



# COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

DAVE OBEY, CHAIRMAN

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## FY 2008 Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON – Today the Congress unveiled the details of an end of the year package to wrap up work on the annual funding bills.

Dave Obey (D-WI), Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, summed it up this way, “The omnibus appropriations bill is totally inadequate to meet the long term investment needs of the country, but it is a whole lot better than the country would have without a Democratic Congress.”

“We have arrived at this point because the White House and their allies in the Senate have refused to respond to the American people’s cry for change in the last election. If America wants new budget priorities, we are going to need a new President who will reflect those priorities and we need more progressive voices to the Senate so that we can have a working majority in that body, something which we now lack. America needs a President who will not have as his only priority asking Congress for more and more money in Iraq at the expense of our society here at home.”

“Congress began its work having to fill some of the unacceptable holes created in the President’s budget. Even as the President asked for another \$200 billion for Iraq, he sent Congress a budget that cuts America’s priority needs. His budget essentially froze most domestic funding, producing real cuts.”

“Even though we have had huge difficulty persuading the President to listen to any reasonable compromises, it is important to understand the differences between the President’s original budget and some of the priority changes that we have been able to achieve in this bill.”

### **The President’s budget would have required:**

- CUTS of 800 grants for **Medical Research** at NIH.
- CUTS in programs that **Provide Access to Healthcare** by \$595 million.
- CUTS to **Rural Health Initiatives** of 50%.
- CUTS in crucial funds for **Education** by \$1.2 billion.
- ELIMINATION of every **Student Aid** program except Pell Grants and Work Study.
- CUTS in **Vocational Education** by 50%.
- CUTS in support for **State and Local Law Enforcement** by \$1.4 billion at DOJ.
- CUTS in **Homeland Security Grants** for police, firefighters and medical personnel by \$1.1 billion.
- **SHORTCHANGING Highway Infrastructure.**
- CUTS in **Renewable Energy** programs at DOE by \$195 million and freezes in **Scientific Research.**

**This bill rejects those priorities, moving crucial amounts from lower priority programs and investing in:**

- **Medical Research:** \$607 million above the President's request to study diseases like Alzheimer's, cancer, Parkinson's and diabetes.
- **Healthcare Access:** \$1 billion above the President's request, making targeted increases to programs like Community Health Centers to provide 280,000 more underinsured Americans with access to healthcare and High Risk Insurance Pools to help 200,000 more people afford health insurance.
- **Rural Healthcare:** \$147 million above the President's request to help 1,200 small, rural hospitals.
- **K-12 Education:** \$767 million above the President's request with targeted increases to Title 1, Special Education, Teacher Quality Grants, After School Programs, and Head Start.
- **Student Aid:** \$1.7 billion above the President's request for Pell Grants and other student aid programs.
- **Vocational Education:** \$575 million above the President's request for technical training at high schools and community colleges.
- **State and Local Law Enforcement:** \$1.2 billion above the President's request to help local communities across the country.
- **Homeland Security Grants:** \$1.8 billion above the President's request, recognizing that fighting terror must be a top priority.
- **Highway Infrastructure:** Meets the guaranteed levels set in the authorization bill and provides a \$1 billion initiative for our bridges.
- **Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency:** \$486 million above the President's request for important investments in Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Biofuels, and Energy Efficiency, with a careful blend of new scientific investments and conservation efforts.

“This bill also provides \$3.7 billion in additional funding for veterans healthcare, a proposal which the President at first said he would veto. Meeting the needs of our veterans has been the number one appropriations priority of Congressional Democrats this year,” said Obey.

“It's unfortunate that even though our appropriations bills passed the House with large bi-partisan majorities, the President still refused to work with the Congress and refused to compromise. Given the President's refusal to compromise and given the inability of the Senate to produce the 60 votes necessary to move legislation forward, this is the best we can do. Unlike last year, when the previous Republican Congress failed to complete any of its work on domestic funding bills, we are recognizing that in an adult world, we have an obligation to the country to complete our budget work and move on. That is what we're trying to do with this bill,” Obey concluded.

**War Funding**

- **Afghanistan:** Recognizing the importance of our efforts in Afghanistan, the bill includes \$31 billion for operations in Afghanistan.
- **Prohibition:** Prohibits funds from being used for operations in Iraq.