DEMOCRACY BUILDING

(Mr. SNYDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, Stephen Kinzer, in his book, “All the Shah’s Men,” describes the events of the overthrow of the Iranian Government in 1953 in a coup staged by the United States and the British. President Truman did not support overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Mossadegh. In this picture taken in 1951 here in Washington, D.C., you can see the British MI6 man who respected as a nationalist. However, the Eisenhower government came in, President Eisenhower supported the coup, and the government was overthrown in 1953.

I thought of these events on hearing the President’s speech yesterday calling for the spread of democracy in the Middle East. Stephen Kinzer in his interviews with Iranians asked them in the past what they had thought of American overtures talking about democracy in Iran, and their response was we had a democracy, but you Americans overthrew it.

We all support democracy and democratic ideals, but when it comes to remaking societies, Mr. Speaker, we should approach this with humility, realism, and a sense of history.

LT. COLONEL WEST SHOULD BE GIVEN MEDAL, NOT COURT MARTIALED

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, this coming Monday, Lt. Colonel Allan West is scheduled to face an article 32 hearing to see if he should be court martialed.

Colonel West is accused of threatening an Iraqi prisoner. According to news reports, Colonel West shot his handgun into a firing barrel and also fired it near this prisoner. He did not harm the prisoner in any way, but he apparently scared him into giving information that foiled an attack on American soldiers.

If these news reports are accurate, Colonel West saved many American lives. This is a man who has served honorably for almost 20 years in the United States Army. He should not be court martialed. He should be given a medal for saving American lives.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER. Mr. Speaker, if we needed any more proof of an improving economy following last week’s outstanding economic growth figures, we just got it. The manufacturing sector of our economy, which is important to so many States, including my home State of Michigan, appears to be turning around with a vengeance.

October’s indices showed manufacturing expanding at an annual rate of nearly 20%. In 2002, the GDP grew by 7.2 percent in the last quarter.

Last week was the fourth straight week in which jobless claims were below 400,000, as claims dropped to 348,000. In headlines across America today, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said of the decrease in jobless claims, that “the odds increasingly favor a revival in job creation.” As Democrats continue to try to talk down the economy, the news of the recovery is just too clear to ignore: 126,000 new jobs in October were announced this morning.

Republican policies of tax relief, fiscal discipline, corporate accountability, and nation-building have restored our Nation’s confidence and promoted a healthy business environment.

In conclusion, God bless our troops.

THE ECONOMY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the economy is turning around: a 7.2 percent growth last quarter in the gross domestic product, the largest since Ronald Reagan cut taxes in 1984. The jobless claims have fallen. More people are working than ever before. Productivity has increased. Tax cuts work.

Why do they work? Because the more money a worker has in his pocket, the more money he is going to spend. When he goes outdoors and buys more clothes, tires, or hamburgers, small businesses react by expanding their inventory. When they do that, they also hire more employees. When more people have jobs, more people are working, more people pay taxes, and less people are dependent on government welfare checks.

Tax cuts work. The best solutions are always seen in the private sector and not in government. I hope the next time when we have an opportunity to make these tax cuts permanent that we can get the Democrats, particularly those in the other body, to join us in making these tax cuts a permanent part of our Tax Code.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1588, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZA-
TION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 437 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 437
Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the
Americans' all-volunteer armed services and the families that support them.

The pay raise will cut the pay gap between military and civilian jobs from 6.4 to 5.5 percent. This will be the fifth consecutive year that pay raises have exceeded this rate.

For our active soldiers, the conferees increased the rates of special pay for those subject to hostile fire and imminent danger worldwide from $150 a month to $225 per month for the period beginning October 1 of 2003, through December 31 of 2004.

We also want to acknowledge where these active soldiers get the source of their strength. It is from their families here at home. And we are increasing the family separation allowance for servicemembers with dependents from $100 a month to $250 a month for the period October 1 this year through December 31 of 2004.

I also want to take a moment to personally thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) for tirelessly fighting for the solid “Buy American Provisions” that are included in this conference report. That is extremely important to my State of North Carolina.

The ongoing war on terrorism dictates the need to have reliable domestic sources of weapons and equipment. Unfortunately, fewer American companies are designing and manufacturing the components and materials used in our military systems, as the industrial base is becoming more dependent on foreign sources. And this is a disturbing factor to me, as I know it is to the gentleman from California (Chairman HUNTER). We have got to be able to produce these equipment needs here in the United States so we are not at the mercy of some other country if they decide for some reason to cut us off.

However, I am very disappointed, and I know the chairman is too, that the conference report did not include a key provision that was passed by the House that would ensure that all the components of the Department of Defense uniforms come from American companies. The language specifically worked to more adequately cover domestic textiles and leather industries.

I would also like to congratulate my good friend and colleague on the Committee on Appropriations, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), for tirelessly working to strengthen America’s military, to increase our national security, and to ensure victory. At this crucial time in our history, this bill is most important.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, for all of my 25 years in this Congress, I have worked to strengthen America’s military and to increase our national security. Like other defense proponents on both sides of the aisle, I have been fighting to put politics aside and work together to support America’s men and women in uniform.

For instance, nearly 18 months ago, I introduced the Citizenship for America’s Troops Act, a bill to help U.S. troops, who are leading the way in combating the enemy and burdensome obstacles that they face in the current citizenship process. Working with Democrats and Republicans in the House and the Senate, a good compromise was finally reached, one that is in this defense authorization conference report. It is not perfect, but it does provide much-needed relief to the more than 37,000 patriotic legal immigrants on active duty in the U.S. military, brave men and women who have been fighting and dying for a country in which they could not even vote.

This kind of cooperation and bipartisan approach, Mr. Speaker, is fundamental to our efforts to keep America’s military strong, especially at a time when so many Americans are losing faith in President Bush’s ability to win the peace in Iraq.

While this conference report offers much to be proud of, Mr. Speaker, like the military pay raise and health care benefits for the National Guard and Reserve that Democrats have fought for, it also demonstrates how bipartisanship is becoming increasingly rare under this all-Republican government.

