I oppose the toothless benchmarks and momentum-delaying reports in this bill. I agree

with the Iraq Study Group that continued U.S. military support for Iraq “depends on the Iraqi government’s demonstrating political will and making substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliation, security and governance.”

It has been clear for a long time that there is no military solution in Iraq and that an Iraqi political settlement is necessary if there is a chance of ending the violence in Iraq.

Most telling, perhaps, was Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki’s acknowledgement of this essential point when he stated in November:

The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle . . . of bloodletting of innocents are the [Iraqi] politicians.

Apparently, the Iraqi leaders, however, will realize that their future is in their hands only when they are forced into that recognition. That is one of the many reasons that we must pass a law requiring our President to begin reducing U.S. troops in Iraq in 120 days. We will continue our efforts to do so when the Defense authorization bill is before us.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are working on a new strategy in Iraq. According to the Washington Post: “The end of 2008, is more political than military: to negotiate settlements between warring factions in Iraq from the national level down to the local level. In essence, it is as much about the political deals needed to defuse a civil war as about the military operations aimed at quelling a complex insurgency, said officials with knowledge of the plan.”

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I begin by thanking majority leader HARRY REID for his extraordinary work in helping to negotiate the full Katrina-Rita package that many of us worked on to try to accelerate and jump-start the recovery that is underway slowly, solidly in some places, and not so solidly in others along the entire gulf coast of this Nation, America’s energy coast. Louisiana sits in the middle of this great coastline and was hit not by one but by two monstrous storms 18 months ago. But, as my colleagues have heard me say many times, it wasn’t just Katrina and Rita that did so much damage, it was the collapse of a Federal levee system that should have held but didn’t hold. In Louisiana alone, 200,000 homes were totally destroyed. In Mississippi, it was over 65,000 homes because of the surge that came out of the gulf.

It is hard for people to comprehend what that means. It is still difficult for those of us who live there to get a handle on the scope of the damage and devastation. We are grateful for the generosity of this Nation. We are grateful for the private contributions, the many church groups and people of faith who have come to help us, and we are excited about this package in this emergency supplemental.

When we began this journey 4 or 5 months ago, there were some on the opposition side that said we didn’t need to include any of this; that this is for an emergency overseas. But I really want to remind everyone that we are still in a state of emergency on the gulf coast, and asking for \$3.7 billion in a \$120 billion bill is really not too much to ask for hard-working American taxpayers whose homes had never flooded before. Many of these home owners and business owners never had an inch of water in them, but they suddenly came home or woke up to 12 to 14 feet of water, up to their roofs, ruining everything they had worked for, sometimes everything their parents and grandparents had worked for.

Briefly, what we have done, in this last minute as I summarize, is to waive the 10-percent match, which is critical. It is not only the money that is helpful, obviously, to not have to put up that 10 percent, but mostly by waiving the match we are waiving 90 percent of the redtape that is keeping these hard-working people who are doing everything they can to rebuild their lives.

There were some in the administration who wanted to play games with the levees, and move levees from the east bank to the west bank and say we will fund it later. Well, there is no later for us. There is now, and we are going to build these levees and protect the people in south Louisiana. That has been done.

One other part that is very important to me, and a provision I objected to when it was first implemented 2 years ago, is the option for the forgiveness of loans, which had been taken away. I said, on behalf of the people I represent, we are entitled to the same response that other communities have received, and this bill gives us justice on the gulf coast.

In addition, there is some money for help for our criminal justice system that needs improvement, and to correct some of the teacher shortages as a result of the collapse and damage to many schools, and teachers who have had to move to higher ground but who want to come back to teach the children.

Finally, let me thank Senator MURRAY, who has been extraordinary in her efforts on our behalf. I also thank Senator BYRD, the chairman of our committee. They were not going to let this bill get through without Katrina and Rita being recognized and the hundreds of thousands of people who are depending on this Congress to keep fighting for them and to at least meet them

halfway. We do not look for charity, we look for a hand up. We look for our Government to meet us halfway.

We can afford at least 10 to 15 days’ worth of Iraq spending toward rebuilding the great energy coast of America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it was important from the outset that this supplemental, these funds, be provided to the troops by Memorial Day. The President told us the first week in February that he needed the funds to support troops stationed overseas. A month and a half after the Secretary of Defense stepped in, he said delays would seriously disrupt key military programs. The Army Chief of Staff told us if he didn’t get the funds soon, he would have to take Draconian measures that would impact readiness and impose hardships on soldiers and their families. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace, said delays would force the Army to cut quality-of-life initiatives.

Then the calls started coming from Iraq. The chief spokesman of the Multinational Forces, General Caldwell, told us that delays in funding have already started to hamstring our efforts to train Iraqi security units. That was more than a month and a half ago.

It was 108 days ago the President said he needed funds for the troops. But since that first request in early February until today, Congress has voted more than 30 times on Iraq-related measures without approving a single dime. Mr. President, 108 days and more than 30 votes later, Congress is finally sending these funds to the troops.

Many on this side of the aisle are disappointed that the final bill contains billions of dollars in spending for items unrelated to the war, but we are relieved the Democratic leadership has decided to strip a reckless and nonsensical surrender date from the bill.

One other thing. It is important the Iraqi Government be held accountable. It needs to engage in political reconciliation, and this bill calls upon them to do just that. Members on both sides are deeply frustrated with the Iraqi Government. Anything that puts pressure on them without putting pressure on U.S. troops is a step in the right direction.

