



Friday, July 10, 2009

| House Meets At... | Votes Predicted At... |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 9:00 a.m. For Legislative Business Five "One-minutes" Per Side | Last vote: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. |

Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported immediately to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.

Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **H. Res. 622 – Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 3082 – Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2010 (Rep. Pingree – Rules)**: The structured rule provides for one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule makes in order the amendments printed the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. The rule provides that each such amendment may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. The rule provides that for those amendments reported from the Committee of the Whole, the question of their adoption shall be put to the House en gros and without demand for division of the question. The rule provides one motion to recommit the bill with or without instructions. The rule provides that after consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their designees each may offer one pro forma amendment to the bill for the purpose of debate, which shall be controlled by the proponent. The rule provides that the Chair may entertain a motion that the Committee rise only if offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee. The rule also provides that the Chair may not entertain a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill. Finally, the rule provides that during consideration of H.R. 3802, the Chair may reduce to two minutes the minimum time for electronic voting. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Pingree, and consideration will proceed as follows:

 - One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on a Democratic Motion ordering the previous question. **Members are urged to VOTE YES.**

- Vote on adoption of the rule. **Members are urged to VOTE YES.**

- **H.R. 3082 – Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2010 (Rep. Edwards (TX) – Appropriations):**
 Pursuant to H.Res. 622, general debate on the bill will be managed by Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. Dave Obey or his designee. Consideration on the bill will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of general debate on the bill.
 - Debate and possible votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on final passage of the bill. **Members are urged to VOTE YES.**

Bill Summary & Key Issues

Summary of H.R. 3082 – Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2010

BILL TOTAL

2009 Enacted: \$72.9 billion

President's Request: \$77.7 billion

Committee Mark: \$77.9 billion

KEY INVESTMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS: \$108.9 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$14.5 billion above 2009, for veterans' medical care, claims processors, and facility improvements. In addition, \$48.2 billion is provided in advance appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for three medical accounts: medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities.

Veterans Health Administration (VHA): \$45.1 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$4.4 billion above 2009 after adjusting for transfers approved by the Committee on January 6, 2009, for veterans medical care. The Veterans Health Administration estimates they will treat more than 6.1 million patients in 2010 including more than 419,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan (56,000 more than 2010).

- **Medical Services:** \$34.7 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$4.0 billion above 2009 after adjusting for approved transfers, to improve access to medical services for all veterans.
- **Mental Health:** \$4.6 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$800 million above 2009, for mental health care.

- **Assistance for Homeless Vets:** \$3.2 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$949 million above 2009, includes \$26 million for a Presidential Initiative to combat homelessness, \$150 million for the homeless grants and per diem program, \$20 million for supportive services for low income veterans and families, in addition to \$21 million to hire additional personnel for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program.
- **Rural Health:** The Department estimates that \$440 million will be spent in fiscal year 2010 on innovative practices to improve access to care for veterans in rural areas. More than 3.2 million (41%) of enrolled veterans live in rural or highly rural areas.
- **Medical Support and Compliance:** \$4.9 billion, \$200 million below the President's Request and \$450 million above 2009, to ensure the efficient operation of the Department's health care system.
- **Medical Facilities:** \$4.9 billion, \$200 million above the President's Request and \$136 million below 2009, for non-recurring maintenance at existing VA facilities to address identified shortfalls and to ensure the Department's facilities remain capable of delivering world class medicine.
- **Medical and Prosthetic Research:** \$580 million, the same as the President's Request and \$70 million above 2009, for medical and prosthetic research related to veterans health, including a \$48 million increase for research to address the critical needs of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans.

Major and Minor Construction: \$1.9 billion, \$127 million above the President's Request and \$256 million above 2009. Major construction funding of \$1.2 billion will enable the Department to implement the recommendations made by the Capitol Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission, which was established to look at facilities and determine their construction needs. The increase in minor construction will enable the Department to complete approximately 100 projects in 2010.

Extended Care Facilities: \$85 million, the same as the President's Request and \$90 million below 2009, for grants to states for construction and renovation of extended care facilities. States must provide 35% of the cost, while the Department pays the other 65%.

General Operating Expenses: \$2.1 billion, \$135 million below the President's Request and \$287 million above 2009, to enable the Department to hire roughly 1,200 additional claims processors to continue to work down the backlog of benefits claims and to reduce the time to process new claims. The most recent VA quarterly status report estimates that nearly 397,000 claims are pending.

Information Technology: \$3.3 billion, the same as the President's Request and \$558.9 million above 2009 after adjusting for transfers approved by the Committee on January 6, 2009. New initiatives in 2010 include paperless benefits processing and improvements in electronic health records.

