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**Daily**

**Floor Briefing**

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2001**

The House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2:00 p.m. for legislative business. There will be NO budget related votes.  
No recorded votes before 6:00 p.m.

### **Suspensions (2 bills):**

- H.R. 801** – Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001
- H.R. 811** – Veterans' Emergency Hospital Repair Act

### **Privileged Matter:**

- H.Res. 84** - Omnibus Committee Funding Resolution

### **General Debate:**

- H.Con.Res. 83** – Budget Resolution for FY 2002

### **Suspensions (2 bills):**

#### **Floor Situation**

The House is scheduled to consider two bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

## Summary

**H.R. 801** improves educational assistance programs; expands transition assistance and outreach programs to departing servicemembers, veterans, and dependents; increases burial benefits; and provides for family coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Specifically, Title I (1) increases from \$2,000 to \$3,400 the maximum allowable annual ROTC award for benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB); (2) expands the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) work-study program for veteran-students to include helping State Approving Agencies with outreach efforts, working in their major academic discipline, and working in state veterans homes; (3) provides an inclusion of certain private technology entities in the definition of "educational institution"; (4) allows the disabled spouse or surviving spouse of a severely disabled service-connected veteran to receive special restorative training; and (5) permits veterans to use the VA educational assistance benefits for a certificate program offered by an institution of higher learning by way of independent study.

In addition, Title II (1) provides the VA authority to maintain transition assistance offices overseas; (2) extends the time that pre-separation counseling is available to servicemembers leaving the service to as early as 12 months before discharge, and 24 months prior to discharge for military retirees; (3) improves education and training outreach services by requiring each State Approving Agency to conduct outreach programs and provide services to eligible veterans and dependents about state and federal education and training benefits; (4) for purposes of the VA's outreach program, the measure defines an eligible dependent as the spouse, surviving spouse, child or dependent parent of a servicemember/veteran, and requires the VA to ensure that eligible dependents are made aware of the VA's services through media and veterans publications; and (5) requires the VA to provide, to the veteran or eligible dependent, information concerning the VA benefits and services whenever that person first applies for any benefit.

Finally, Title III (1) increases the burial and funeral expenses for a service-connected veteran from \$1,500 to \$2,000, increases the burial and funeral expense for a nonservice-connected veteran from \$300 to \$500, and increases the burial plot allowance from \$150 to \$300; (2) expands the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program to include spouses and children. Spouse's coverage will not exceed \$100,000 and child coverage would be \$10,000. Upon termination of SGLI, the policy could be converted to a private life insurance policy; (3) makes the effective date of an increase from \$200,000 to \$250,000, in the maximum SGLI benefit provided for in Veterans' Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 (*P.L. 106-419*) retroactive to October 1, 2000, for a

servicemember who died in the performance of duty and had the maximum amount of insurance in force; (4) increases the automobile and adaptive equipment grant for severely disabled veterans from \$8,000 to \$9,000; (5) increases the grant for specially adapted housing from \$43,000 to \$48,000, and increases the amount for additional adaptations to the home that may be needed later in life from \$8,250 to \$9,250; and (6) revises the rule with respect to the net worth limitation for VA's means-tested pension program by excluding the value of property used for farming, ranching or similar agricultural purposes.

H.R. 801 was introduced by Mr. Smith of New Jersey on February 28, 2001, and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs. The measure was reported by voice vote on March 21, 2001. CBO estimates that enacting this bill would increase direct spending by \$46 million in 2002, \$290 million over the 2002-2006 period, and about \$700 million over the 2002-2011 period. Direct spending increases fiscal year 2001, should the bill be enacted before the end of this fiscal year. In addition, implementing the bill would increase spending subject to appropriation by less than \$500,000 a year. Because the bill affects direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures apply.

**For additional information or questions, please contact the Veterans' Affairs Committee at 5-3527.**

**H.R. 811** authorizes \$250 million in FY 2002 and \$300 million in FY 2003 to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for major medical facility construction projects. Additionally, the measure authorizes the VA Secretary to select patient care projects for construction, which are not to exceed \$25 million for any single project. The measure limits the type of project funded to patient care projects that improve, replace, renovate or update facilities. In certain circumstances, research facilities for patient safety, seismic protection, privacy, and accommodation for disabilities may be funded. As an exception to the funding limit, the VA Secretary has the option to select two seismic correction projects estimated to cost \$30 million.

Additionally, the VA Secretary is authorized to improve the various high-priority special disabilities programs. In selecting projects, the measure requires the Secretary to consider recommendations of the VA's independent capital investment review board. Also, the measure permits the VA Secretary to use the Advance Planning Fund to design projects. Finally, this measure requires the VA Secretary and the Comptroller General to make reports to Congress on projects, purposes and costs, results of the authorization process, and other matters.

H.R. 811 was introduced by Mr. Smith of New Jersey on March 1, 2001, and was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The measure was reported by

voice vote on March 21, 2001. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 811 will cost \$11 million in 2002 and \$506 million over the 2002-2006 period. Because the bill does not affect direct spending or receipts, so pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

**For additional information or questions, please contact the Veterans' Affairs Committee at 5-3527.**

### **Privileged Matter (1 bill):**

#### **Floor Situation**

The House is expected to consider H.Res. 84 as a privileged matter today. It is debatable for one hour, may not be amended, and requires a simple majority vote for passage.

#### **Summary**

H.Res. 84 authorizes \$203.5 million over two years for the basic operations of the 19 House committees (excluding the Appropriations Committee) during the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. This is a \$20.1 million (10.9 percent) increase over the allocation for the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress. This measure provides the committees with the funds needed for staff, consultants, office equipment and supplies, official committee travel, and costs associated with committee business. Adjusted for inflation, the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress funding is 19.4 percent (\$48.8 million) less than the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress.

