



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release: December 17, 2011 Contact: Rob Blumenthal: 202-224-7363

Senate Approves FY 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Senate has approved, by a vote of 67 to 32, the Conference Report on H.R. 2055, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012. The legislation includes the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense; Energy and Water Development; Financial Services and General Government; Homeland Security; Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies; Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; Legislative Branch; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; and State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bills. The Senate also approved, by a vote of 72 to 27, H.R. 3672, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2012.

Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) released the following statement today:

“The Omnibus bill the Senate considers today represents a victory for compromise, a victory for American taxpayers, and a victory for the appropriations process.

“The measure before us funds everything from our men and women in uniform to students who strive to improve their future through higher education, from environmental protection to protecting our children from harmful products, and from Homeland Security to the Securities and Exchange Commission. With the exception of the Department of Defense, all of these agencies have been running on a Continuing Resolution for well over a year now. This must stop. It is no way to run a government, particularly one that must learn to do more with less. How can an agency be more efficient when it is operating under budget plans that were developed two or even three years ago?

“At the opening of the Conference for this bill, I told the assembled Members that the final legislation presented to the House and the Senate would include something for everyone to dislike. Clearly, based on press reports, I was correct. There are provisions in this legislation that I would not have included if I was negotiating with a Democratic majority in the House. But such is not the case. Compromise means that I get something, and the other guy gets something. So I urge all of my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to look at the entire package, and not just at one or two things you don’t like. The fact of the matter is that Congress could produce a bill that only Democrats like, or one that only Republicans like, but we all know neither bill would make it to the President’s desk.

“Last year the Congress enacted only one appropriations measure, the Defense bill. This year, we have passed a minibus containing three bills, and we are now considering a final package incorporating the nine remaining bills. While it is true that we again fall short of regular order, it is also true that if the Senate passes this measure and the President signs it into law, we will have succeeded in enacting each of our bills prior to end of the calendar year for the first time since 2009.

“I would note for my colleagues that in the Senate, the Appropriations Committee reported 11 bills, nine of them with overwhelming bipartisan support. We moved four of our bills across the Senate floor, with an opportunity for every Senator to offer amendments. We accomplished all of this at a time when partisanship is high and the desire by some to delay even the most innocuous of bills has made it difficult to get any measure to the President.

“As Chairman of the Defense Subcommittee, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss that portion of the bill. This consolidated appropriations bill includes \$633 billion for the Department of Defense. This amount includes a \$20.8 billion reduction from the President’s request for the base defense budget and a reduction of \$2.5 billion from the Overseas Contingency Operations request. Although these substantial reductions in the defense budget mean that many tough decisions had to be made, I assure my colleagues that all the recommendations in the defense bill were made in a fully bipartisan, bicameral manner.

“Most importantly, let me assure my colleagues that this agreement takes care of our men and women in uniform and their families, fully supports military readiness, protects the forces, and maintains our technological edge. It complies with the earmark moratorium and contains no congressionally directed spending items.

“At the same time, it reins in defense spending and takes important steps to improve the Department’s fiscal accountability. The conference agreement recommends 775 reductions to individual programs, primarily because of program terminations or delays, changes to policies or programs since the submission of the budget ten months ago, or inadequate justification in an era of fiscal discipline.

“The bill limits the production of the Joint Strike Fighter to 31 aircraft, and slows the planned production rate for the following year. It supports the restructured Joint Light Tactical Vehicle program, saving taxpayers \$500 million. The bill terminates the troubled Defense Weather Satellite System and saves funds from the delayed Joint Tactical Radio Systems program. It incorporates savings from programs that the Department of Defense identified as being no longer needed, and rescinds \$2.6 billion from unused prior-year funds. These reductions are the product of careful bipartisan, bicameral negotiations, and do not target urgently needed capabilities.

“Even with the large reductions to the budget request, the bill invests in our men and women in uniform, and their families that support them. It fully funds the requested military endstrength and the 1.6 percent authorized pay raise for military personnel, and increases funding for personnel shortfalls that were identified after the budget was submitted. It restores funding for family support and education programs and increases funding to address shortfalls in our military schools.

“The agreement increases funding for the Defense Health Program by \$1 billion over the fiscal year 2011 level to ensure that our military and their families are provided the quality healthcare they deserve, and also invests in life saving medical research.

“The agreement takes extra caution to protect readiness funding to ensure that our forces are properly trained and their equipment is adequately maintained. Reductions recommended in our operation and maintenance funds come almost exclusively because of poor budgeting practices by the Department.

“The agreement also provides funding to address urgent equipment shortfalls and improve protection for our troops overseas. It includes \$2.4 billion for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, adds \$230 million for Special Operations Command equipment shortfalls, accelerates the purchase of six Black Hawk battle loss helicopters for the Army, and adds \$1 billion for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account.

“Furthermore, the bill makes targeted investments to maintain our technological superiority on the battlefield. The agreement fully funds basic scientific research programs across the military services. It fully funds critical modernization initiatives like the Air Force Aerial Refueling Tanker and the Navy’s ballistic missile submarine. The bill adds \$100 million for the Next Generation Bomber and accelerates the purchase of a much-needed communications satellite. The bill also provides the needed amount of funding for Army modernization initiatives such as the Ground Combat Vehicle, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, and the Armed Scout Helicopter.

“The defense appropriations bill complies with the discretionary budget caps mandated by the Budget Control Act. This product is a carefully crafted, bipartisan bill. While I understand there may be debate over individual recommendations, in total, this is a good bill and I urge bipartisan support of the measure.

“As the Chairman of the full Committee, I am proud of the work done on these nine bills by the Appropriations Committee, its Members and its staff, each of whom have worked diligently late into the night for many months to arrive at this point. All of the subcommittee Chairmen and Ranking Members should be recognized for their leadership and achievement in completing these nine remaining bills. I also wish to recognize the dedicated staff, on both sides of the aisle, for their months of effort and their commitment to completing their individual bills.

“This is a strong, bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote yes, and send it on to the President for his signature.

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