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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

May 1, 2008

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The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In the absence of any response from you to my April 21st and April 24th letters, and recognizing Senator Byrd's immediate response to the Republican Senators from his Committee, we are writing to once again express our grave concerns over media reports that your leadership plans to unilaterally, and without Member input, write and take to the House floor the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill under a closed rule and bypass full Appropriations Committee consideration. Such action would be an historical and unprecedented abdication of responsibility for the House Appropriations Committee and would be viewed by many in both parties as a shameful power grab by House and Senate leaders.

Senator Byrd, who recognizes the slippery slope involved in circumventing the well-established rules and precedents of the Appropriations Committee, has scheduled a full Senate Appropriations Committee markup for the week of May 5th. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to follow Senator Byrd's example and schedule a full Committee markup in the House at the earliest possible date.

It is only right and fair that you allow Members of our Committee—Republicans and Democrats—to do the work they were elected to do. We are extremely troubled by the fact that under this scheme no Member of the House will be afforded the opportunity to offer amendments in full Committee or on the House floor while Senators in the other body will be given the opportunity to let their constituent's voices be heard. We must act expeditiously to move through full Committee and onto the floor a clean Emergency Supplemental, free of extraneous funding and policy provisions, to address the urgent needs of our troops and their families.

May 1, 2008
Page Two

On October 20, 2006 then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi wrote in a letter to then-Speaker Hastert: "We must restore bipartisanship to the administration of the House, reestablish regular order for considering legislation, and ensure the rights of the minority, whichever party is in the minority. The voice of every American has a right to be heard."

Again, we urge you and Speaker Pelosi to stand by those words. Historical precedent and tradition dictates that this legislation be fashioned in an open and transparent process, and ensure full participation by both parties—not behind closed doors but in the full light of day. As the Speaker stated less than two years ago, every Member of the Appropriations Committee and, indeed, every Member of the House and their constituents deserve to have their voices heard.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Jerry Lewis
Bob Young
Zoe Lofgren
John Kline
Jack Kingston
Todd Tiahrt
Robert Aderhold
Paul R. Lujan
Ken Calvert

Hal Rogers
Lamar Smith
Judy Shelton
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Ray Jones

Ami T. Ulahak

Rodney Alexander

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Raymond

cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
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Republican Whip Roy Blunt