During the conference committee negotiations on this bill, Republican leaders shut out Democrats, including the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELETON), on some key areas of the conference report. And the Missouri will speak about those in more length. This is part of a clear and dangerous pattern by Republican leaders. We have seen it on the energy bill, the...
Medicare bill, and the FAA bill; but it is extraordinarily disappointing to see America’s national defense policy treated in such a partisan manner.

Moreover, the conference report itself contains several provisions where Republicans and Democrats who are fighting to repeal the disabled veterans tax? Right now it penalizes nearly 560,000 disabled veterans, denying them $3 billion in military retirement benefits each year. As the American Legion has said, Mr. Speaker, the right thing to do is repeal the tax for all service-disabled military retirees. Democrats have proposed a plan to do that; but Republicans, led by President Bush, continue to block it. In fact, in this bill, Republicans refuse to help almost 70 percent of those disabled veterans, Mr. Speaker.

So when Republican Members are at home for Veterans’ Day celebrations next week, I hope they will be honest with the people about the provisions in this bill which provide only partial relief to only a fraction of America’s disabled veterans. I hope they will explain that they did not think they could afford to restore military retirement benefits to 390,000 disabled veterans because they spent so much of the U.S. Treasury on tax breaks for the wealthiest few.

Second, does anyone really believe that national security requires that we gut landmark environmental protections? Of course not. But rolling back America’s environmental protections is a Republican priority. So Republicans stuck into this bill provisions that attack the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

And, third, is it really necessary to weaken the workplace protections of 746,000 patriotic Americans employed at the Pentagon, the same people who responded so courageously to the September 11 attack on that building? And is it really necessary to eliminate the rules prohibiting patronage at the Pentagon? Of course not. But gutting important worker rights is another key Republican priority, and they are shamefully using this national defense bill to do it.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are some areas of this conference report where bipartisanship and sound defense policy have prevailed. These include the substantial quality-of-life improvements that Democrats have fought for. Those include a 41 percent increase in basic pay for all members of the Armed Forces, plus targeted increases for mid-grade and senior noncommissioned officers. Those increase will help officer retention. And they also include an increase in imminent-danger pay and the family separation allowance for U.S. troops serving in harm’s way.

The conference report also builds on our efforts to support the National Guard and Reserves, who bear more and more of the burden of defending America at home and abroad. For instance, it ensures that when the Ready Reserve cannot get health insurance through their employer, it gives them access to the same TRICARE system that serves the military.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the conference report includes my own legislation to make life easier for the Guard and Reserves, both active duty and retirees, and their families, by allowing them unlimited access to commissaries. They and their families are making great sacrifices for this Nation and they deserve our support.

Finally, the bill continues to make important investments in the wide range of weapons that assure America’s military superiority throughout the world. It includes full funding of $4.4 billion for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the next generation multirole fighter of the future for the Air Force and Navy, and it fully funds the F/A-22 Raptor aircraft, the high-technology air dominance fighter for the Air Force, by providing $3.5 billion for 22 planes, and it includes the full $1.2 billion needed for the V-22 Osprey aircraft.

Mr. Speaker, all these important prodefense provisions have strong bipartisan support. They reflect the long-standing commitment of Democrats and Republicans to work together to ensure the U.S. military has the resources it needs. That is the type of bipartisanship and cooperation that our national security policy requires. It builds strong public support for a U.S. foreign policy here at home and assures our troops have the resources they need to do the dangerous job we ask of them.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Republican leaders seem to have forgotten these lessons. And the President too often ignored them in the run-up to the war in Iraq, which is a big reason it will be so hard to restore President Bush’s credibility and the public’s confidence in his ability to win the peace in Iraq. The American people deserve better than that, and so do our troops in the field. I urge my Republican friends to remember that, especially as U.S. troops and U.S. taxpayers continue to shoulder almost the entire burden for rebuilding Iraq.

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

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), our distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)
Now, I want to say that as I listened to my friend from Dallas go through his prepared statement on this he did end by talking about the fact that Democrats and Republicans alike stand together in support of a strong defense, but I want to make sure my colleagues understand that the notion that was made that somehow Republicans are interested in gutting worker rights, murdering our environment. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

I want to express my deep appreciation to my good partner on the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) will get into this as he has in our meeting upstairs this morning and he has repeatedly here in the well, he has said that we want to do a good job. We must do our very best, and I think we have done a good job as it relates to the troops of the United States of America. They are superb. They are doing a good job. We must pay respect to them legislatively as well as to their families legislatively, and I think we have done that by the various items. The family separation allowance, the combat pay, the pay raise and all of these personnel items that we touched upon is our way of saying thanks for a good job well done.

So I support this rule. In the process I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone in uniform and to those families who support those in uniform. And, sadly, we have lost some and I hope that this is some consolation that we continue to support the American men and women who are wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time. Let me congratulate my colleague, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the good partner on the Committee on Armed Services, and all the Members, Republican and Democrat, who helped to put this bill together. We have given a lot of time and attention, and all the members of the Committee on Rules.

I believe this measure is going to ensure that our men and women in uniform are equipped and compensated to diminish the threat of loss of life to our armed services.

With respect to personnel, right now we are trying to give as much value to the sailors' survival as we have given to the sea lions' survival. I think that is a good balance. In this bill we have put together this balance between conservation and military training.

We continue to live in a very dangerous world. And the chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence from Florida (Mr. Goss), I think made a point very clearly in our hearing this morning and that is that we need to take action now. We want to make sure that the conflict exists there and not here, and that is why this legislation is so important, so that we can in fact deal with those who want to do us in.

The training that continues to take place in the madrasas, which is virulently opposed to the United States and our Western values, the other kind of terrorist activity that we are seeing, we have to be prepared to deal with that.

Lives are being lost on a regular basis because of this battle against international terrorism, but with passage of this legislation we will be able to diminish the threat of loss of life and ensure that our men and women in uniform are equipped and compensated to deal with this very, very serious issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge strong support of this rule and the conference report.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking member on the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and thank the gentleman from California (Mrs. MYRICK) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) for presenting it this morning.

