

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 76, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 430, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 76) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of H.J. Res. 76 is as follows:

H.J. RES. 76

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Public Law 108-84 is amended by striking the date specified in section 107(c) and inserting "November 21, 2003".

SEC. 2. Section 8144(b) of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 107-248), as amended by Public Law 108-84, is further amended by striking "November 7, 2003" and inserting "November 21, 2003".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 430, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 76, just extends the date of the previous CR until November 21. There are no additional changes. It just continues the anomalies that were included in the previous continuing resolutions. So there is really not much to debate here except the date.

I would take just a minute and say that the House passed all of our bills in the summer, but the other body has not concluded all of its bills yet. But we are making some progress. This

morning we concluded the conference meeting and the conference report on the energy and water appropriations bill. In addition, we appointed conferees this morning in the House on the foreign operations appropriations bill. So there are three other bills presently in conference, labor-HHS, transportation-treasury; and as I said, foreign operations for which we appointed conferees this morning. There are still four bills that the Senate has not passed; but, Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that we can conclude those and get to the conferences and get the appropriations business for this year completed.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I think this would be a good time to try to analyze exactly why we are in the situation of having to again ask the House to pass yet another resolution keeping the government open until we finish our appropriations work. I note in the CongressDaily A.M. edition of this morning that there is a headline on page 12 which says: "Senate Nearing Halfway Point on fiscal 04 Appropriation Bills." I thought that when a race was run that it would be over when it was over. But the fiscal year ended on October 1 and what this headline indicates is that the other body had not yet even run half the race. So I concur with the gentleman that a lot of these bills are dragging because the Senate has not yet been able to take them up.

But I think we need a little bit more detailed description of what has happened. As I see it, there is one bill which is hung up, the Labor, Health and Human Services bill, which is hung up because there are deep divisions between the two parties in this Congress about how adequately education is funded in that bill, how adequately research is funded under NIH; and there is also, I think, a deep division between us on how workers ought to be treated with respect to their overtime rights. And because our party believes that the bill is woefully inadequate on all three of those counts, we have not supplied votes for it on this side of the Capitol and are still hoping that the majority will come to its senses in terms of recognizing the need to at least provide the money which was provided in the Republican Party budget resolution for education and for special education.

But once we get beyond the Labor, Health and Human Services bill, I find the story even more interesting. The other bill that was passed with deep divisions between the two parties in this House was the District of Columbia appropriation bill. That bill passed almost exclusively with Republican votes because the Republican majority saw fit to include the controversial issue of vouchers. So they went beyond where they could go and still maintain a bipartisan consensus for that bill and in the process lost the votes of most of the people on this side of the aisle.

In the other body, the other body has not yet even taken up that bill because not only Democrats, but I think moderate Republicans in that body, recognize that that bill was passed by the House in a shape too partisan or at least too ideological in order to be able to pass muster. So that is being held up for that reason.

Then we have the Energy and Water appropriations bill which passed both Houses with over 90 percent of the vote. In fact, the Senate vote was unanimous; and yet because of majority party scheduling decisions in the Senate, that bill was not considered until September 16 even though it passed the House on July 18. And I want to say that I am happy that finally today we have come to an agreement in conference. I think the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman HOBSON) did a good job on that. But, nonetheless, it was the majority party scheduling problems in the Senate which delayed consideration of this conference until this week.

Then we take a look at the Military Construction bill, the bill that was just disposed of. That bill passed unanimously in this House, and it passed by a vote of 91 to 0 in the Senate. It passed the Senate on July 11, and yet the bill was held up until today because of differences within the majority party about how the funds ought to be allocated. Then if we take a look at the Transportation bill, that bill passed the House very late in the cycle, September 9. It took that long to pass it because the subcommittee produced a product which not even the majority party Members in this House could support without substantial repair. Finally, after it was somewhat repaired, the bill passed the House with 85 percent of the votes of both parties; and yet it did not pass the other body until October 23, some 3 weeks after the deadline for the fiscal year.

□ 1500

So, again, majority problem scheduling problems determined the delay for that bill.

Then if you take a look the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing, that bill passed with over 75 percent support in both parties when it passed the House. The other body has not yet taken up the bill. So, again, we have scheduling decisions by the majority party which have determined that this bill will be late to the gate.

