

IRAQ

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss Iraq, as I have every day this week that we have been here. First, I know we all have the deepest gratitude and respect for the sacrifice of the brave men and women serving our country so valiantly in Iraq. Make no mistake about it, the troops are doing their job. I am concerned, however, that their mission is not worthy of their great sacrifice, especially the President's surge.

The surge, despite earlier reports this week, has failed to meet the objectives set out by the President. And the President can't change that fact by changing the goal. He is now claiming progress in Iraq as evidence that the surge—directed at Baghdad—is working. While the President has claimed progress in Anbar, it was not the surge that brought the momentary calm to this region, because the surge was focused mainly on Baghdad, and the difficult process of political reconciliation. Its objective, as stated by the President himself, was to create breathing room for the central Iraqi Government to make political progress.

Our brave troops have been in Anbar for years and years, doing the first-rate job they always do in what is a very difficult environment. Now, however, some elements of the local population, and some of their leaders, have made common cause with the brave men and women of our military. They have cooperated with our troops out of distaste for the brutal methods of al-Qaida. While this is a welcome and helpful development, it is neither the foundation upon which a successful long-term strategy can be launched, nor is it a result of the surge, which was targeted mainly at Baghdad and the national Iraqi political process.

We have heard about successes in the past. They are temporary. They are not based on any permanent structural change or any permanent change in the views of the Iraqi citizens. The Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds still despise each other. They dislike each other more than they like any central government. We have heard about success in the past in Baghdad, and we have heard about success in Fallujah, and they vanish like the wind because the fundamentals on the ground haven't changed.

Now, at a time when the American people are crying out for a change in course, some are pointing to a temporary situation in one province—Anbar—as a way to continue the present misguided policy. It makes no sense. It makes no sense because the fundamentals in Iraq stay the same. There is no central government that has any viability, and the warlords in Anbar Province have no relationship with the central government whatsoever. The Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis, as I have stated, dislike each other far more than they like or want any central government, and these two

facts doom the administration's policy to failure.

We should not have our brave soldiers fighting a civil war caught between rival political and religious factions. We desperately need a change in course, a change in course that recognizes the political situation on the ground, and I urge that this body move forward to do just that.

CHANGES TO S. CON. RES. 21

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, section 306 of S. Con. Res. 21, the 2008 budget resolution, permits the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to revise the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels for legislation that would make higher education more accessible and more affordable, provided that the legislation does not worsen the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2017.

I find that the conference report for H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, satisfies the conditions of the deficit-neutral reserve fund for higher education. Therefore, pursuant to section 306, I am adjusting the aggregates in the 2008 budget resolution, as well as the allocation provided to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

I ask unanimous consent that the following revisions to S. Con. Res. 21 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008.—S. CON. RES. 21; REVISIONS TO THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 306 DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

(In billions of dollars)

Section 101:	
(1)(A) Federal Revenues:	
FY 2007 .....	1,900.340
FY 2008 .....	2,022.084
FY 2009 .....	2,121.502
FY 2010 .....	2,176.951
FY 2011 .....	2,357.680
FY 2012 .....	2,494.753
(1)(B) Change in Federal Revenues:	
FY 2007 .....	-4.366
FY 2008 .....	-28.712
FY 2009 .....	14.576
FY 2010 .....	13.230
FY 2011 .....	-36.870
FY 2012 .....	-102.343
(2) New Budget Authority:	
FY 2007 .....	2,371.470
FY 2008 .....	2,503.114
FY 2009 .....	2,524.848
FY 2010 .....	2,579.138
FY 2011 .....	2,697.407
FY 2012 .....	2,734.883
(3) Budget Outlays:	
FY 2007 .....	2,294.862
FY 2008 .....	2,469.527
FY 2009 .....	2,570.800
FY 2010 .....	2,607.889
FY 2011 .....	2,703.174
FY 2012 .....	2,716.580

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(In millions of dollars)

Current Allocation to Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority .....	12,922
FY 2007 Outlays .....	13,144
FY 2008 Budget Authority .....	10,608
FY 2008 Outlays .....	10,024
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority .....	56,565
FY 2008–2012 Outlays .....	54,185
Adjustments:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority .....	-4,890
FY 2007 Outlays .....	-4,890
FY 2008 Budget Authority .....	-176
FY 2008 Outlays .....	-842
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority .....	5,754
FY 2008–2012 Outlays .....	4,888
Revised Allocation to Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority .....	8,032
FY 2007 Outlays .....	8,254
FY 2008 Budget Authority .....	10,432
FY 2008 Outlays .....	9,182
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority .....	62,319
FY 2008–2012 Outlays .....	59,073

RECONCILIATION PROVISIONS—H.R. 2669

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, as chairman of the Committee on the Budget, pursuant to section 313 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I submit to the Senate the following list of reconciliation provisions considered to be extraneous under the Byrd rule, to be printed in the RECORD.

PROVISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE REPORT ACCOMPANYING H.R. 2669, THE COLLEGE ACCESS AND COST REDUCTION ACT, WHICH ARE EXTRANEUS PURSUANT TO THE BYRD RULE  
None.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my letter to Senator BYRD regarding my absence for rollcall vote No. 315.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,  
Washington, DC, September 6, 2007.

Hon. ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President Pro Tempore, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Mr. President, due to my presence at a critically important Armed Services Committee hearing regarding the Iraq war, I was unavoidably absent during rollcall vote No. 315. This vote concerned Senator Brown's amendment No. 2673 to the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. I was questioning committee witnesses at the time the floor vote was called, and I abbreviated my questioning in order to arrive for the vote. However, I arrived on the floor shortly after the vote concluded. Had I been present, I would have supported Senator Brown's amendment, which I cosponsored. That amendment prohibits the Department of Veterans Affairs from outsourcing certain VA jobs to private contractors.

Sincerely,

JIM WEBB,  
U.S. Senator.