



Boarding Pass: Thursday, June 16, 2011

This Week

- **FY 2012 Military Construction–Veterans Affairs (MilCon/VA) Appropriations** – On Tuesday, June 14, the House approved [H.R. 2055](#) by a vote of [411-5](#). The bill would include a total of \$72.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$615 million below last year's level and \$1.2 billion below the President's fiscal year 2012 request. Much of the savings in the bill are the result of the expected decline in funding requirements to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, as well as significant reductions from construction cost savings.
- **FY 2012 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations** – On Thursday, June 16, the House approved [H.R. 2112](#) by a vote of [217-203](#). The bill would provide a total of \$17.25 billion in non-emergency, discretionary budget authority in FY 2012 for government programs funded through the Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations Act. The bill would represent a decrease of \$2.67 billion or 13 percent below the FY 2011 funding level and a reduction of \$5.03 billion or 22 percent below the President's request. H.R. 2112 meets and surpasses [House Republican's pledge](#) by bringing discretionary budget authority for Agriculture and related agencies down to nearly [FY 2006 spending levels](#).

Next Week

- **Encouraging Entrepreneurship and Growth** – Also next week, the House will likely consider H.R. 1249, the America Invents Act. The bill would implement a first-inventor-to-file standard for patent approval, create a post-grant review system to weed out bad patents, and help the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) address the backlog of patent applications.
- **FY2012 Department of Defense Appropriations** – Also next week, the House will consider the 2012 Department of Defense appropriations Act. According to the Appropriations Committee, the base budget of the bill provides \$530 billion in discretionary budget authority for defense activities, which is an increase of \$17 billion over last year's level. The overseas contingency operations recommendation for emergency spending for Defense activities related to the Global War on Terror is \$118.7 billion, which is \$842 million above the request.
- **Maximizing Domestic Energy Production** – Also next week, the House is likely to consider H.R. 2021, the Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011. The legislation would eliminate needless permitting delays that have stalled important energy production opportunities off the coast of Alaska. The bill aims to eliminate uncertainty and confusion under the Clean Air Act that has delayed – sometimes for years – oil exploration in the Alaskan Outer Continental Shelf and will apply to other offshore areas as well.
- **FAA Reauthorization** – Also next week, the House will consider either a short-term extension of FAA authorization or the conference report. On February 27, 2011, the Senate passed S.232, a full FAA authorization bill by a vote of 87-8. The House approved an alternative version, H.R. 658, FAA Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011, by a vote of 223-196 on April 1, 2011. A conference committee is expected to report a final agreement soon. H.R. 658 would reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operations and programs for four years, including the remainder of FY 2011 through FY 2014. In addition, the bill makes a number of policy changes, including a repeal of a National Mediation Board (NMB) rule allowing airline employees to unionize without a majority vote. CBO estimates that the bill would decrease direct spending by \$4 billion and increase revenue by \$34 million over the FY 2011 through FY 2016 period.

Official Floor Statement on Motion to Recommit H.R. 2055

Mr. CULBERSON of Texas. "Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs has worked in an arm-in-arm, bipartisan way in support of our troops, in support of our veterans. And we have provided funding for every need that was presented to the committee to help our men and women in uniform do the job that they do every day defending this Nation, to help our veterans as they move out of active duty into retired status, to help the Veterans Administration treat not only the veterans who have suffered or been injured in combat in defense of this Nation, but also those veterans who have suffered in some way psychological trauma that would put them at risk of suicide, a growing problem, and one that the committee is deeply concerned about, and, in fact, the committee has fully funded at the President's request of \$69.9 million. The committee has provided essentially \$70 million at the President's request, at the request of the Veterans Administration. We have fully funded in every way the request of the professionals in this area, what they believe is necessary to meet the need that they have determined is out there among the veterans of this Nation.

"One of the great joys I know that all of us have as Members of Congress is to provide the support that is necessary for our men and women in uniform to do the extraordinarily difficult job that they confront every day and to ensure that their families have the peace of mind that their son, their daughter, their father, their husband, their loved one has been given every piece of equipment, every possible support logistically with the love and comfort and prayers that we all send them with their families.