I think there is an understandable reason for that, because the substance of the bill is unacceptable in large part to the veterans community in this country because it shortchanges needed veterans funding by more than \$1.3 billion. So I do not blame the majority party for being discombobulated because it is having a debate with itself about how it can correct that problem.

Then we have the Foreign Operations bill, which passed the House on July 24. It did not pass the Senate until October 30, 1 month after the expiration of

the fiscal year. Again, even though that passed the House with huge bipartisan agreement, it was hung up because of scheduling decisions and scheduling problems in the other body by the majority party because their party was split around the edges on issues such as Mexico City and concern about the fact that HIV funding was not adequately handled in that legislation.

Then we have the Agriculture bill, which passed the House on July 14 with support of more than 75 percent of Members of both parties. It passed this House on July 14, well before the end of the fiscal year. But, again, because of majority party scheduling decisions in the Senate, the Senate has yet to take up that bill. That is being hung up, as I understand it, over questions that relate to changing the authorization for the farm bill.

Then, lastly, we have Commerce-Justice-State, which passed this House with over 90 percent of both parties voting for it, and yet the Senate has yet to take up this bill. So, again, a majority party scheduling problem has led to a long delay in consideration of this bill.

I would simply say, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how long it is going to take before the majority party is able to overcome their differences with themselves, but I do hope that they recognize that we are ready and anxious to help if they will produce bills which meet at least minimal standards for meeting the needs of the country in areas such as veterans' health care, education, special education and aid to our local law enforcement officials, who will see a large squeeze on traditional law enforcement programs such as the Byrne Grants, unless some substantive decisions are made that produce a different bill than we are facing today.

Mr. Speaker, that is my analysis of why we are sitting here with so much of the appropriations work still not done.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for yielding me time.

Let me start, as we start almost every one of these discussions, with the expression of respect and affection for the gentleman who chairs our committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), one of the best Members of this House. We disagree, obviously, from time to time on issues, but he is a gentleman who runs his committee and leads, to the extent that he can, this institution in a fair manner.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, because perhaps above his pay grade we have not seen the same kind of fairness extended and the same kind of adherence to good order that ought to happen. My distinguished friend says sometimes below his pay grade perhaps we do not find that either.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress seems destined to end the first session of the 108th Congress in the same hapless and undemocratic way in which we began it. One of our first acts this year was to pass an omnibus appropriations bill on February 13 that wrapped up 11 of the 13 annual spending measures for fiscal year 2003 in one piece of legislation. It was bad enough that we could not finish our work on time and had to pass that omnibus bill 4½ months, a full third of the year, after the start of the fiscal year. But what was even worse was the fact that the Republican leadership dropped that 3,000 page bill on the Members and forced them to vote on it within a few short hours, a 3,000 page-plus bill.

As I said back in February, that was the worst appropriation process that I had seen in 22 years in this body. That was not the desire of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) nor the result of his leadership.

However, we now seem determined to outdo ourselves once again. Here it is, November 5, and only 3 of the 13 annual appropriations bills have been signed into law; Defense, Homeland Security and the Legislative Branch. Another spending bill, Interior, awaits the signature of the President. This body today will consider the conference report on the fifth, Military Construction. At least four other spending bills, however, are likely to be included in a year-end omnibus, Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-State, District of Columbia and VA-HUD, and three others are theoretically, Mr. Speaker, theoretically, in conference; Energy and Water, Transportation-Treasury and Labor-HHS-Education.

I will say, since this was written, it is my understanding there is actually, shockingly, a conference being held on Energy and Water. How do I know? Because the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR) told me he was going to one. So I am very pleased to see that. I am convinced if the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) were making the decisions, we would have full conferences on every bill that is pending.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is none, as far as I know, except a motion to go to conference on Foreign Operations which was approved this morning, so we cannot really hold them accountable yet.

Mr. Speaker, I am a conferee, duly appointed by Speaker HASTERT, on two of those bills allegedly in conference, Transportation-Treasury and Labor-HHS. But let me say, if there are conference meetings going on today or in the past or in the future, I have not been notified of those hearings. I have not attended any. I do not know where they are occurring. I have not had an opportunity to have any input, nor have the 662,000 people that I represent had a voice in those conferences.

