



## Senate Update – April 21, 2008

### Last Week in the Senate

On Monday, April 14, 2008, the Senate agreed to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Highway Technical Corrections Act (H.R. 1195) by a vote of 93 to 1. ([Record Vote 103](#))

*\*Note: The House passed H.R. 1195 on March 27, 2007, by voice vote under suspension of the rules.*

On April 14, 2008, the White House issued a Statement of Administration Policy that highlighted their opposition to the bill and encouraged the Senate to “restrict the bill to true technical changes.” ([SAP for H.R. 1195](#))

Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) offered a motion to recommit H.R. 1195 with instructions to strike all new earmarks and spending increases for earmarks to the Senate Committee on Energy and Public Works. His motion to recommit was defeated when the Senate moved to table it by a vote of 78 to 18 on April 16, 2008. ([Record Vote 104](#))

The Senate then began consideration of two amendments that would call for an investigation into an earmark for the Coconut Road interchange that was included in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (P.L. 109-59). The earmark has been under scrutiny because it was modified after both the House and Senate had passed the legislation, but prior to the bill being signed into law.

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) offered an amendment that would require the U.S. Department of Justice to review whether there was a violation of Federal law regarding the Coconut Road earmark. The amendment was adopted by the Senate by a vote of 64 to 28. ([Record Vote 105](#))

The Senate then considered an amendment offered by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) that would create a bipartisan, bicameral special committee to investigate the insertion of an earmark for Coconut Road into the conference report of the 2005 highway bill after both chambers of Congress had approved identical versions of the conference report. This amendment failed by a vote of 49 to 43. ([Record Vote 106](#))

Following these votes, the Senate agreed to end debate on the Senate amendment to H.R. 1195 by a vote of 90 to 2. ([Record Vote 107](#)) H.R. 1195 passed the Senate as amended by a vote of 88 to 2 on April 17, 2008. ([Record Vote 108](#))

### This Week in the Senate

On April 22, 2008, the Senate is expected to begin consideration of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007 (S. 1315). S. 1315 was introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and was reported out of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs on August 29, 2007. This legislation affects a wide range of veterans' benefits, including life insurance, housing grants, and burial allowances. In addition, it would award full pensions to Filipino veterans of World War II living in the Philippines.

Following consideration of S. 1315, the Senate may consider the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007 (H.R. 2831). The House passed H.R. 2831 on July 31, 2007, by a vote of 225 to 199.  
([Legislative Digest for H.R. 2831](#))