"We as Members of Congress also have a sacred obligation to ensure that those men and women who are out there defending us don't ever need to look over their shoulder, that they don't ever need to worry that they are lacking in any way the equipment, the support. Everything that they might possibly need in the course of their day defending this Nation we have made sure, on the Appropriations Committee, that the men and women in uniform have. We've made sure that the Veterans Administration hospitals across the Nation have everything they need to take care of our men and women in uniform who have retired and gone on to the private sector to work in some other capacity.

"As a general rule, I've heard the number, the average time, that a man or woman serving the Nation may serve in uniform is--I think the numbers I've heard are about 36 months, but they will spend the rest of their life in the care of the Veterans Administration. And it's an extraordinarily important trust that our subcommittee takes very personally, as a truly sacred obligation on our part to make sure that these wonderful men and women, these extraordinarily courageous men and women who have sacrificed so much have everything they need when they move into the VA system, that the VA Hospital is providing them with the very best possible medical care, physically, mentally--and suicide prevention, in fact, is one of those areas that we on the subcommittee have fully funded and worked again in a bipartisan way.

"In fact, our committee as a whole has always worked together in a very bipartisan way, and particularly the subcommittees that deal with the men and women in uniform. Whether it be the Military Construction, the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, or the Defense Subcommittee, the members of the Appropriations Committee don't pay attention to party labels. We're focused on what's best for the men and women of the United States military. We're focused on what's best for their families and for the Veterans Administration, the health care that our men and women in uniform are given physically--again, mentally. And without regard to party, without regard to any other distinction other than what's good for these men and women who serve our Nation, we have worked together without really any real serious disagreements.

"We, of course, have a problem today in the Nation of unprecedented debt, unprecedented deficits, record unfunded liabilities. And the new conservative majority that controls the House today is determined to do everything we can to reduce the unconscionable burden that's being passed on to our children and grandchildren. So we have found savings in this bill in money that was unspent, in accounts where money has been set aside for years and unspent, where savings have been produced from reduced cost of concrete and steel, reduced bid savings, for example, that we then returned that money to the taxpayers. We found areas that we could save money, but not at the expense of our men and women in uniform."

Unofficial Floor Statement on Motion to Recommit H.R. 2112

Mr. KINGSTON of Georgia. "I thank the Speaker, and I want to point out I'm gonna start out by saying that if this was a serious amendment, if this was a serious proposal—we have had twenty-five hours of debate—it would have been out on the House floor and we could have taken a look at it. But let me say this and very importantly there is absolutely nothing in this bill that prohibits the CFTC from looking at oil speculation as it respects the supply or the cost of oil.

"This amendment is not needed because of that alone. But let me also quote the Democrat commissioner on the CFTC, Michael Don, a Democrat member of the CFTC, 'There has been a suggestion by some that once we set position limits that speculative limits on physical derivatives that the price we pay will inevitably drop. I believe this is a fallacy. To date, the CFTC staff has been unable to find any reliable economic analysis to support the contention that excessive speculation is affecting the markets we regulate or that position limits will prevent excessive speculation.' The price volatility exists in our markets because of global supply and demand for physical commodities.

"Now why are the Democrats trying to get us bogged down in that the price of oil is going up because of speculation? Well I can tell you. Go back to January 2009 and ask your constituents if they remember paying a dollar eighty-three per gallon. And, in that same month, who became President of the United States but President Obama, the Democrat. The change you were asking for, the change we were promised was that gas went from one eighty-three per gallon to now three dollars and eighty cents, a ninety percent increase. And the Democrats want us to believe that it is because of speculators.

"You know why it has gone up? Because of more regulation, less permitting, more delays, and more lawsuits. Think about this, the President recently went down to Brazil and he told them, 'Hey, we understand that you are going to drill offshore. We encourage you to do so, we want to lend you the money, and we want to become your best customers. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have news for the President. I have news for the Democrats. American technology and American engineers do not need to hold second place to Brazil or any other country in the world! We are America!

"We need to have an all-of-the-above energy policy. We do need to look at solar, we do need to look at ethanol, we do need to look at wind. We need to also look at nuclear and fossil fuels and we need to do it here in the United States of America. We are Americans! And if you want to bring down the price of gas at the pump then let's increase our own domestic supply and quit playing games of blaming it on Wall Street. I yield back the balance of my time and I recommend a 'no' vote on the motion to reconsider."