Either no meetings are being held, or duly appointed conferees on our side of the aisle are being purposely, deliberately, undemocratically excluded.

This House passed the Labor-Health bill on July 10. The Senate passed its version nearly a month ago, on September 10. When and where are the meetings, Mr. Speaker? Why are the conferees being deliberately excluded? I have asked the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) that, and he assures me that we are having "conferences of the willing." I presume that means conferences of those who agree. But the voices of dissent or difference are stifled, ignored and shut out.

This House passed the Transportation-Treasury bill on September 9. The Senate passed its version 2 weeks ago tomorrow, October 23. Are we meeting on that bill? I have no notice of it. If we are, why are conferees on our side of the aisle, appointed by the Speaker, being deliberately excluded from those meetings?

Mr. Speaker, let us face the facts: This leadership is rendering conference committees absolutely meaningless. That is a corruption of the processes of this House. It is a corruption of democracy and the people we represent in this, what we call proudly, the People's House. I do not believe that it is the policy that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) would pursue if he were making the decisions.

I have served, Mr. Speaker, on the Treasury and Labor-Health-Education subcommittees for more than 21 years. I am not a new kid on the block. I am used to being included in conferences. I can never remember a time when Democrats controlled the majority, Mr. Speaker, that we failed to hold real conferences on appropriations bills.

The distinguished gentleman from Florida, my friend for whom I have unlimited respect and affection, he and I have participated in numerous conferences on the Labor-Health bill that went for days, sometimes weeks. I can remember an extraordinary, historic debate between Senator BYRD and Bill Natcher on a very important provision of our bill that went on literally for days. They had a disagreement. They talked about it in conference. Reporters could see it, the public could see it, Members could see it.

There are no conferences that the public can see. There are no conferences the press can report on. Whatever is being done, is being done in secret, undemocratically, unfairly, and it demeans this institution, Mr. Speaker.

There are other conferences other than the Committee on Appropriations. There have been no real conference committees on two of the most important pieces of legislation still facing this Congress, on adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare and on comprehensive energy reform.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the dean of the House of Representatives, serving on this floor longer than any other Member, has been excluded from the conference to which the Speaker appointed him.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), third or fourth in seniority in

this House of Representatives, excluded from the conference on prescription drugs. He, however, heard there was a meeting. He went to the meeting. He went through the door, and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) said, "You are not welcome, Mr. RANGEL. This is only a meeting of the willing. No dissent is allowed in this room," except if you happen to be a Republican on the other side of the Capitol, in which case maybe we have to talk to you. But, then again, as we know, Mr. Speaker, Mr. GRASSLEY apparently feels in effect he is shut out.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that it is absolutely outrageous that Congressional Republicans are considering across-the-board cuts to cover a \$3 billion gap, we hear, between House and Senate spending bills. We have not been asked, however, to participate in a conference in which you may make the decisions on what to cut.

In the last 7 months, this Congress has passed two emergency supplemental appropriations bills totaling \$166 billion. There was zero, none, no debate on how we would pay for those.

There was a bill pending in which the Committee on Ways and Means wants to add \$60 billion to the debt confronting this country. No question about how it is going to be paid for, it will just be passed. And yet we worry about how to pay for some \$3 billion for election reform, for veterans health care and for money to combat global HIV-AIDS, and how to provide \$400 million to the Forest Service so they can fight devastating wildfires in the Interior bill.

Mr. Speaker, if this process were being run by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), you would find the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and I standing here and saying we may disagree on this item, that item or the other item, but we have had a fair opportunity, as he gives us in every committee meeting, to state our points, to offer our amendments, to vote. That is not happening. It is not the gentleman from Florida's fault. The leadership of this House demeans the House by not providing for those procedures.

