

APPROPRIATIONS ALERT

BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET, REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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FISCAL YEAR 2008 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS A SWEEPING YEAR-END SPENDING BILL (H.R. 2764)

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Nearing the close of their first year in the Majority, House Democrats have amassed 11 regular appropriations bills into a single, \$515-billion omnibus package mainly to fund the government's domestic agencies. The 3,565-page bill, filed at 12:30 a.m. today, also includes \$31 billion in war funding for Afghanistan, but no money to support troops in Iraq.

Although a measure of this magnitude reflects undisciplined legislating and invites embarrassing errors, the bill is an improvement over previous House Democratic spending plans. Largely due to the resolve of House Republicans and the President, Democrats have shaved \$21 billion from their previous House-passed spending bills – an amount that would translate to a \$204-billion increase over the President when extended over 5 years. When the omnibus is combined with the already-enacted defense appropriations bill, non-emergency discretionary spending will total \$933 billion – the level requested by the President.

Nevertheless, because the omnibus lacks funding for troops in Iraq, and contains other restrictive policy language, the administration has stated the President would veto the bill in its current form.

Fiscal Year 2008 Base Discretionary Spending (excludes Global War Against Terrorism) (dollars in billions)

| | 2007 Enacted | 2008 President | 2008 House | 2008 Democrats | 2008 Dems. v. President |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Enacted DoD | 420 | 463 | 459 | 459 | -3.5 |
| Omnibus | 453 | 470 | 495 | 474 | +3.5 |
| Total, Base Discretionary | 873 | 933 | 954 | 933 | 0 |
| Memorandum: Emergencies | | | | | |
| Enacted (2 nd CR) | – | – | – | 6 | – |
| Omnibus | – | – | – | 11 | – |
| Total Emergencies | – | – | – | 17 | – |

Key points about the bill include the following:

- **Covers 11 Regular Appropriations Bills.** The measure contains \$474 billion for domestic programs and activities covered by the 11 regular appropriations bills that have not been enacted. (To date, only the Defense Appropriations bill – H.R. 3222, Public Law 110-116 – has been passed and signed into law.)

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- **Limits Troop Funding, and Blocks Fund Transfers.** As noted above, the bill contains \$31 billion to fund operations in Afghanistan only. It provides no funds for activities in Iraq, and contains restrictive language preventing the Department of Defense from transferring funds to support those troops.
 - **Includes Emergency Veterans Health Spending.** A sum of \$3.7 billion for veterans' health care is included as "contingent" emergency spending – meaning the President must request the spending as an emergency.
 - **Adds \$7.5 Billion in Other Emergency Spending.** The bill also contains \$7.5 billion in additional emergency-designated spending, including: \$2.7 billion for border security; \$2.4 billion for international affairs programs; \$300 million for wildfire suppression; \$602 million for drought relief; \$400 million for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]; \$195 million for the collapsed Minnesota bridge; and \$250 million for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program [LIHEAP].
 - **Extends Certain Farm Bill Programs.** The bill extends certain 2002 farm bill programs through 15 March 2008. Because these programs have an existing mandatory baseline, there is no new budgetary impact.
 - **Extends Aviation Taxes and Spending.** The bill also extends aviation tax collection and expenditure authority for the Airport and Airways Trust Fund. There is no budgetary impact.