



# U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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Contact: Tom Gavin, 202-224-3904

## **Congress Set to Debate Key Investments in Law Enforcement, Health, Education** *Appropriations Committees Finish Work on FY07 Funding Package*

WASHINGTON, D.C.... The Congress is poised to debate legislation that invests in key national priorities including health care, education, law enforcement, and veterans care.

U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., and U.S. Representative Dave Obey, D-Wisc., the leaders of the Congressional Appropriations Committees, announced on Monday night an agreement on the final federal funding package for the current fiscal year. The House of Representatives is expected to debate and vote on the legislation as early as Wednesday. Senate action will follow.

"This legislation makes smart investments in national priorities. We address major holes in medical care for our veterans and for our troops in the field. We work to keep terrorists off our shores and criminals off our streets. We begin to make good on the dollars promised to our students in No Child Left Behind," Byrd said. "From day one, we recognized the major challenges we faced in balancing this legislation, but we have worked together, Democratic and Republican Members of Congress, to put the nation's interests first."

"I hope that the Congress approves this funding legislation quickly so we can turn our full attention to the President's anticipated request for more than \$100 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," Byrd stated, noting that the war funding request is expected on February 5.

The legislation fulfills a pledge that Byrd and Obey made in December, namely, that the Fiscal 2007 legislation will comply with the statutory budget ceiling on spending while not containing Congressional earmarks. The funding package will continue to help local and state governments meet the needs of their residents with support for fully authorized federal initiatives, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water program and the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program.

"This legislation is a good step forward for the nation. But, in order to meet the challenges ahead in our economy, in technology, and in security, we must not settle for good enough. Democrats and Republicans, working together, need to start today to build the foundation for America's long-term success," Byrd said.

The \$463.5 billion legislation remains within the overall budget cap, established by the Republican-led 109th Congress. Essential national priorities receive a boost in the legislation, including:

**VA Medical Care:** \$32.3 billion, an increase of \$3.5 billion over the Fiscal 2006 level, so that no veteran is denied medical care;

**Defense health initiatives:** \$21.2 billion, an increase of \$1.2 billion to provide care for military members and their families including treating servicemembers wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Classroom funding:** Title I grants to K-12 schools is funded at \$12.8 billion, an increase of \$125 million, which will provide approximately 38,000 additional low-income children with intensive reading and math instruction. Meanwhile, the legislation funds the Title I School Improvement Fund at \$125 million to target assistance to the 6,700 schools that failed to meet No Child Left Behind requirements in the 2005-2006 school year, enabling them to implement improvement activities, such as teacher training, tutoring programs, and curriculum upgrades. The Education Department reports that four-fifths of high-poverty districts cannot afford these improvements.

**College financial aid:** For the first time in four years, Pell Grants will expand thanks to the \$13.6 billion included in this legislation -- an increase of \$615.4 million that will increase the maximum Pell grant by \$260 to \$4,310.

**Health research and medical care:** The National Institutes of Health is funded at \$28.9 billion, an increase of \$620 million, for research to cure debilitating and possibly deadly diseases. Meanwhile, Community Health Centers would receive \$1.9 billion, an increase of \$207 million, to finance more than 300 new or expanded health centers;

**Coal mine safety:** \$300 million for the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), an increase of \$13 million, to allow the agency to continue its national efforts to hire and train new mine safety inspectors;

**Law enforcement:** According to the FBI, violent crime is on the rise in America for the first time in 15 years. In response, the legislation directs \$6 billion to the FBI, an increase of \$200 million, to ensure that the FBI not only retains all of its special agents, but also completes the effort to double the number of intelligence analysts hired since September 11, 2001. The legislation overall invests federal, state, and local law enforcement by more than \$1.7 billion.

**Federal Highway Administration:** The federal-aid highway program is fully funded at the level guaranteed in the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) by providing an obligation limitation of \$39.1 billion for Fiscal 2007, \$3.5 billion over the Fiscal 2006 enacted level.

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