Inspector General: \$107 million, the same as the President's Request and \$19.2 million above 2009, to provide additional oversight personnel, including initiatives regarding financial audit and information technology program reviews.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION: \$24.6 billion, \$226 million above the President's Request and \$472 million below 2009, including \$1.4 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations. The decrease from 2009 is attributable to the expected decline in BRAC construction requirements and the success of the family housing privatization program.

- **Trainee Troop Housing Initiative:** \$450 million to accelerate the Army's program to modernize troop housing facilities for trainees. The Army has a need for \$2.2 billion to bring all 115,413 trainee barracks spaces up to standard and the program currently is not scheduled to finish until 2017.
- **Guard and Reserve Initiative:** \$200 million in additional funding is provided for Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy and Marine Corps Reserve, and Air Force Reserve construction to address critical unfunded requirements, in recognition of the tremendous contributions made by Guard and Reserve personnel to emergency assistance, homeland security, and national defense.
- **BRAC 1990 Environmental Cleanup:** \$537 million, \$140 million above the President's Request and \$78 million above 2009, to address the large unfunded backlog of environmental cleanup for bases that were closed during the four previous BRAC rounds.
- **2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and Re-stationing:** \$7.5 billion, same as the President's request, to implement base closures and realignments, and support the re-stationing of troops and their families from overseas to the United States.
- **Military Housing:** \$2 billion, same as the President's Request, to continue eliminating inadequate military housing.
- **Overseas Contingency Operations:** \$1.4 billion to support additional military construction requirements to support operations and troop increases in Afghanistan.

RELATED AGENCIES

American Battle Monuments Commission: \$61.8 million, \$1.5 million above the President's Request and \$2.3 million above 2009. This funding provides for the care and operation of our military monuments and cemeteries around the world.

United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims: \$27.1 million, the same as the President's Request and \$3.8 million below 2009, which included \$7 million in one-time costs for the planning and design of a new facility.

Cemeterial Expenses: \$42.5 million, \$5.3 million above the President's Request and \$5.8 million above 2009, for Arlington cemetery. The additional funding will enable relocation of power and telephone lines to make ground available for over 8,000 additional gravesites.

Armed Forces Retirement Home: \$134 million, the same as the President's Request and \$71 million above 2009, for the Armed Forces Retirement Home, including \$72 million for capital expenditures.

IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS

Advanced VA Healthcare Funding: The bill provides advance appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for three medical accounts: medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities, to ensure timely and predictable funding for the veterans health care system.

**Amendments to H.R. 3082 – Military Construction and Veterans Affairs
Appropriations Act, 2010**

1. **Cohen:** Reduces funding for the General Operating Expenses account by \$1,000,000 and increases the Medical Services account by \$1,000,000 in order to offer educational debt forgiveness for mental health professionals who agree to employment at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Department needs to hire more mental health professionals and this program improves their ability to recruit quality staff.
Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES.

2. **Filner/Langevin:** Reduces funding in the Medical Support and Compliance account by \$3,500,000 and provides an increase of \$3,500,000 to the General Operating Expenses account for the Department of Veterans Affairs Paralympics program. This program not only provides support to veteran Paralympics athletes but also offers community programs to provide all veterans with sports that assist in their recovery.
Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES

3. **Capito:** Provides an increase of \$1,000,000 for the pro bono program of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, providing increased assistance to low income veterans who have claims before the Court.
Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES.

4. **Garrett:** Decreases the Department of Veterans Affairs Minor Construction account by \$4,000,000 and provides an increase of \$4,000,000 for the grant program for construction of State Veterans Cemeteries. The increase in funding will address a backlog of projects valued at \$151 million.
Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES.

5. **Sessions:** Requires a report from the Department of Veterans Affairs detailing the current and planned use of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in its medical facilities, including the types of conditions being treated, the success rate of the treatments, and the current inventory of hyperbaric chambers. Such therapy has a potential to decrease recovery time for serious war wounds and other chronic conditions.
Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES.

6. **Flake:** Strikes funding for all congressionally directed Military Construction projects. This amendment would eliminate more than a hundred training, maintenance, quality of life, force protection, and other

projects for both the active duty and Reserve components. Member-requested projects represent less than one-half of one percent of total spending in the bill.

Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE NO.

7. **Hensarling:** Strikes the Marine Mammal Surgical Center project from the Military Construction portion of the bill. This project improves an existing veterinary care facility for animals used by the Navy for force protection, mine hunting, and other missions, and was in the most recent Navy Future Years Defense Plan.

Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE NO.

8. **Moore (WI):** Prohibits funds to be used for enhanced-use lease activities at three National Homes for Disabled Soldiers.

Chairman Obey recommends that Members VOTE YES.

Quote of the Day

“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country.”

— George Washington