



## U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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### **Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Clears Fiscal 2008 Funding Legislation**

Washington, D.C. . Today, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies approved Fiscal Year 2008 legislation aimed at investing in some of the nation's most important education, workforce, science, and technology projects. The Committee allocates over \$152 billion, more than \$9 billion over President Bush's request, for programs that offer real dividends for America's future.

This bill reflects the priorities and values of the American people and funds some of our most important domestic programs, said Subcommittee Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa. We have invested in our youngest learners and students with disabilities, and expanded access to a college education which will strengthen our economy and uphold the promise of the American dream. We will increase the number of nurses and medical clinics and fund research to find the cures to a multitude of illnesses, which will strengthen our healthcare system. And we will increase the safety of our workplaces and prepare workers for the challenges of our ever-changing economy, which will strengthen families and communities of all sizes. We have also upheld our commitment to promoting independence for those with disabilities and reducing the backlog of disability claims in the Social Security Administration.

The future of our nation and its ability to dominate in the global economy depends on the strength of our workforce, our ability to give our children access to an education that is second to none, and invest in our research facilities so that our doctors and scientists can continue to find cures for illnesses that affect millions of Americans every year, said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va. For too long our education system and health facilities have been burdened with the Bush Administration's unfunded mandates and empty promises. This legislation begins to reverse the trend and give health care providers much-needed resources to care for patients, and places in the hands of our students and teachers the tools they need to succeed.

## Legislation highlights:

### **Labor**

**Job Training** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$5.2 billion** for job training programs. This includes more than **\$1.6 billion** for the Office of Job Corps, an increase of \$81.595 million over the FY 2007 level and \$137.5 million more than the President's budget request. The Committee rejected the Administration's proposal to cancel \$335 billion in job training funds currently available for training purposes.

**Worker Protection** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$828 million** to ensure the health and safety of workers, including **\$498.445 million** for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and **\$330.028 million** for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). This is an increase of \$39.978 million above the FY 2007 level.

**Child Labor** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$82 million** for activities designed to end abusive child labor. This is \$10 million above the FY 2007 level.

**Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)** . The Committee legislation includes **\$330.028 million** for MSHA, an increase of \$28.458 million over FY 2007 and \$16.55 million more than the President's budget request. The recommendation provides \$13 million more than the request to accelerate the implementation of the MINER Act and to ensure that mine enforcement personnel are hired and trained in sufficient numbers to conduct effectively 100 percent of mandatory health and safety inspections. Also included is \$2.2 million for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) to provide mine rescue team training.

The Committee bill contains legislative language for MSHA that requires the Secretary of Labor to revise regulations, not later than June 20, 2008, to prohibit the use of belt haulage entries to ventilate active working places without prior approval from the Assistant Secretary of Labor, and to issue regulations, not later than June 15, 2008, requiring installation of rescue chambers in the working areas of underground coal mines.

**National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** . The Committee legislation provides NIOSH with **\$48.2 million** for mine safety research, \$10 million more than the President's budget request, and doubles the FY 2007 funding level for the Miner's Choice screening program to **\$652,000**.

## Health and Human Services

**National Institutes of Health** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$29 billion** to fund biomedical research at the 27 Institutes and Centers that comprise the NIH. This represents an increase of \$1 billion over the FY 2007 level and more than \$1.2 billion over the President's budget request.

**Health Centers** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$2 billion** for health centers, \$250 million over the FY 2007 level.

**Nursing Education** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$169 million** for nursing education, \$20 million over the FY 2007 level.

**Autism** . The Committee legislation provides **\$53.5 million** for prevention of and support for families affected by autism and other related developmental disorders. This is an increase of \$18.5 million over the FY 2007 level.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$6 billion** for the CDC. This is an increase of \$223.841 million over the FY 2007 level and does not include funding for the influenza pandemic, which is appropriated in the HHS Office of the Secretary.

**Substance Abuse** . The Committee legislation provides more than **\$3 billion** for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Included in this amount is more than **\$2.1 billion** for substance abuse treatment, **\$197.108 million** for substance abuse prevention, and **\$920.077 million** for mental health programs.

**Pandemic Influenza** . The Committee legislation provides **\$888 million** to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. Funds are available for the development and purchase of vaccine, antivirals, necessary medical supplies, diagnostics, and other surveillance tools.

**Persons With Disabilities** . The Committee bill includes more than **\$228 billion** to promote independent living in home and community-based settings. This includes **\$27.712 million** for the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the Department of Labor, and **\$190.836 million** for programs funded under the Help America Vote Act and the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. It also includes **\$10 million** for Real Choice Systems Change Grants through the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services.

**Alcohol Abuse Reduction Program** . The Committee legislation provides **\$33 million** for the alcohol abuse reduction program. This is an increase of \$591,000 over the FY 2007 level and the President proposed eliminating this program.

The Committee agreed to maintain bill language stipulating that **\$850,000** shall be used to reduce alcohol abuse on college campuses. The President's budget request did not include this bill language.

**Rehabilitation Services** · The Committee legislation provides more than **\$3.2 billion** for rehabilitation services that are essential for families with disabilities seeking employment. The Committee restored funding for several important programs proposed for elimination, such as Supported Employment State Grants, Projects with Industry, recreational programs, and programs for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The Committee rejected the Department's proposal to freeze State grant funding at the FY 2007 level.

