

For Immediate Release

Contact: Vicki Prost, 2006

### Byrd - Obey Announce FY 2007 Plan

WASHINGTON - On Saturday, President Bush signed the third continuing resolution to cover for the financial mess left by the outgoing Republican Congressional Leadership. However, that short-term measure only lasts until February 15, 2007. U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., and U.S. Representative Dave Obey, D-Wisc., will lead the Senate and House Appropriations Committees when the new Congress convenes. Today, they issued a joint statement outlining their plan to complete the unfinished federal funding bills for the current fiscal year.

---

The Congressional Republican Leadership started the year with a budget so unrealistic that their own members rejected it. Despite the best efforts of the chairmen of the Appropriations Committees, the GOP has ended the year without so much as completing work on a single appropriations bill that invests in our communities, provides for the medical care of our veterans, helps to fight crime in our communities, or works to make college more affordable. It is a record of dismal failure for the American people. Now, the incoming 110th Congress will have to clean up the mess left behind.

The new Congress will face, as one of its first orders of business, the job of finishing the appropriations process for the current year. We also must prepare for February's arrival of the President's new budget and an expensive White House request for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The outgoing Republican Leadership's failure to govern has denied the new Congress the opportunity to start with a fresh slate.

As incoming Chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, we are now responsible for finding a way out of this fiscal mayhem. It is important that we clear the decks quickly so that we can get to work on the American people's priorities, the President's anticipated war funding request, and a new budget.

Unfortunately, there are no good options available to us to complete the unfinished work of the

Republican Congress. After discussions with our colleagues, we have decided to dispose of the Republican budget leftovers by passing a year-long joint resolution. We will do our best to make whatever limited adjustments are possible within the confines of the Republican budget to address the nation's most important policy concerns. We intend to work with the leadership of both parties in both houses to do what we can to resolve last year's disputes and turn to the challenges facing us in the new fiscal year.

While the results will be far from ideal, this path provides the best way to dispose of the unfinished business quickly, and allow governors, state and local officials, and families to finally plan for the coming year with some knowledge of what the federal government is funding.

There will be no Congressional earmarks in the joint funding resolution that we will pass. We will place a moratorium on all earmarks until a reformed process is put in place. Earmarks included in this year's House and Senate bills will be eligible for consideration in the 2008 process, subject to new standards for transparency and accountability. We will work to restore an accountable, above-board, transparent process for funding decisions and put an end to the abuses that have harmed the credibility of Congress.

There is no good way out of the fiscal chaos left behind by the outgoing Congress. Indeed, this joint resolution provides the Administration far too much latitude in spending the people's money. But that is a temporary price that we will pay in order to give the President's new budget the attention and oversight it deserves and requires, and so that we can begin work right away at putting the people's priorities front and center. We, in the new Congress, have a responsibility to build the foundation for a better future. We cannot begin that work until we fix the problems left behind by the Republican Congress. So, we must turn the page on the Republican failures and work together in the best interests of the American people.

The last time each of the appropriations bills were passed by Congress individually and signed into law on time was 1994 -- the last time we both chaired the Appropriations Committees. That is the best way to govern and we are committed to that effort.

###

