

House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Hal Rogers

Website address: <http://appropriations.house.gov/>

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Summary: FY 2012 Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill

The House Appropriations Committee has approved the Fiscal Year 2012 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. The legislation includes 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.

The legislation provides the nation's military with the infrastructure needed to house, train, and equip military personnel, provides for the quality of life of our troops and their families, and maintains a strong military base structure. The bill also funds veterans' benefits and programs to ensure that all veterans receive the services they have earned as a result of their sacrifices and service to the country.

Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers has made the following statement on the legislation:

"The legislation funds critical quality of life programs for our troops, their families, and our veterans, and provides our military personnel with the resources to effectively advance U.S. missions abroad and the support they need here at home," Chairman Rogers said. "At the same time, the legislation takes responsible steps to trim excess spending wherever possible and requires strong oversight over spending to ensure that the American people, our troops, and our veterans are getting the most from each and every precious tax dollar."

Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Subcommittee Chairman John Culberson has also commented on his bill:

"For the first time in history, we have achieved savings in this bill while continuing to build necessary facilities and preserving high-quality services for our military and veterans," Chairman Culberson said.

Bill Highlights:

Military Construction – The bill provides \$14 billion for military construction projects – a decrease of \$2.6 billion below last year's level. Much of the reduction comes from savings related to the BRAC process (which will be completed in September 2011), as well as rescissions from previous year funding from lower than estimated construction projects. Within the total, the bill fully funds the President's request for Military Family Housing Construction at \$376 million, which provides for a total of 48 new family housing construction projects, 80 replacement projects, and improvements to 216 family housing units. In addition, the legislation contains \$1.1 billion for construction and alterations for new or existing military medical facilities, including the first phase of funding for the replacement hospital in Landstuhl,

Germany, which treats many wounded troops abroad, and \$483 million for 15 Department of Defense (DoD) Education facilities located in both the U.S. and overseas.

Veterans Affairs (VA) – The legislation includes a total of \$127.8 billion in both discretionary and mandatory funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Discretionary funding alone equals \$58 billion, which is \$8.6 billion above last year’s level. Within this funding, the bill provides full funding for VA compensation and benefits, education benefits, vocational rehabilitation, and housing loan programs. The legislation includes provisions to increase spending oversight at the VA, including requiring the agency to report on construction savings and restricting the agency from taking certain spending actions without notification to Congress. The bill also reduces funding below last year’s level in VA administrative expenses, research, and major facility construction.

Advance Appropriations for Veterans Medical Programs - The bill contains \$52 billion in advance funding for the VA – the identical level provided in the House-passed Budget Resolution – for medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities. This advance funding will ensure that our veterans have full access to their medical care needs regardless of where we stand in the annual appropriations process. However, given the nation’s current economic challenges and historic deficits and debt, this funding mechanism must be properly managed and will be subject to stringent oversight by the Appropriations Committee.

Arlington National Cemetery – The legislation includes \$45.8 million for the Arlington National Cemetery, an increase of \$700,000 over last year’s level. The Committee notes progress in changes to the management structure of the cemetery to avoid the errors and mismanagement that have occurred in the past. The additional funding will provide for additional personnel to meet the most pressing needs of the cemetery and maintain orderly operations.

Full Committee Amendments – Several notable amendments were accepted by the Full Appropriations Committee, and are now included in the legislation. These include: an amendment striking language in the bill to prohibit certain Davis-Bacon wage requirements; an amendment to prevent the Army from relocating units of 200 personnel or larger, unless the Secretary of the Army certifies to Congress that the relocation complies with Army Regulation 5-10; an amendment prohibiting the government from entering into contracts or agreements with any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months; and an amendment prohibiting funding from being used to enforce Executive Order 13502, related to collective bargaining.

For the text of the FY 2012 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, please visit:

http://www.rules.house.gov/Media/file/PDF_112_1/legislativetext/HR2055%20comm%20text.pdf

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