



The Daily Whip

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2003

House Meets At...	Last Vote Predicted At...
10:00 a.m.: Legislative Business Five "One Minutes" Per Side	5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

***** NOTE THAT TODAY WE EXPECT IMPORTANT VOTES ON THE LABOR-HHS APPROPRIATIONS BILL. ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL. PLEASE NOTIFY THE DEMOCRATIC WHIP'S FLOOR STAFF IF YOU WILL BE ABSENT.**

FLOOR SCHEDULE

H.R. 2660 – Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (*Rep. Regula-Appropriations*) (*Open Rule with three hours of general debate*).

Motion to go to Conference on H.R. 1 – GOP Medicare Prescription Drug Bill – Motion to Instruct Conferees.

BILL SUMMARY AND KEY ISSUES

H.R. 2660 – Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (*Rep. Regula-Appropriations*) (*Open Rule with three hours of general debate*). This bill fails to meet specific promises made by Republicans to increase funding for education programs and shortchanges critically needed programs during this time of record unemployment, rising numbers of Americans without health insurance, and state budget cutbacks. This bill was opposed by all Democrats on the Appropriations Committee on June 25th.

H.R. 2660 Breaks Republican Promises to Increase Overall Education Funding. Just over two months ago, the Majority passed a conference report for the FY 04 Budget Resolution that promised to provide a \$3 billion increase over the previous year for the Department of Education. This bill falls far short of that commitment, and provides only a \$2.3 billion (or 4.3%) increase -- the smallest dollar increase for education in four years and the smallest percentage increase in eight years.

- **H.R. 2660 Fails To Meet Commitment To Leave No Child Left Behind.** When the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law, President Bush and Congress promised to provide greater resources in exchange for reforms. Although states are working towards the new accountability goals, this bill provides only a \$382 million (or 1.6%) increase over current funding for the No Child Left Behind Act – which is a freeze in real terms and \$8 billion short of full funding.
- **H.R. 2660 Breaks Repeated Promises To Increase Special Education Funding.** The FY 04 Budget Resolution conference report also promised to increase IDEA funding by \$2.2 billion over the current level to help school districts meet the cost of special education. During the recent IDEA reauthorization debate, Republicans again promised this increase. This bill provides less than half of the increase promised -- a \$1.2 billion shortfall.
- **H.R. 2660 Breaks Promises to Increase Title I Funding.** The FY 04 Budget Resolution conference report also included a \$1 billion (or 8.6%) increase over the current level for Title I grants to school districts. Yet, the \$12.35 billion provided in this bill is \$334 million short of the amount promised in the budget for the 9 million low-income children that qualify for Title I assistance. This amount is more than \$ 6 billion below the amount authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act.
- **H.R. 2660 Reduces Commitments to Support College Education.** During this time of state cutbacks leading to skyrocketing tuition increases at public universities, this bill freezes the maximum Pell grant at \$4,050. This amount only meets approximately 38% of college costs – compared to 84% when Pell Grants were first established. Nearly 5 million students depend on Pell Grants, the majority of them have incomes of \$30,000 or less. This bill also freezes all other forms of student financial assistance at the same time.

The bill shortchanges other key priorities:

- **H.R. 2660 Cuts Low-Income Heating Assistance (LIHEAP).** This bill cuts LIHEAP funding to \$1.8 billion, which is less than last year, and \$200 million less than the President's \$2 billion request. This important program helps our most vulnerable citizens with their home energy needs.
- **H.R. 2660 Unravels Progress in Scientific and Medical Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).** Over the past five years, Congress has worked on a bipartisan



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basis to double the NIH budget and improve science and medical research. This bill brings that progress to a screeching halt by including only a 2.5% increase -- which is not only a sharp deceleration from the 15% annual increases of the past five years, but also the smallest percentage increase in more than 15 years. This amount is not even enough to keep up with inflation in research costs (which NIH estimates at 3.3%) and will only permit an increase of just two-tenths of one percent in the number of new and competing research grants (outside of the bio-defense area) – just 21 new grants for all of NIH.

- **H.R. 2660 Inadequately Funds Health Care Safety Net Programs.** This bill provides the smallest percentage increase since 1998 for Community Health Centers, which serve 13 million people who lack access to health services in rural and urban areas; provides no increase at all for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, or the National Health Service Corps; and provides no increase for the childhood immunization program, which has already been having trouble keeping up with the rising cost of vaccinating children.
- **H.R. 2660 Slashes Unemployment Programs.** This bill cuts the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) by \$150.8 million. This cut will reduce services for the growing numbers of low-income, working poor and the long-term unemployed. In many areas, this cut will shut down programs which upgrade the skills and marketability of TANF recipients and other low-wage workers. And it will shut down desperately needed emergency food distribution efforts for homeless and other low-income families.
- **H.R. 2660 Underfunds Bioterrorism Preparedness.** This bill provides state and local health departments with \$94 million less in bioterrorism preparedness grants than they received this year. The bill also provides less than half the amount needed to help the Department of HHS prepare to deal with an influenza pandemic.
- **H.R. 2660 Fails To Meet Commitment To Address Nursing Shortage.** After passing the Nurse Reinvestment Act just last year to deal with the critical shortage of nurses, this bill provides no increase at all in funding for those programs. The bill actually contains \$7 million less than the President's request for the nurse scholarship and student loan repayment program.

Under the rule adopted yesterday, germane amendments will be considered under the five-minute rule. Several amendments are expected including one critical amendment by Ranking Members Obey and Miller:

- **The Obey/Miller amendment would prohibit the use of funds to issue or enforce a regulation that would take overtime pay away from any employee who, under current regulations, is entitled to overtime pay.** This amendment seeks to block regulations proposed by the Department of Labor that would make it easier for employers to reclassify workers as "white collar" employees who would be ineligible for overtime compensation. Like the GOP Comp Time bill, these regulations would result in a pay cut for as many as 8 million workers, including some 500,000 critical First Responders such as firefighters, police officers and nurses.

Democrats are strongly urged to VOTE YES on the Obey/Miller amendment.

Even if this amendment is agreed to, DEMOCRATS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO VOTE NO on Final Passage of H.R. 2260.

Daily Quote...

"No private health insurer has expressed eagerness to enter the senior market even with the subsidies that Republicans would provide. Healthy old folks are still old folks, and for HMOs, no ideology will ever carry the weight of an actuarial table."

-Harold Meyerson of the American Prospect in the *Washington Post* today.