

MINORITY VIEWS

The fiscal year 2013 Military Construction, Veterans' Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill sufficiently funds critical military construction, family housing and quality of life improvements and enhancements for our brave men and women in uniform and their families. In addition, this bill provides adequate funding for VA programs, and it provides a satisfactory amount of funding for our heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice and are honored in the battle monuments and cemeteries that are funded in this bill.

While the allocation for the fiscal year 2013 Military Construction, Veterans' Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill is adequate, we are very disappointed that House Republicans walked away from the hard fought bipartisan agreement reached to establish a discretionary spending cap of \$1.047 trillion for fiscal year 2013 and instead opted to create a new number, \$19 billion below what we agreed to. This puts House Republicans at odds with the President, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, and House Democrats who have all maintained that we must stick to the Budget Control Act allocation which is defined in statute. The lower allocation, if it stays in effect, will vastly slow down economic growth, impede job creation, and cause more uncertainty.

We believe that the position of House Republicans is unsustainable and that by the end of the process we will be back to the agreed upon allocation of \$1.047 trillion with their breach of trust having only served to slow the process down.

During Full Committee consideration, the Committee adopted by voice vote an amendment to prohibit the use of Project Labor Agreements (PLA). The amendment nullifies the decision-making ability of the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, American Battle Monuments Commission, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and Arlington National Cemetery, to use a PLA business model. All of these agencies currently have two choices: either "yes" we want to use a PLA or "no" we don't want to use PLA. The new language does not allow them to make a "yes" or "no" choice. PLAs ensure that construction projects are built correctly the first time, on time, and as a result, on budget for the end user. In addition, PLAs prevent costly delays that usually result from an unskilled workforce's lack of knowledge regarding the use of building materials or tools as well as job site safety measures. By including the ban on PLAs, the bill will delay new construction and add to the end cost.

In conclusion, we commend the Chairman for his efforts in setting the funding levels in the bill and being receptive to Democratic Members' concerns; however, we are extremely disappointed that Republicans chose to include an ideological, divisive policy rider in a bill that is known for strong bipartisan support.

NORMAN D. DICKS.
SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