This was a difficult bill, and shortly we will talk about some bumps along the way, but we are at a plan for war. We must do our very best, and I think we have done a good job as it relates to the troops of the United States of America. They are superb. They are doing a good job. We must pay respect to them legislatively as well as to their families legislatively, and I think we have done that by the various items. The family separation allowance, the combat pay, the pay raise and all of these personnel items that we touched upon is our way of saying thanks for a good job well done.

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Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time. Let me congratulate my colleague, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), my good partner on the Committee on Armed Services, and all the Members, Republican and Democrat, who helped to put this bill together. We have given a lot of time and attention, and all the members of the Committee on Rules.

I just say a word or two about what this bill does because this bill makes what I consider to be some sweeping reforms and it is a great bill. It covers a number of major areas, and along with what I call the "people issues"; that is, the pay raise that has been mentioned, the additional monies for housing that brings down the amount that a service member has to pay out of their pocket, all of the things that go to quality of life for personnel. It is what we call major areas that have needed reform.

One aspect of that is what I call freedom to train, and today if you go to a place like Camp Pendleton, I have used that as an example. It has some 17 miles of shoreline. Only a very small area can actually be utilized for Marines who basically practice Iwo Jima. They practice assaulting a defended beach area. They can only do that in a very, very limited area of about one kilometer because of environmental considerations. And if you go a bases around the country, rifle ranges, air space for our Air Force and our other services to undertake integrated training with multiple aircraft, all of that is being hindered and obstructed because of a collision with our environmental laws.

Now, we have an answer to that, and this answer is a management plan that is the military gets together with State Fish and Wildlife and Federal Fish and Wildlife and they make an agreement. They make an agreement and they say, okay, the habitat for the gnatcatcher will be over here, we will set aside this 400 acres, and the Marines will have this area for rifle training or the Army will have this area for tank training or the Air Force will have this area for aircraft training.

We believe that agreement and you put it in place, it is not open for groups to come in and sue under the Endangered Species Act to close down that rifle range, to close down that tank range, to close down that air space that is so vital so that our people can survive in theaters like Iraq and Afghanistan.

So this is offered under the proposition that the real endangered species is a 19-year-old Marine rifleman who needs the very best training that he can get here at home before he projects American power overseas, and in this bill we put together this balance between conservation and military requirements.

Also, with respect to allowing our submariners to utilize the best of their sonar devices that will keep them alive when they are in the littorals, in shallow water areas around the world, where they will be faced with very quiet submarine now, being proliferated in certain adversaries' navies. We say that, whereas before the standard was that if a mammal, maybe a sea lion, was potentially disturbed that military training could not take place in his neighborhood. Now we say he has to actually be significantly disturbed. He has to actually be disturbed or that disturbance has to be significant enough to alter the way he migrates or feeds or the way he goes about his daily life.

So we are trying to give as much value to the sailors' survival as we have given to the sea lions' survival. I think that is a good balance. In this case we put the sailor ahead of the sea lion. I think the American people want that.

With respect to personnel, right now we are facing a war that is a new war. It is a war in which we see terrorists with high technology. We have to be able to respond quickly, and that involves people who not just wear the uniform of the United States, it also involves people who wear the civil service uniform.
So we are empowering Mr. Rumsfeld with the ability to reshape his civil service so that instead of taking 4 or 5 or 6 months to go through the bureaucracy to qualify a civil servant to work at a job so you get to the point where you just select a sergeant to get it and he salutes you and do what you want, we will now be able to quickly move civil servants into that job. We will be able to hire them quickly, and when people show an extraordinary ability to work and an enthusiasm and dedication that rises above the community, that they will be rewarded for that. And we have tested these ideas in pilot projects around the country, and the members who have participated in the pilot projects have voted that they like it.

So we are undertaking important reforms in this bill. We are giving the military the tools they need to fight this new type of war. I would urge everyone to support the rule and support the bill.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN).

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I am a conference on the Defense Authorization Act. Virtually all of the funding for intelligence is contained in this bill. This is one of the most complex bills. Like a number of conference, I am enormously concerned about developing bunker buster nuclear weapons, weakening nonproliferation programs, and an assault on collective bargaining, all of which is unfortunately part of this legislation.

Nonetheless, I signed the conference report and I intend to vote for final passage. The lives of American soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, Marines and civilians are on the line in Iraq and in the global war on terrorism. Accurate and actionable intelligence is vital if we are to prevail, and I intend to do everything I can to provide our forces with the best intelligence possible.

The funds in this bill meet important intelligence needs vital to our Nation's security and, in contrast to the recent $87 billion supplemental, these funds come through the regular budget process.

Still, the following needs to be said: The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on a bipartisan basis has identified serious shortcomings in the prewar intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorism. Accurate and actionable intelligence is vital if we are to prevail, and I intend to do everything I can to provide our forces with the best intelligence possible.

The Intelligence Community has yet to acknowledge any flaws in prewar intelligence. With American lives on the line now, the shortcomings in prewar intelligence must be addressed now. A "lessons learned" study cannot await the conclusion of David Kay's ongoing WMD search. Regardless of what he finds, there were problems with collection, analysis and the way policy makers used the Intelligence Community's information.

I strongly support this bill's requirement of an Iran "lessons learned" report by the Department of Defense due March 31 of next year. As a conference on the intelligence authorization bill, I plan to push for an interim "lessons learned" report from the Intelligence Community on the same date as the military's report is due, and I hope that the gentleman from Florida (Chairman G OSS) will join me in this request.

Ms. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TI AHRT).

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) for yielding me time.

In order to provide the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), who has just through very difficult negotiations on a very difficult time. Some Members may not know that he lost his home to the California wildfires that swept through southern California. So I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

This is good news. This defense conference report is good news for our young men and women who serve in the Armed Services and are required to carry out the will of this Nation overseas. We want to give them the tools necessary so they can do their job and come home safely to their families, and this bill provides many of the tools necessary for that to happen. It is also good news for our veterans in addressing the issue of concurrent receipts.

It is also very good news for the KC-767 program. This is a critical part of our defense strategy. It completes the circuit for the start of a new program in fulfilling a great need by replacing our KC-135's, the tanker fleet that we currently have.