I have been saying since January that benchmarks would be a good idea. General Petraeus and General Pace have said the Baghdad security plan is a necessary precondition for political progress in Iraq. We need to be sure Iraqi politicians are putting the same effort into their half of the bargain as our men and women in uniform.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will report back to Congress at the end of the summer, and the success or failure of the security plan will be clear by the end of the year.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill, which finally gives the troops the funds they need. We

should remember as we return home to our families this weekend that thousands of American men and women will be fighting for us far away from their homes. The very least we can do for them this Memorial Day is to give them the tools they need to stay in the fight.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' CARE, KATRINA RECOVERY, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives on the bill, H.R. 2206, making emergency supplemental appropriations and additional supplemental appropriations for agricultural and other emergency assistance for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

H.R. 2206

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2206) entitled “An Act making emergency supplemental appropriations and additional supplemental appropriations for agricultural and other emergency assistance for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes”, with the following:

House amendment to Senate amendment:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the amendment of the Senate, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007”.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

TITLE I—SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR DEFENSE, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND OTHER SECURITY-RELATED NEEDS

TITLE II—HURRICANE KATRINA RECOVERY

TITLE III—ADDITIONAL DEFENSE, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND HOMELAND SECURITY PROVISIONS

TITLE IV—ADDITIONAL HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY

TITLE V—OTHER EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS

TITLE VI—OTHER MATTERS

TITLE VII—ELIMINATION OF SCHIP SHORTFALL AND OTHER HEALTH MATTERS

TITLE VIII—FAIR MINIMUM WAGE AND TAX RELIEF

TITLE IX—AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

TITLE X—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The following sums in this Act are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007.

TITLE I—SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR DEFENSE, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND OTHER SECURITY-RELATED NEEDS

CHAPTER 1

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

PUBLIC LAW 480 TITLE II GRANTS

For an additional amount for “Public Law 480 Title II Grants”, during the current fiscal year, not otherwise recoverable, and unrecovered prior years’ costs, including interest thereon, under the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, for commodities supplied in connection with dispositions abroad under title II of said Act, \$350,000,000, to remain available until expended.

CHAPTER 2

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LEGAL ACTIVITIES

SALARIES AND EXPENSES, GENERAL LEGAL ACTIVITIES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses, General Legal Activities”, \$1,648,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

SALARIES AND EXPENSES, UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses, United States Attorneys”, \$5,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$6,450,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$1,736,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$118,260,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$8,468,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$4,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

FEDERAL PRISON SYSTEM

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$17,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2008.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS CHAPTER

SEC. 1201. Funds provided in this Act for the “Department of Justice, United States Marshals Service, Salaries and Expenses” shall be made available according to the language relating to such account in the joint explanatory statement accompanying the conference report on H.R. 1591 of the 110th Congress (H. Rept. 110-107).

SEC. 1202. Funds provided in this Act for the “Department of Justice, Legal Activities, Salaries and Expenses, General Legal Activities”, shall be made available according to the language relating to such account in the joint explanatory statement accompanying the conference report on H.R. 1591 of the 110th Congress (H. Rept. 110-107).

CHAPTER 3

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—MILITARY

MILITARY PERSONNEL

MILITARY PERSONNEL, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Military Personnel, Army”, \$8,510,270,000.

MILITARY PERSONNEL, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Military Personnel, Navy”, \$692,127,000.

MILITARY PERSONNEL, MARINE CORPS

For an additional amount for “Military Personnel, Marine Corps”, \$1,386,871,000.

MILITARY PERSONNEL, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Military Personnel, Air Force”, \$1,079,287,000.

RESERVE PERSONNEL, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Reserve Personnel, Army”, \$147,244,000.

RESERVE PERSONNEL, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Reserve Personnel, Navy”, \$77,800,000.

RESERVE PERSONNEL, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Reserve Personnel, Air Force”, \$5,500,000.

NATIONAL GUARD PERSONNEL, ARMY

For an additional amount for “National Guard Personnel, Army”, \$436,025,000.

NATIONAL GUARD PERSONNEL, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “National Guard Personnel, Air Force”, \$24,500,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Army”, \$20,373,379,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Navy”, \$4,652,670,000, of which up to \$120,293,000 shall be transferred to Coast Guard, “Operating Expenses”, for reimbursement for activities which support activities requested by the Navy.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, MARINE CORPS

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps”, \$1,146,594,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Air Force”, \$6,650,881,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide”, \$2,714,487,000, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$25,000,000 may be used for the Combatant Commander Initiative Fund, to be used in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom; and

(2) not to exceed \$200,000,000, to remain available until expended, may be used for payments to reimburse Pakistan, Jordan, and other key cooperating nations, for logistical, military, and other support provided to United States military operations, notwithstanding any other provision of law: Provided, That such payments may be made in such amounts as the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, and in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, may determine, in his discretion, based on documentation determined by the Secretary of Defense to adequately account for the support provided, and such determination is final and conclusive upon the accounting officers of the United States, and 15 days following notification to the appropriate congressional committees: Provided further, That the Secretary of Defense shall provide quarterly reports to the congressional defense committees on the use of funds provided in this paragraph.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Army Reserve”, \$74,049,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Navy Reserve”, \$111,066,000.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, MARINE CORPS RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps Reserve”, \$13,591,000.