



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Conferees Approve FY 2006 District of Columbia Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON, DC – House and Senate conferees have approved the fiscal year 2006 District of Columbia spending bill. The bill totals \$603 million in Federal funds, which is \$47.5 million more than the fiscal year 2005 enacted level and \$29.6 million above the President's budget request. The bill will be included as Division B of the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development bill, which is scheduled to be considered in a House-Senate conference this afternoon.

Highlights of the Bill:

- **\$218.9 million for the DC Courts**, an increase of \$29.6 million above the FY '05 enacted level. Most of the increase will pay for renovations, improvements, and expansions of court facilities.
- **\$201.4 million for the DC Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency**, an increase of \$22.8 million above the FY 05 enacted level. The majority of the increase will be used to increase the capacity for residential substance abuse treatment for offenders.
- **\$33.2 million for DC resident tuition support**, which allows DC residents to pay in-state tuition rates at any public university. This is an increase of \$7.8 million over the FY 05 enacted level. Additional funds are necessary because of increasing student enrollment.
- **\$5 million for a new bioterrorism and forensics lab**. The District has a severe lack of lab capacity and limited technology and is therefore forced to rely on the assistance of the FBI's crime lab. Currently, the FBI limits the evidence it will process for the District and is proposing to charge the District for future casework. The limitations on technology and the lack of capacity have led to many cold crime cases in the District.
- **\$13.5 million for emergency planning and security costs** for events that occur in the District due to the fact that the District is the seat of the Federal Government. This \$1.4 million below the FY '05 level, but reflects the rate at which the District is spending these funds.
- **\$40 million to promote inner-city educational opportunities in the District**. The initiative is comprised of 3 interrelated components: investing in excellence in traditional public schools; expanding choice through high quality charter schools; and offering opportunity scholarships for low-income students. Each component is allocated an equal amount of \$13 million, with the remainder available for administrative expenses at the Department of Education.
- **\$7 million for the Water and Sewer Authority to implement the Combined Sewer Overflow System**. Each year the antiquated system, which dates back to 1872, overflows 60-70 times, dumping raw sewage into the Anacostia River. This funding level is \$2 million more than the FY'05 enacted level. The President requested no funds for this purpose. Since FY'02, the Committee has provided \$87 million for this purpose.
- **\$3 million for Marriage Development Accounts**. These accounts will be available to low income married couples who are citizens or legal residents of the District of Columbia and who have very low net worth. MDAs will help couples save money to pay for job training or education, buy a home or start their own business. Participating couples will have a high incentive to save because their contributions will be matched at a ratio of 3:1 by the Federal government and partnering private institutions. As a requirement of participation, couples will receive training that helps them repair their credit, set a budget and savings schedule, and manage their money. Some of these funds will also be for pre-Marriage Development Accounts (pMDAs), which will be available to engaged couples, each of whom is 18 or older. These accounts will also be available to individuals aged 16-22 who are not married, do not have children. pMDAs will help engaged couples build a strong financial and emotional foundation to help foster successful and long-term marriages and will help low-income youths

gain a longer-term perspective and provide incentives and training to make economically and emotionally sound life decisions.

The conference report continues current law on the following general provisions:

- Lobbying: prohibits both Federal and local funds for lobbying purposes, including lobbying for voting representation and statehood.
- Needle exchange: prohibits both Federal and local funds for programs which distribute hypodermic needles.
- Attorney's Fees: caps the amount paid to attorneys at \$4,000 per case in suits against the District of Columbia Public Schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Abortion services: Prohibits Federal and local funds for abortion services, except in the case of rape or incest or to preserve the mother's health.
- Medical Marijuana: Prohibits Federal and local funds to implement a 1998 D.C. initiative in support of the medical use of marijuana.

The bill includes a new provision to transfer 15 acres of Federal land at RFK Stadium to the District of Columbia. The land is currently being used as a parking lot and the bill language stipulates that the land be used for educational purposes.

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