The average age of the KC-135s is 43 years. Can the Members imagine, Mr. Speaker, coming back and forth to work in a 1960 automobile? This is basically what we have asked our young men and women to do. The average age of 43 years is the equivalent of driving a 1960 Dodge Dart. And just like an older automobile would suffer from rust and need repair, these aircraft are suffering from corrosion and have high maintenance costs. So the KC-135 must be replaced, and this is good news because this defense authorization conference report does that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that we are on notice that we will have to correct some of the problems that have been created by this agreement in the current legislation. The conference report changes the original plan for the KC-767. It changes the delivery schedule for the KC-767. It changes the delivery schedule for the KC-767. It changes the delivery schedule for the KC-767.

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combination of these added funds achieves an immediate start to the program and allows us to purchase the last 80 aircraft at time of delivery.

I appreciate the support that you have provided in the past and look forward to working with you in the future. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I commend the chairman, whom I have worked with for 20-odd years, for once again bringing a bill to closure.

I do have to call attention to the fact that this rule waives all points of order, which is typical; but in this case, as Ranking Member of the Budget Committee, I feel obliged to make my colleagues aware what it is we are waiving because it is not a good way to do business; it is not a good way to keep a budget.

This conference report contains two provisions that entail significant spending over and above the amounts allowed in the budget resolution. One allows concurrent receipt of military retirement benefits for retirees who also receive disability benefits. The other commits the government to lease and purchase up to 20 or maybe even 100 new tanker aircraft.

No funds were added to this conference report for either of these programs, and that is my problem. Between the two of them, they will entail new unfunded future commitments of approximately $40 billion, $22 billion for concurrent receipt, $18 billion for 100 new tanker aircraft.

As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I support the compromise on concurrent receipt, and I understand the need for new tankers; but I am concerned, and have to be, about the way we are doing this. The rule before us would waive the point of order that would otherwise lie against the conference report for some clear and substantial departures from the budget resolution that is supposed to be prevailing in this House.

We just finished the fiscal year 2003. The largest deficit in our peacetime history, $374 billion. The deficit for next year, fiscal year 2004, is likely to break that by $100 billion, even without the additional cost of these programs which are not included in any of CBO's or GAO's projections.

All I am saying is if concurrent receipt is a worthy benefit, and I think it is, then let us pay for it or at least let us recognize fully in the budget the cost of it. If we need these tankers, and I accept the arguments that we do, then let us pay for them. Let us make the argument and pay for them and set the priority in the budget. This bill does not do that, and this rule would allow Congress to flout the budget resolution without facing up to these costs. If Congress feels that it is necessary to abandon the budget resolution that supposedly prevails in the House and further increases the deficit, then we ought to be accountable for that decision.

But this rule would make sure that no Member of this body will have the opportunity to demand such accountability.

Let me tell the Members specifically that two problems in the conference report with respect to items that give me trouble. The conference report phases in a compromised version of concurrent receipt. In 2004 this would increase direct spending by $800 million. By 2013 this would increase annual cost to as much as $3.5 billion. This provision would cost an estimated $2 billion in additional direct spending over the next 10 years, none of which is provided for in the mandatory spending provisions of the budget resolution. That is why I call it a substantial departure.

There are two issues. I rise in strong support of the rule that this rule waives all points of order, which is typical; but in this case, as Ranking Member of the Budget Committee, I feel obliged to make my colleagues aware what it is we are waiving because it is not a good way to do business; it is not a good way to keep a budget.

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As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I support the compromise on concurrent receipt, and I understand the need for new tankers; but I am concerned, and have to be, about the way we are doing this. The rule before us would waive the point of order that would otherwise lie against the conference report for some clear and substantial departures from the budget resolution that is supposed to be prevailing in this House.

We just finished the fiscal year 2003. The largest deficit in our peacetime history, $374 billion. The deficit for next year, fiscal year 2004, is likely to break that by $100 billion, even without the additional cost of these programs which are not included in any of CBO's or GAO's projections.

All I am saying is if concurrent receipt is a worthy benefit, and I think it is, then let us pay for it or at least let us recognize fully in the budget the cost of it. If we need these tankers, and I accept the arguments that we do, then let us pay for them. Let us make the argument and pay for them and set the priority in the budget. This bill does not do that, and this rule would allow Congress to flout the budget resolution without facing up to these costs. If Congress feels that it is necessary to abandon the budget resolution that supposedly prevails in the House and further increases the deficit, then we ought to be accountable for that decision.

But this rule would make sure that no Member of this body will have the opportunity to demand such accountability.

Let me tell the Members specifically what are two problems in the conference report with respect to items that give me trouble. The conference report phases in a compromised version of concurrent receipt. In 2004 this would increase direct spending by $800 million. By 2013 this would increase annual cost to as much as $3.5 billion. This provision would cost an estimated $2 billion in additional direct spending over the next 10 years, none of which is provided for in the mandatory spending provisions of the budget resolution. That is why I call it a substantial departure.

There is another anomaly in the way that concurrent receipt is treated. Since the mid-1990s, we have recognized military retirement costs through an accrual system that funds cover the cost of retirement benefits we owe in the future for today's military service. The concurrent receipt provisions in this bill eliminate a reduction or offset in military retirement and thus increase military retirement benefits. Under current procedures, we should increase our accrual payments to account for the fact that we have just increased future spending on retirement benefits. This bill does not do that. It departs from a convention we adopted 20 years ago for reporting military retirement programs.

The conference agreement also includes language that was not in either bill to lease 20 tankers and then buy 80 more. In effect, what it allows is increases in military retirement and thus in military retirement benefits. Under current procedures, we should increase our accrual payments to account for the fact that we have just increased future spending on retirement benefits.

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percent would not receive any relief at all. In other words, some veterans who lost their limbs while serving their country are not considered worthy of relief after they get back to the States. This is not a full concurrent receipt as a compromise. This is clearly not a victory for veterans. It is an attempt to divide and conquer veterans so as to deprive most retirees of their earned retirement benefits. A vote for the motion to recommit is a vote for full concurrent receipt and an end to the tax on our disabled veterans.