\$4.2 million (20 percent) of the increase is needed for five special circumstances relating to changes in committee structures and jurisdiction.

- **Intelligence Committee** – Funding for nine staff slots for the new Intelligence Policy and National Security Subcommittee.
  - Funding for the Speaker's Task Force on Terrorism and Homeland Security.
- **Energy and Commerce** – Funding for nine new staff in order for the minority to reach 1/3 allocation of slots.
- **Financial Services** – Funding for six staff slots for the new International Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee.
- **International Relations** – Funding for six staff slots for the new Middle East Subcommittee.

## Committee Funding for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress

Committee	106 <sup>th</sup> Funding	107 <sup>th</sup> Request	107 <sup>th</sup> Funding
<b>Agriculture</b>	\$8.4	\$10.0	\$9.6
<b>Armed Services</b>	10.3	10.8	10.9
<b>Budget</b>	9.9	11.2	11.1
<b>Education &amp; Workforce</b>	11.2	15.6	13.6
<b>Energy &amp; Commerce</b>	15.3	18.8	17.2
<b>Financial Services</b>	9.3	15.1	11.9
<b>Government Reform</b>	19.8	21.8	19.4
<b>House Administration</b>	6.3	7.9	7.4
<b>Intelligence</b>	5.2	7.5	7.0
<b>International Relations</b>	11.3	14.5	12.7
<b>Judiciary</b>	12.2	15.5	13.2
<b>Resources</b>	10.6	12.0	11.6
<b>Rules</b>	5.1	5.4	5.4
<b>Science</b>	8.9	12.3	10.6
<b>Small Business</b>	4.1	4.8	4.8
<b>Standards</b>	2.6	2.9	2.9
<b>Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	13.2	16.6	14.5
<b>Veterans' Affairs</b>	4.7	5.5	5.1
<b>Ways &amp; Means</b>	11.9	16.1	14.7
<b>Reserve Fund</b>	3.0	-----	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$183.4 Million</b>	<b>\$224.3 Million</b>	<b>\$203.5 Million</b>

Source: The House Administration Committee

## General Debate (1 bill):

### Floor Situation

Pursuant to a unanimous consent agreement, the House will proceed with two hours general debate on H.Con.Res. 83 and one hour of debate dedicated to economic goals and policies. At 2:00 p.m. today, the Rules Committee is scheduled to meet to consider a rule for H.Con.Res. 83. Additional information regarding the rule and any amendments will be included in a *Daily Floor Briefing* prior to Floor consideration.

### Summary

H.Con.Res. 83 establishes a blueprint for the congressional budget for FY 2002 and sets budget levels for FY 2002-2011. The resolution establishes a budget that provides a historic \$2.3 trillion in public debt reduction by 2011 (the maximum that can be repaid without penalties), \$1.62 trillion in tax relief over 10 years (an average of \$1,600 for a family of four), an 11.5 percent increase for improved education programs, and a \$5.7 billion increase in defense spending (to increase military pay, improve troop housing, and expand health benefits for military retirees). The budget also dedicates \$153 billion for Medicare modernization (including the addition of a prescription drug benefit) and provides a reserve fund, if additional Medicare modernization funds are necessary. The resolution also provides a \$2.8 billion increase to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Finally, the budget is consistent with the provisions of H.R. 2, the Social Security and Medicare Lock-Box Act of 2001, which passed the House this year on February 13, by a vote of [407-2](#). The act creates a point of order against legislation that reduces the total unified surplus below the combined total of the Social Security Trust Fund surplus and the Medicare Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund surplus. The point of order would not apply to legislation reforming Social Security or Medicare, and would terminate upon enactment of such legislation. Consequently, the measure creates a procedural "lock-box" protecting the Social Security and Medicare surpluses from being used for any purpose other than debt reduction until the enactment of Social Security and Medicare reform legislation.

Specifically, the resolution calls for:

\* an increase in spending for national defense to \$324.6 billion (a \$14.3 billion increase over FY 2001) in budget authority (BA) and \$319.2 billion in outlays in FY 2002;

- \* an increase in education spending to \$44.5 billion (a \$4.6 billion increase over FY 2001) in BA;
- \* an increase in spending for Medicare to \$229.1 billion in BA and outlays in FY 2002 (an increase of \$11.6 billion over FY 2001);
- \* an increase in spending in international affairs to \$23.9 billion in BA and \$19.6 billion in outlays in FY 2002 (an increase of \$1.4 billion over FY 2001);
- \* an increase in transportation-related spending to \$61.0 billion in BA and \$55.6 billion in outlays in FY 2002; and
- \* a total of \$457.2 billion (\$22 billion more than FY 2001) in BA and \$455.0 billion in outlays for Social Security (including off-budget spending) in FY 2002.

The resolution was reported from the Budget Committee on Wednesday, March 21, by a vote of 23-19. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Nussle on Monday, March 26, 2001.

### [OMB Statement of Administration Policy](#)

#### [Additional Resources](#)

#### **CRS Products**

*The congressional appropriations process: an introduction.*

**Date:** Updated Feb. 14, 2001. 33 p.

**Author:** Streeter, Sandy.

**Product Number:** 97-684 GOV

**Available:** [Document \(PDF\)](#)

*Budget reconciliation legislation: development and consideration.*

**Date:** Updated Mar. 5, 2001. 2 p.

**Author:** Heniff, Bill.

**Product Number:** 98-814 GOV

**Available:** [Document \(PDF\)](#)

[Administration Budget blueprint.](#)

Press Resources: [Budget Committee](#)

**For additional information or questions, call the Budget Committee at 6-7270.**

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