



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 10, 2007
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY
H.R. 2206 – U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq
Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007
(Sponsor: Obey (D), Wisconsin)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 2206, as introduced in the House. The President requested funding for the global war on terror more than three months ago and continues to seek its prompt enactment to support our men and women in the armed forces and diplomatic corps. They deserve our full support as they implement the new strategy to achieve America’s strategic objective of a democratic Iraq that can govern, defend, and sustain itself and be an ally in the war on terror. This bill does not provide that full support; does not address many of the Administration’s serious concerns about H.R. 1591, which the President vetoed on May 1, 2007; and contains additional, troubling provisions for partial funding of the war. If H.R. 2206 were presented to the President in its current form, he would veto the bill.

The President vetoed H.R. 1591 because it set an arbitrary date for beginning the withdrawal of American troops without regard to conditions on the ground; micromanaged the commanders in the field by restricting their ability to direct the fight in Iraq; and contained billions of dollars of spending and other provisions completely unrelated to the war. This bill continues to include many of the same unacceptable provisions as the vetoed legislation.

H.R. 2206 delays the availability of over half of the funding for our troops until late July at the earliest, denying our military commanders the resources they need now to implement our new strategy and the resources our troops also need to protect themselves and fulfill their mission. As the Department of Defense has made clear, in order to operate effectively and efficiently, our military needs assurance in the timing and amount of funding from Congress. Incremental funding will cause breaks in production schedules of critical equipment, delay the delivery of equipment to deploying forces, halt the hiring of needed civilian personnel, lead to far more expensive and burdensome short term procurements, and undermine the Department’s ability to relieve stress on the force. It will also disrupt daily operations at installations, driving up costs and impacting support activities for military personnel and their families, affecting quality of life, morale and retention.

The bill also sets up a fast-track vote in July on an arbitrary withdrawal date. Precipitous withdrawal from Iraq is not a plan to bring peace to the region or to make our people safer here at home. Withdrawal could embolden our enemies and confirm their belief that America will not stand behind its commitments. It could lead to a safe haven in Iraq for terrorism that could be used to attack America and freedom-loving people around the world, and is likely to unleash chaos in Iraq that could spread across the region. Ultimately, a precipitous withdrawal could

increase the probability that American troops would have to one day return to Iraq – to confront an even more dangerous enemy.

Furthermore, the bill provides billions of dollars in unrelated and non-emergency spending, which would be available in full immediately, without the delays, uncertainty, and complicated procedures required to release critical funding for our troops. Providing full funding for non-emergency discretionary funding while only providing partial funding for U.S. troops in combat reflects misplaced priorities.

For example, although the President's FY 2008 Budget adequately addresses funding for homeland security and avian flu preparedness and includes a deficit-neutral policy to address funding shortfalls in the State Children's Health Insurance Program, each was inserted in this emergency legislation. Additional funding in the bill for low-income heating assistance is also excessive and unneeded at this time.

Since Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Government has made available \$110.8 billion to the relief and recovery effort for the Gulf Coast states. The Administration has requested an additional \$3.4 billion to ensure that we can meet FEMA's existing obligations. This bill provides additional funding for four separate 2005 hurricanes, and it inappropriately expands federal taxpayer responsibility for the costs of recovery.

The bill also contains numerous unrelated authorizing and regulatory provisions, including a minimum wage package, which should be considered on their own merits, not as part of an emergency war supplemental. In addition, the Administration opposes a provision of the bill that would significantly delay and weaken the Department's ability to implement its chemical facility security regime. The provision would prevent the Department from preempting State or local laws that actually conflict with and/or impede the Federal regulatory scheme. The proposed provision also would weaken the Department's ability to protect from disclosure information transmitted to the Department for regulatory purposes—information that could provide insight into how to attack chemical facilities and foil existing defenses.

Constitutional Concerns

The Administration urges the House of Representatives to strike sections 1311, 1313, 1327, 1328, and 1329. These provisions could unreasonably burden the President's exercise of his constitutional authorities, including his authority as Commander in Chief and his ability to conduct diplomatic, military, and intelligence activities or supervise the executive branch. Furthermore, the Administration urges the House of Representative to strike those provisions of the bill purporting to require approval of Congressional Committees prior to the obligation of funds. These provisions should be changed to require only notification of Congress, since any other interpretation would render the provisions unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's decision in *INS v. Chadha*.

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