I urge all Members to vote for this motion and support what 374 Members have already said by cosponsoring legislation for full, not partial, concurrent receipt.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the veterans of our country are wise enough to make judgments about where they want to go, and I salute them for raising the issues that we have been dealing with the last several months.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this opportunity to say straight up front that I will vote for this defense authorization. The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTEN), and a whole range of people have done an outstanding job to ensure that we not only of the United States and our security but of those young men and women who are out there basically buttressing the pillars of civilization.

The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) mentioned a little while ago that a 19-year-old rifleman ought to get the best training in the world. I agree with him 100 percent. I was a 19-year-old Marine Corps rifleman who worked with the Navy over a period of years, went into assaulted-fortified positions from Navy ships. So I personally recognize the absolute need, the uncompromising need, to ensure the best available training, the best equipment, the best of support that this country can offer to U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines Corps, and airmen.

I would like to work with the Committee on Armed Services and the chairman and the ranking member. Over the next several months, the Committee on Resources will be reauthorizing the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The language in the defense authorization bill dealing with the marine mammals was something that we worked out. The language that is in the defense bill now, I think, goes beyond what is necessary. There are some issues dealing with small numbers versus negligible numbers. There are some issues dealing with confined geographic areas. There are issues dealing with permits. There are issues with civilian scientific research.

I think the civilian can use for the marine mammals and the Marine training is laid out before us in this thing called INRMPs. Integrated National Resources Management Plans, that there is consultation, there is collaboration with the Committee on Resources and the other agencies throughout the Federal Government. That model that deals with INRMPs, that would be replaced, that young 19-year-old rifleman, is going to get the best training, no compromise on that. And I would like to work with the Committee on Armed Services to deal with those issues over the next several months.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

I rise to express my opposition to the conference report on the Department of Defense Authorization bill. I want to pick up with where the last speaker finished. He said he thought in this bill they went a little further than was necessary in the area of the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act. I want to say what I believe to be the case, that the problem with this bill is that it has been hijacked by the Republican leadership and the White House, who insisted on provisions that weakened environmental protections relating to the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

I am also the ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform, which deals with civil service provisions in this bill. I am not opposed to reasonable reform that makes the Federal Government function more efficiently and still protects the basic rights of Federal employees, but this bill is not it.

Senator COLLINS developed a bipartisan compromise that safeguarded the collective bargaining rights of 700,000 DOD employees, yet gave DOD much of its flexibility. The last bill abandons that compromise. This bill makes a mockery of labor relations at the Defense Department. At the same time that the bill claims to protect collective bargaining, it allows DOD to waive these requirements for the next 6 years. During these 6 years, the Department can run rough-shod over its unions. The Department can decide what issues will be bargained, how labor and management impasses will be resolved and whether it will discriminate against union members.

This bill also makes it harder for DOD employees to gain redress for unfair treatment. Currently employees have the ability to file appeals with the independent Merit Systems Protection Board, but under this bill employees first would have to go through an internal DOD appeals process. An administration that says it is against bureaucracy and red tape wants to create so much bureaucracy for employee appeals that it simply give up trying to protect their rights.

The bill removes requirements for DOD employees to receive overtime pay or pay for working on holidays or weekends. This is ironic, since both the House and the Senate recently voted to protect overtime pay for private sector employees.

As the heroic efforts in Iraq have demonstrated, DOD employees do not work only Monday through Friday, 9 to 5. Frankly, it is shameful that Congress is going to give those employees who safeguard our national security less overtime protection than it gives private sector employees.

Finally, I have concerns about some of the provisions dealing with government-wide procurement policy. In particular, the bill extends to all civilian agency something known as "other transaction authority" for research and development projects related to defense against terrorism. This would essentially waive all Federal procurement laws for these contracts. The bill to give veterans' excess wartime procurement rules for contracts related to other anti-terrorism products and services.

It is wrong to take important must-pass legislation like the DOD authorization bill and load it with policies that damage the environment and strip employees of basic rights, but that is what this bill is doing, and I am going to urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Let me say that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for 18 years in this Congress supported legislation that would give concurrent receipt to our veterans; 18 years. People in this Chamber need to know that, because there are people here who have been present during that time, and during that time the people who are now saying in the Republican leadership that we support our veterans need to remind themselves that not a one of them joined sponsorship for his bill while that was there.

Since I came to Congress, Mr. Speaker, I have been working to strengthen the Berry Amendment to help ensure that the Department of Defense use American manufacturers and products in its procurement programs. This past spring, and this good rule supports these efforts, I became very concerned when there was a blanket waiver issued for commercial aircraft.

Among other products, this largely jeopardizes our domestic titanium industry. The number of companies that currently comprise this industrial base has shrunk to three domestic producers of titanium. Maintaining this base is not only vital for our economy, but also our national security. We simply cannot rely on the Russians and the Chinese, who are developing their own economies, to supply significant amounts of titanium for our Nation's defense.
Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman HUNTER) for his comments on this issue.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and we are going to describe during the general debate the great industrial base provisions, like the machine tool provision that we came out of this conference with, some excellent stuff.

But with respect to titanium, we know that we have three major makers of titanium left in this country. Otherwise, you have to rely on foreign sources, and you have to go back to the gentlemen from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES) personally for putting together the working group between industry and the Air Force and Members who are interested, and putting together what we call the basket approach to titanium.

The basket approach says basically this: If you are going to take a domestic system, like the planes that are candidates for this tanker operation, and you convert them into a military system, right now the Berry Amendment says you have to use American-made titanium on American military systems.

We have agreed that since some of these civilian aircraft will have some foreign-made titanium, we got with the industry leaders and they agreed that they would take and require the same amount of American titanium, with in fact a 10 percent increase, and spread that across the rest of their lines to make sure that we get enough titanium that was in those civilian aircraft. I have talked with industry leaders. They feel a strong commitment to that policy.

I want to thank the gentleman for putting that in place. I think it is going to accrue to the benefit not only of our tanker program, but also the health of the titanium industry.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the chairman very much, and thanks again to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK). This is a great rule. It is for our troops, it is for our Nation. The spirit and intent of what we discussed is there.