□ 1515

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The gentleman from Wisconsin has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I think that what the distinguished minority whip has just told the House is right on the button; and I want to emphasize, I do not believe these decisions, I do not believe that these practices, are being imposed upon the House and the Congress because of the desires of the people who run this committee. This committee has had an honorable tradition of deal-

ing fairly with the majority and minority Members alike ever since I have been here. In my early years, I think junior Democrats were as unhappy with some of the decisions that were made by senior Democrats as some of the Republicans were. The unhappiness was bipartisan. And I think in that sense things have changed because today, many of the decisions that affect the way this committee works are being made, as the gentleman from Maryland said, at a higher pay grade. But I think the result is, unfortunately, that we have many closed-door decisions being reached in a closed-minded atmosphere, and that does the House no good in the long term.

What has happened, I think, is that we have seen almost an unparalleled institutional arrogance on the part of the leadership of the majority party in the way they conduct this House's business.

First of all, they have assured that when each of the appropriation bills has come to the floor, they have come to the floor under conditions which guarantee that no meaningful, comprehensive alternatives can be offered which differ in any significant way with the priorities mandated by the majority party leadership. They bring bills to the floor which have been exempted from the normal rules, processes, and procedures of the House so that the committee product produced by the Republican majority can have the luxury of not having to compete with any other significant approaches. But then, they say that proposals that the minority party seeks to offer will not be granted those same exceptions from the rules and procedures of the House. That creates a very uneven playing field, and it is intended to do that.

And then, when that happens, and when bills pass because we have no way of reaching them and changing them in a significant way, then we run into a situation where, as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) says, in many instances conferences are simply conferences between a few well-connected people on the majority side of the aisle, with no real consultation with the minority. That can occur anytime that the leadership wants to exercise their ability to find 218 votes for their product.

But it is not democracy. It is not the kind of collegial vetting of differences that we have had in this House through the years. It is simply an arrogant assertion of will. It is a power play on the part of the majority party. And the purpose is not just to hold the minority party in check; the purpose is to, by their actions, hold Members of the majority party under control, so that no one does too much thinking for himself, so that no one will dare to say, "Well, I think there ought to be a different path that is pursued."

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I want to emphasize again, I recognize the effort of the gentleman from Flor-

ida to be fair; but I also recognize that sometimes he has to be a loyal soldier, and I think if he were to run these conferences in a way that suited his desires, some of them would be run quite differently.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the matter before us, as the gentleman from Florida has indicated, is simply whether or not we should keep the government open for another short period while these differences are resolved. We have no choice but to do so. So I urge a "yes" vote on the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

I rise in support of this continuing resolution. I wish we did not have to have a CR on the floor today. I wish it would have been possible for the Congress to have concluded all of its appropriations bills. The House did, but the entire Congress did not.

Mr. Speaker, we have a two-House, bicameral legislature. And I think that is a great idea, to have a bicameral legislature, where we have the checks and the balances, not only within the three branches of government, but checks and balances within the Congress itself. I will have to admit that there are times when I am tempted to believe that a different approach would be better, such as a one-House legislature. A one-House Congress would be easier to work with, because some of our conferences that we have had this year and in previous years have been very, very difficult and very trying.

But nevertheless, that is our system. We make the system work. We do a pretty good job at it. I would say, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues that in most of the conferences for this year, the House has prevailed, I think, far more than the other body. So I do not feel too bad about this. But I know it is very time consuming. It gets very frustrating.

But on the issue that the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) raised, and the gentleman from Maryland is one of my very best friends and has been for years. He and I work very closely together. We serve on one of the same subcommittees, and the two subcommittees that the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) serves on have not been called to conference yet. So obviously, he has not been called to a conference.

But I think, generally, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) would agree, that he and I work very closely in keeping each other informed. He will tell me when he has a proposition or a proposal; and if I can agree with him, I agree with him, and I do not have any problem with that just because he is the minority leadership. But if I disagree with him, then I also tell him that; and he understands that. When I go to him with a proposition and tell him what my plan is, sometimes he will agree and sometimes he will not, and the committee settles that. There

are no hard feelings; it is just the idea that the two parties have different general philosophies.

But it works okay. It works well. As my colleagues know, we concluded all of our House bills in the summer when we were supposed to conclude them, and that was partially because of the strong relationship that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and I have and that our subcommittee chairmen and their ranking members have.

