

(The remarks of Mr. DODD pertaining to the introduction of S. 2755 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the granting of this request, the official Senate copy of the Defense appropriations conference report having been presented to the desk, the Senate proceed to 2 hours for debate only, with 1 hour equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the committee and 1 hour equally divided between Senator MCCAIN and Senator INOUE; provided further that following that time the Senate proceed to a vote on adoption of the Defense appropriations conference report with no intervening action or debate and points of order waived; further, that when the Senate receives the official papers from the House, the vote on passage appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD following the receipt of those papers; and, finally, this agreement is null and void if the House does not agree to the conference report.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, if all goes well, Members will not use the full 2 hours. This, I think, is the only remaining vote Members would have to worry about tonight unless something untoward happens. Is that right?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we have several business items, one of which has Transportation, Coast Guard, and other issues. The assistant Democratic leader is right with his implication that this is going to be in all likelihood the only rollcall vote. It is absolutely critical that Members understand we have other items we have to address tonight. We need to do that, and finish with this vote, if all goes well.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if everything goes well, Members may have a vote on this very important conference report.

There is no objection on this side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Who yields time?

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, after the vote on the Defense appropriations, will there be opportunities for Senators to speak on other subjects?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, there will be. We will be happy to be here through the night for morning business—at some reasonable hour, I hope. We will be here for a while.

Mr. DAYTON. I thank the majority leader.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4613) "making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes," having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement of the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same.

Signed by all of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of Tuesday, July 20, 2004 (No. 101—Book II).)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, our Appropriations Committee is pleased to present to the Senate the Defense Appropriations Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2005. I believe passage of this measure today represents the earliest date the Defense bill has ever been sent to the President for signing.

This conference report symbolizes a balanced approach to fulfilling the financial needs for the Department for the fiscal year 2005.

It provides \$416.2 billion in new discretionary spending authority for the Department of Defense. This amount includes \$25 million in emergency spending requested by the President for the fiscal year 2005 costs associated with the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. That provision becomes effective immediately upon the signing of this bill by the President.

The conference report fully funds key readiness programs critical to the global war on terrorism such as land forces training, helicopter flying hours, ship steaming days, and spare parts.

It fully funds the 3.5 percent military pay raise proposed in the President's budget, and increases levels for basic allowance for housing, eliminating service members' average out-of-pocket housing from 3.5 percent to zero in 2005.

It provides \$1.5 billion above the President's budget request for Army and Marine Corps recapitalization of combat and tactical vehicles, helicopters, and ammunition, and provides a total of \$18.2 billion for the Defense Health Program, an increase of \$2.5 billion over the fiscal year 2004 enacted level.

I urge all Members to support the men and women in uniform who risk their lives for our country each day by voting for this measure.

I would like to thank Larry Lanzillota, the Acting Department of Defense Comptroller, for his hard work, dedication, and diligence throughout the past year. He has done a superb job and we wish him success in his future endeavors.

I also thank my cochairman, Senator INOUE, for his support and valuable counsel, and recognize him for any statement he wishes to make.

I wish to put in the RECORD the names of the diligent staff members who have worked on this bill night and day to be able to present it to the Senate at this time, as follows:

Charlie Houy, Betsy Schmid, Nicole DiResta, Sid Ashworth, Jennifer Chartrand, Kraig Siracuse, Tom Hawkins, Kate Kaufer, Lesley Kalan, Alycia Farrell, Brian Potts, Brian Wilson, Janelle Treon, and Mazie Mattson.

I yield to my friend from Hawaii, if he wishes to make an opening statement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise today to address the Defense appropriations conference report that passed the House earlier today.

First, I wish to commend my chairman, Senator STEVENS, and his capable staff for this agreement.

The proposals provided by the conference report represent a careful balance between the recommendations of each body. Moreover, it provides what the Defense Department needs for the coming year.

This is a good bill. It represents a fair compromise. It is the product of a lot of hard work by the chairman and members of the committee. I recommend all my colleagues support it.

Let me highlight just a couple of key items in this measure.

In meeting the conference committee priorities, the bill supports the men and women in uniform. It approves a 3.5 percent pay raise for them. It funds health care requirements to include benefits that are authorized for our guard and reserve forces. And, most important in this very challenging time, it provides significant increases for force protection—specifically up armored "humvees", body armor, better helmets, armor plating for other vehicles and new technology to try and counter improvised explosive devices.

The bill provides substantial resources to enhance investment programs in the Defense Department to support key programs like the V-22, the F-22, the new DDX destroyer, the littoral combat ship, missile defense and significant increases in Army equipment for Stryker combat vehicles, trucks, and helicopters.

But, I want to inform my colleagues that this bill does not rubber stamp the administration's desires. It reduces many programs for which insufficient justification has been provided. While we recognize that the country needs to continue to enhance its space capabilities, members of the Appropriations Committee have learned the hard way that improvements must be developed prudently. It is a waste of resources to try and accelerate complex new technologies in the manner recommended by civilian officials in the Defense Department.

The bill also provides \$25 billion in emergency spending, the amount requested, but it allocates the funds to meet the priorities and needs of the individual military departments, not the