Vote for this rule.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Dicks).

(Mr. DICKS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report and this rule. I have concerns about this bill, too. I represent the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Keyport, Bangor. Many of these work rules are very much deployed by the workers there, and I regret that they have been attached to this bill. My concern is that we need to work to try and deal with them as we proceed in this session of Congress.

I want to rise in very strong support of the provision my friend the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) talked about, the question of tankers. I became interested in this issue several years ago with a visit to Tinker Air Force Base where we saw the condition of our KC-135-Es. I believe that this is a crucial national priority, to underway tanker replacement program started.

The Air Force has chosen the 767. We have had a lot of controversy about whether we should buy or lease. We smart see up and don't have an here. The Secretary of Defense's office, led by Mr. Wolfowitz, sent a letter on Thursday, which has brought us together. I want to commend the Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), for his leadership on this issue. Without his tremendous effort and tenacity, we would not have gotten this far.

I intend to have a colloquy later with the chairman of the committee when we get to the authorization bill on this matter, but I just want to say that I want to compliment everyone who has worked on this. For 2 years, we had to get an effort under way to get this replacement effort going.

Not to underrate it, every single plane that flew into Afghanistan and into Iraq had to be refueled multiple times. Our whole effort to improve our bomber capability with the B-2 and the B-2 and the aircraft coming off of our carriers, Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, all of them had to be refueled multiple times. So you do not get anything done without tankers.

We have planes now, 544 of them, that were built between 1957 and 1963. These are very old aircraft. We have serious corrosion problems, and I am glad that this conference committee was able to come together and put together this package and that the administration has said they will make it work.

I believe this is one of the most important things we can do. If you think about it, tankers and the EA-6-Bs, which are used in combat, in terrible condition, are two weapons systems that have become absolutely fundamental to our U.S. ability to project power around the world. I am glad we can get this tanker thing moving forward and that it is in the bill.

I appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mrs. SKELTON) for their leadership on this issue.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mrs. INSLEE).

(Mrs. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deep disappointment at the failure to deal with Chairman HUNTER's patriotic mission to revise and extend his reauthorization bill for half of our patriotic team in the war against terrorism. We have done some good things in here for our folks in the Armed Services, but for our civilian employees, who are a crucial part of our defense team, we are removing protections for overtime pay and other matters, and that is just abominable.

When I went out to greet with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) the Carl Vinson when she came back from the Afghanistan war, I talked to the folks about their incredibly successful safety record of thousands of sorties without a loss, and they told me it is in large part because of the incredibly adept maintenance done on that ship by our civilian employees. This bill is a flagrant mark of disrespect for those civilian employees, who are every bit as patriotic as our folks in the Armed Services today, and there is no reason for this to have happened.

Now, this is just the first step in this effort. We are going to continue to work on this, that this effort of flexibility does not mean disrespect for our civilian employees. We are going to stay on it like a dog with a bone.

Mr. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this rule and the underlying bill which will follow immediately thereafter.

I want to just point out to my colleagues that the concurrent receipt victory that is in this bill is significant, it is profound, it is historic, and we make a major move in the lives of our men and women who have served ably and honorably in our military, have served for 20 years or more, and also have been disabled. It will provide that anyone who is service-connected disabled, 50 percent or more or combat-related of any rating will get the full concurrent receipt after a phase-in of 10 years.

Let me point out to my colleagues that this adds about $22 billion in benefits over 10 years to veterans compensation. This is not an insignificant amount of money.

After the phase-in period, let me remind my colleagues as well that this will add about $3.5 billion every year to service-connected disabled vets. So the next 10 years we are talking about another $35 billion more that will go to our disabled veterans. That is in excess of $57 billion to our disabled veterans as a result of this legislation.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the committee, for his work, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILLAKIS), the gentleman from Missouri...
Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would only point out to the previous speaker and to speakers on the other side that if the Republicans in the House were willing to forego a little bit of the tax cuts for the wealthy, we could fully fund concurrent receipts, rather than just partially funding concurrent receipts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this rule and adoption of this conference report.

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

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to again thank the chairman and ranking member of this committee for the good work they have done in bringing this bill forward. It is a good bill at the right time in history to help our men and women and to be sure that we are doing all we can in this war on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 437, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1598), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2004 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. (For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 6, 2003, Book II."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 437, the conference report is considered as having been read.

The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELOTON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank all of my colleagues who participated in putting this bill together from the earliest hearing that we had early in the year on the threat that America faces, on the status of our Armed Forces, and on what we need to do to give the President and our troops the tools to get the job done. My partner, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELOTON) is, ever a bit a 50-50 partner in this operation, Mr. Speaker. When we really get down to what it takes to protect our freedom, there are no Republicans or Democrats, and we have a very bipartisan committee, and I am proud of that. I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELOTON) as not just a friend, but a real full partner in helping to shape America's defenses, along with the Democrats who are on the Democrat side on the Committee on Armed Services and, of course, our great, great folks on the Republican side, along with the subcommittee chairmen and ranking members who have done such a great job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think this is an era of new. This is an era of what I would call terrorists with high technology; and probably Jim Woolsey said it best when he said we have killed the big dragon, that is, we have disassembled the Soviet Union, but there are lots of poisonous snakes out there, and we are seeing those poisonous snakes and the effect of their bites every day around the world, not just in the theatres in Afghanistan and Iraq, but elsewhere. And now Americans think, since 9-11 still have an acute understanding of the venom and the poison that is manifest in that capability of our adversaries in this new era of terrorists with high technology.

Our job in the Civil Service, our job in the Department of Defense, our job is to meet that threat, and our job is further, in meeting that threat, to shape the U.S. military and our defense apparatus to meet the threat, to defeat it, and to equip it; to give it the tools that it needs to do its job most effectively, and this bill does that, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to talk about a number of issues with respect to this bill. This is a sweeping bill; and it does a number of reforms, a number of changes, a number of things that I think are important to change our military as we move into this new era.

Let me talk about first just talk about the last subject that came up during the rule, and that is the tanker issue. Mr. TIAHRT talked about, are necessary to project American air power. If we have American air power, and, unclassified briefings, as have most of our adversaries in this new era of terrorists with high technology.