Now, on the issue of excluding any member from conference committee or their staff, we do not do that. The Committee on Appropriations does not do that. A lot of staff work goes into preparing the bills and a lot of staff work goes into preparing for the conferences. When that staff work is being done, we keep the minority staff just as involved as the majority staff, and I think that they would admit to that and agree to that.

I would not stand for any member of my committee being excluded from the considerations of the committee. The majority is going to prevail, but the minority has every right in the world to be part of that process. In fact, I remember a couple of years ago that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) came to me with a problem that some of the minority staff were not being involved in one of the subcommittee considerations, and I solved that almost more than overnight. I solved that problem in a matter of hours, and I think to the satisfaction of the minority. While the majority is going to prevail, the minority has every right to be a part of the process.

Except for those single-Member States, all of us are elected by about the same number of people. All of us have the same rights as Members of the House of Representatives. I will tell my colleagues as one who believes in this institution, I am going to do whatever I have to do to guarantee that those rights are protected and preserved for all of the Members; again, pointing out that the majority is going to prevail. I recall being in the minority here for a long time, and I did not like it a lot of times when the majority prevailed, but that is the way it is. But I think on the Committee on Appropriations, there are not very many complaints about the issue of the minority being excluded.

Now, I do know that there was an issue last week when, as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) pointed out, that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) was uninvited to attend a fairly important conference meeting. I did not know about that until I heard the comments on the floor. But I would say this: my leadership believes very strongly in the rights of each individual Member. I will tell my colleagues that all of the committee chairmen were called to a meeting last night actually, and were told, do not ever let that happen again, that every member of that committee or that subcommittee has the right to be involved,

and our leadership made it very clear that any committee chairman who allowed that to happen would not be standing in good favor with the leadership.

So we try. Now, nobody is perfect, and I am sure that there are times when there will be complaints, even from majority members, that maybe they were not told in advance or were not told enough. But sometimes, members have an obligation to either do the proper staff work or prepare themselves when things are happening. This is not a babysitting institution. But for the most part, our members are very good about things that they are interested in, inquiring of the committee, inquiring of the staff, making their contribution to what they think should be the outcome. We do the best we can with 435 Members to reach a consensus. But I would just say again, on that issue of excluding minority members or staff from what is happening on the Committee on Appropriations, as long as I am chairman, that will not happen. And if any of my subcommittee chairmen were to permit that to happen, we would have a serious conversation. But I know that all of my subcommittee chairmen believe the same as I do, that the majority and the minority members all have equal rights as Members of this House; but the majority will make the final decision.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, it did not have too much to do with the CR, but I thought I would just make that response.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate having been yielded, the joint resolution is considered read for amendment, and pursuant to House Resolution 430, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOUNG of Florida). Pursuant to House Resolution 416 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2443.

□ 1530

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2443) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes, with Mr. OSE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO).

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such times I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2443, the Coast Guard Maritime Transportation Act of 2003. Before I discuss the bill or make comments on it, I would first like to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the distinguished chairman of the full committee, for all of his efforts on behalf of the Coast Guard and, in particular, for this bill, also thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), our ranking member, who certainly has been a champion of the Coast Guard and worked closely with us, and the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER), the ranking member on the Coast Guard Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, for their help and cooperation with this legislation.

This legislation was developed in a bipartisan manner and deserves the support of all the Members of Congress. The primary purpose of this bill is to authorize expenditures for the United States Coast Guard and the Federal Maritime Commission for the fiscal year 2004.

Title I of the bill authorizes for fiscal year 2004 approximately \$7.1 billion for Coast Guard programs and operations. The bill also authorizes the administration's request for 18.5 million for the Federal Maritime Commission.

This legislation will increase funding for Coast Guard programs at a level above the administration's request to ensure that the service can meet its traditional missions and make meaningful progress toward carrying out its homeland security responsibilities under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

The bill funds the Coast Guard at levels requested by the President plus an additional \$460 million. Of this amount, \$70 million is for conducting the mandated U.S. port security plan approvals, \$202 million to keep the Deepwater Capital Acquisition Program on track to meet its original 20-year implementation plan, \$80 million to install equipment on already delivered C-130J aircraft, \$39 million to establish a west coast HITRON squadron, \$50 million for