**Services for Older Americans** · The Committee bill provides more than **\$3.2 billion** for programs serving older Americans, including \$217.586 million for senior volunteer programs, \$483.611 million for community service employment for older Americans, \$350.595 million for supportive services and centers, \$162.595 million for family caregiver support programs, and \$773.57 million for senior nutrition programs. For the medical research activities of the National Institute on Aging, the Committee provides more than **\$1 billion**, and also includes not less than **\$35 million** for the Medicare insurance counseling program.

## **Education**

**Head Start** · The Committee bill includes more than **\$7 billion** for the Head Start Program, an increase of \$200 million over the FY 2007 level.

**Title I (Education)** · The Committee legislation provides more than **\$13.9 billion** for Title I grants to Local Education Agencies, an increase of more than \$1 billion over the FY 2007 level, and **\$500 million** for school improvement grants, an increase of \$375 million over the FY2007 level.

**Student Financial Aid** · **\$16.3 billion** is included for student financial assistance and the Pell Grant Program continues its current maximum grant award of \$4310.

**Higher Education Initiatives** · The Committee bill provides more than **\$2 billion** for initiatives to provide greater opportunities for higher education, including **\$858.178 million** for Federal TRIO programs, an increase of \$30 million over the FY 2007 level, and **\$313.423 million** for GEAR UP, an increase of \$10 million over the FY 2007 level.

**Education for Individuals with Disabilities** · The Committee bill provides more than **\$12.3 billion** to help ensure that all children have access to a free and appropriate education, and that all infants and toddlers with disabilities have access to early intervention services. This amount includes **\$11.24 billion** for

Part B grants to States, an increase of more than \$450 million over the FY 2007 level and \$748.059 million over the President's budget request. The Committee funding level will reverse the declining share of federal resources for educating students with disabilities and raise it to 17.65 percent, the same amount as it was in 2006.

**Byrd Scholarships** - **\$41 million** is provided in the bill for Byrd Scholarships, an increase of \$410,000 over FY 2007. The President did not request funding for this program.

**Teaching American History** - **\$120 million** for teaching traditional American history is included in the legislation. This is an increase of \$210,000 over the FY 2007 level and \$70 million over the President's budget request.

### **Related Agencies**

**Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)** - The Committee bill provides an advance appropriation for FY 2010 of **\$420 million** for the CPB. In addition, the Committee bill includes **\$29.7 million** for conversion to digital broadcasting, and more than **\$26.7 million** for the replacement project of the interconnection system in fiscal year 2008 funding.

**Social Security Administration (SSA)** - **\$9.7 billion** is included for the administrative expenses of the SSA, \$125 million over the President's budget request and \$426.38 million more than FY 2007, to ensure that the backlog of disability claims will decrease, as opposed to increase as assumed under the budget request. Within the recommendation, **\$476.97 million** is dedicated to program integrity activities, including disability reviews. SSA reviews current disability cases to ensure beneficiaries remain eligible for Social Security. As a result of those reviews, some beneficiaries are found to be no longer eligible for benefits. For example, their situation may have improved such that they could return to work. If so, there are savings to the Social Security trust funds and estimates show that for every dollar spent on these activities, SSA saves \$7 for redeterminations of eligibility reviews and \$10 for continuing disability reviews.

### **Competitive Sourcing:**

The Committee bill includes a moratorium on competitive sourcing activities at the Department of Labor until 60 days after the Committee receives a report from the Government Accountability Office on the Department's use of such activities.

### **Earmarks:**

The bill includes a 30% reduction in the dollar amount of earmarks as compared to the FY 2005 LHHS bill, which is the last LHHS bill to include earmarks. For each earmark, the bill includes the name of the grantee, the amount of the

earmark, the governmental purpose, and the sponsor or sponsors of the project. The Committee has included as earmarks monies directed to specific non-federal entities that were not requested in the President's budget.

**Accountability:**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded almost \$2 billion in contracts not subject to full and open competition in 2006. A recent Congressional Research Service report found that 90 percent of the funds under the Department of Labor's High Growth Job Training Initiative were awarded non-competitively, resulting in more than \$250 million being awarded over the past five years without any competition or public oversight. Therefore, the Committee has also included a general provision in Title V requiring the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to provide a quarterly report to the Committee listing all grants and contracts awarded by the Department over the past 90 days for amounts over \$100,000 that were not awarded competitively showing the name of the grantee (or contractor), the amount of the grant (contract), and the governmental purpose.

**Ineffective Programs/ Reduced or Eliminated:**

The Committee recommends a cut of nearly \$230 million from Reading First in response to the Education Department's well-documented mismanagement of the program, which has been the subject of six reports by the Inspector General and several congressional hearings. The Committee needs to be assured that the management problems have been fixed before considering increases to the program in future years. The FY 2007 appropriation was \$1,029,234,000, and the Committee recommends \$800 million.

The Committee has reduced funding for the Compassion Capital Fund (HHS) by \$10.7 million. The program received a PART rating of "Results Not Demonstrated" and GAO has found that the program lacks baseline data for its performance measures and it is not possible to determine the program's effectiveness.