Whether we are talking about B-2 bombers that can fly literally from Whiteman Air Base to strike a target in Kosovo with precision munitions, or talking about tactical aircraft flying off a carrier and hitting targets in Afghanistan or Iraq, we need tankers. Tankers, that big gas station in the sky that the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIENART) talked about, are necessary to project American air power.

If we have American air power, and, specifically, if we have stealth, and we couple that stealth with precision munitions, that is, instead of carpet-bombing a bridge, we send in that one precision munition, it hits one strut on that bridge and brings the whole bridge down, if we have that combination and we have the legs to get it there over the target in whatever remote part of the world we are operating in, we can project American air power. We can protect our military forces, and we can drive them in a blitzkrieg attack against the enemy target, whether it is enemy forces surrounding Baghdad or some other area of the world; and Americans now understand that.

So we have to have tankers. If we do scenarios around the world, every single scenario requires lots of American tankers and, I might say, Mr. Speaker, more than we have now, newer than we have now, more capable than we have now. That is the reason we are putting the tanker deal together, and that is the reason that this is being carried in this bill.

Now, let me tell my colleagues, with respect to personnel, we have had some arm wrestling over this. But I think that the guy with whom we are trusting millions of young American lives, the Secretary of Defense, can be trusted with reshaping our personnel system in civil service in the Department of Defense to be more effective, and I think be more rewarding for those workers. I think they like the idea that we are going to be able to hire people right out of that job fair instead of telling them, they will go to another job, but they will go; the Federal Government can hire you, while IBM and the private concerns are picking them up immediately. I like the idea that they are going to be able to be qualified for a job within a few days instead of after 3 or 4 months of bureaucracy, and that will allow them to take jobs that military people are doing now. When we have tested these things in places like China Lake, a majority of the workers, the workers have voted that they like this new system, the new flexible personnel system. This is an important new part of shaping the military.

So I think that is good.

Freedom to train, Mr. Speaker, we have talked about that. We have to give our young people the freedom to train, and once we make that agreement that the bird hatchery is going to be over here and the rifle range is going to be over there, we cannot let them then go, in 3 months, maybe the rifle range on the basis that they want to get that one too. We have to allow a balance to be maintained. One Marine said it best. He said to our members of the Committee on Armed Services, he said, for years we have done work-arounds. He said, in 3 months, maybe we cannot work around it anymore, there is no land left to work around. So we need to have this. This is very, very important legislation, freedom-to-train legislation, Mr. Speaker.

I want to give you the industrial base. We have got in this bill a great foundation for bringing back and maintaining the industrial base of this
country, and the centerpiece of this is what I think is the centerpiece of American production, the machine tool industry of this country, which used to be second to none. We have a provision in this bill, it is not a mandatory provision, it is a provision that is going to help by saying people who are actually hit by instrumentalities of combat, the 82nd Airborne, with the 82nd Air-

combat area or who are disabled or that full disability check, to all of them together. We also now are going to put in the military the right to provide this benefit, to all of our veterans and to all of the men and women that they have done to serve the U.S. military. We now also are going to put a lot of other great things in our industrial-based provisions, Mr. Speaker; but that is the centerpiece, and I think it is a very important foundation.

Now, we also reauthorize for 10 years the maritime program. This is a program that brings in the strong right arm of America's maritime unions and makes sure that they are the ones that are moving men and ma-
terial across the ocean into theaters of action. We have to have to rely on foreign rental operations where we are taking unions and working people from other countries and having to rely on foreign personnel to move the wherewithal for military victories around the world. That is what is going to bring our mar-
time unions, our ship-builders, and our maritime operators back into pre-
eminence; and we have worked hard on that, Mr. Speaker, and that is a great aspect of this bill.

Concurrent receipt is very important, Mr. Speaker. We started out last year by saying people who are actually hit in combat, people who have won the Purple Heart, are going to get now two checks. They get the full check for every-
thing that they have been disabled, and they get the full check for their retirement for everything that they have done to serve the U.S. military. We now say, and incidentally, I see the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHugh) here, I think that the Committee on Total Force, who very much has been a leader in putting this thing together. We also now are going to give full concurrent receipt, that is that full disability check, to all of those people who are wounded in the combat area or who are disabled or hurt in the combat area, who are hurt or disabled while training for combat. Maybe that guy who is jumping out at the 82nd Airborne, with the 82nd Air-
borne, who is going to get to the war, is going to get it; and also people who are hit by instrumentality of combat, like people who are hit by agent or-
ange, Mr. Speaker. Then we go to the entire population of veterans who were not hurt in combat, were not hit by enemy bullets, were not hurt while training for combat but, nonetheless, have disabilities. And all of those peo-
ple who are over 50 percent, Mr. Speaker, are going to receive both checks. Now, that is going to bring in about 250,000 people, new people into the sys-
tem. It is a big, big victory for veter-
ans. It is a wonderful thing.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say, too, along with the Gentleman from New York (Mr. McHugh), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Bilirakis), obvi-
ously, the guy that I call the father of concurrent receipt, it has been a big part of his career. And the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Smith), the gen-
tleman from Missouri (Mr. Blunt), lots of great people; I might say that Sen-
ator Warner also, working on Purple Heart Plus last year, had a good hand in starting to put this thing together, lots and lots of people. Lots of our vet-
erans and supporters in this House have been involved in putting this program together. This is a great program.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great bill. It is a far-reaching bill. It gives the President and the military the ability to do the job done. Let us pass this bill.

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. It is a far-reaching bill. It gives the President and the military the ability to do the job done. Let us pass this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.
Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Unconventional Warfare, Terrorism and Capabilities and oversees these very important special operations forces doing such a great job for our country. (Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking and commending the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), for the great bipartisan job that has occurred in bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1588 and do so with a great deal of pride after a lengthy but productive conference. The conferences have hammered out an excellent bill that will go a long way in enhancing our national security and providing our troops and their families with the assets they need.

