



## U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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### **CHAIRMAN BYRD STATEMENT ON SUPPLEMENTAL**

Washington, DC...U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today delivered the following statement on the Senate floor prior to consideration of the FY 2008 War Supplemental legislation.

#### Chairman Byrd's Remarks are Below:

Mr. President. Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee met for 3-1/2 hours and reported responsible legislation that supports the troops, sets a goal for reducing the scope of the mission in Iraq, honors our veterans, and helps Americans cope with a sagging economy. The bill includes \$10 billion of domestic funding not requested by the President, less than what the President spends in Iraq in one month.

Yet, the President has threatened to veto the bill if it is one thin dime over his request. He wants this Congress to approve another \$5.6 billion to rebuild Iraq despite the fact that Iraq has huge surpluses from excess oil revenues. He wants funding for Mexico and Central America. But the President says he will veto the bill if we add funding for bridges in Birmingham, or for help with the high cost of energy bills in Maine, or to fight crime in U.S. towns and cities, or to aid Katrina victims.

Just yesterday, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget repeated the silly assertion that by taking care of America, we hold funding for the troops hostage. This is nonsense! Our legislation includes funds that the President did not request for health care for our troops, for Guard and Reserve equipment, for building and repairing barracks, and for training the Afghans to fight for their own security.

In the amendment we are about to vote on, we honor those who have served America by increasing educational benefits for our veterans. We extend unemployment benefits by another thirteen weeks. We honor promises made to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We roll back Medicaid regulations that our nation's governors believe disrupt health coverage for our most vulnerable citizens. We respond to dramatic increases in food prices by increasing funding for the Global Food Aid program. And we also provide humanitarian relief to disaster victims in China, Bangladesh, and Burma.

This amendment includes provisions that have broad bi-partisan support, such as funding for Byrne grants and the Rural Schools program, which runs out of money on June 30, 2008. In the last 18 months, the President has designated 62 disasters for

floods in 32 states. Yet, the President has not requested funding to repair levees, leaving our citizens in Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, and other states vulnerable to more flooding. We fund those repairs.

This is responsible legislation that supports our troops, honors our veterans, and helps our citizens cope with a troubled economy. I urge adoption of the pending amendment.

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