I have the honor of chairs as the chairman said, the new Subcommittee on Total Force, Threats and Capabilities on the Committee on Armed Services. As many in this body know, I have worked for many years to stand up such a subcommittee, and with good reason, for there is much that is left to be done.

The subcommittee's ranking Democrat, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), and I have worked hard together to explore a multitude of ways to provide the Department of Defense with the capabilities to defeat and defend against terrorists at home as well as abroad, and many of these ideas are contained in the conference report before you.

For example, the conference report includes many provisions that will prepare our Armed Forces and, in particular, the Special Operations Command, to combat terrorism worldwide as well as several items that will enhance homeland defense. In addition, the conference report establishes several programs addressing issues that arose in the recent war with Iraq and items that will speed the transformation of the military services.

It is critically important that all Members of Congress, and that is so critical in times such as these. We have heard the gracious comments and enlightened comments of the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), and his colleagues to let us do this in the future in a more sensible way.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), who has a high responsibility of overseeing the total force of our Special Operations forces, our Active, our Guard, with respect to all the personnel issues, pay, personnel issues, family benefits, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force.

(Mr. MCHUGH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), for his gracious comments and for his courageous leadership. I will support this bill, but I also day in and day out.

I think it is obvious there are a couple lessons we can learn from this bill. One is an old lesson, and that is happily this is one of, if not the most, bipartisan committee in the Congress, and that is so critical in times such as these. We have heard the gracious comments and enlightened comments of the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), and I yield to my ranking member, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), for his partnership in our portion on this mark, and all of the members of the committee on both sides of the aisle. But I give a special tip of the hat to our chairman who, in a very difficult time was experiencing personal loss, the loss of his private home during the California fires, still kept a focus on this vital piece of legislation.

The second lesson is that important as all the military is, the troops are key. And you have heard my colleagues comment about the positive things in this bill, active industry, the increase for the Army in difficult times, similar end strength increases for the Guard and Reserve, for those good citizen soldiers the military pay raise average 4.1 percent, the imminent danger and family separation allowances at these difficult times. But I want to focus on committee report.

The third lesson of this bill is we always want to do better, but I would note to my colleagues who have concerns that this is a program that has been in place since the Civil War era. And until all of this work together over the last several years, there had never been a change in it.

With this bill today, we will have started at 35,000 troops, veterans who are receiving full concurrent receipt, and we will have expanded that a couple of thousand to over 40,000. And that is progress, $22 billion. We will continue to fight to do better, but this is amazing progress for more than 160
years when nothing had been done, and I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report on H.R. 1588, a wartime bill that directly addresses committee concerns about the inadequacy of military manpower and the damaging effects of excessive operations and personnel temps.

H.R. 1588 also reflects the House Armed Services Committee’s belief in the need to be proactive in military personnel policy and pay matters so as to sustain the commitment and professionalism of the men and women of America’s magnificent all-voluntary armed services, and the families that support them.

Finally, H.R. 1588 contains legislative and funding initiatives to enhance the ability of the active, National Guard and reserves to operate as an integrated total force.

Among the more important provisions of H.R. 1588 are:

- Active end strength increases of 2,400 for the Army, with an additional $68 million to support the increases.
- Growth in selected reserve and fulltime National Guard and reserve strengths;
- Military pay raises that average 4.1 percent;
- Continued increases in imminent danger pay and family separation allowances;
- A significant expansion of concurrent receipt that will when implemented mean that benefit more than 250,000 military retirees.
- Commissaries and exchange provisions to better define and protect those important benefits.
- DOD health care improvements, to include expanded health care coverage of the National Guard and reserves, and expanded and expedited naturalization procedures for active and reserve component personnel.
- None of these great outcomes is achieved in a vacuum. The conference report before you is a bi-partisan measure, reflecting the active input and involvement of committee members, as well as the leadership and judgment of Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and Representative IBE SKELTON, the committee’s ranking Democrat.

H.R. 1588 is a very good bill that addresses a range of needs of our wartime military. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. SKELETON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Total Force I rise in support of this conference report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), for his leadership and also to thank the committee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELETON), for their many years and efforts that led to this report, once again in a conference agreement coming to the floor.

This bill continues several years of improvements to quality of life programs for our military personnel, retirees, and their families. We provided targeted pay raise of up to 3.7 percent and additional targeted pay increases for mid-career and senior enlisted personnel.

We fixed a problem for our reservists who were called up after September 11 and were forced to pay their lodging expenses when they went home on leave. We extended the increase in imminent danger pay to $225 and family separation allowance to $250 until the end of next year. Our service members are still in conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and face months of separation from their loved ones. These increases are necessary and deserved.

We increased access to TRICARE benefits for reservists and their families. We expanded commissary access to selected reservists and Reserve retirees under 60.

We allow individuals who volunteer to defend our Nation but are not U.S. citizens to become naturalized after 1 year of service. We also allow their families to become naturalized if a service member is killed in action.

None of these great outcomes is achieved in a vacuum. The conference report before you is a bi-partisan measure, reflecting the active input and involvement of committee members, as well as the leadership and judgment of Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and Representative IBE SKELTON, the committee’s ranking Democrat.

H.R. 1588 is a very good bill that addresses a range of needs of our wartime military. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. SKELETON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Total Force I rise in support of this conference report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), for his leadership and also to thank the committee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Chairman, the conference report on H.R. 1588, the Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization Act, contains a provision, section 135, which authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, is it further my understanding that section 135 of the conference report will authorize the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is correct. The conference report contains a provision, section 135, which authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is correct. The conference report contains a provision, section 135, which authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that section 135 of the conference report authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that section 135 of the conference report authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that section 135 of the conference report authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through a combination of lease and purchase.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Total Force I rise in support of this conference report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), for his leadership and also to thank the committee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Chairman, the conference report on H.R. 1588, the Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization Act, contains a provision, section 135, which authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through the terms and conditions of section 8159 of the Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Appropriations Act.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Total Force I rise in support of this conference report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), for his leadership and also to thank the committee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Chairman, the conference report on H.R. 1588, the Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization Act, contains a provision, section 135, which authorizes the Air Force to enter into a single contract to acquire 100 767 tanker aircraft through the terms and conditions of section 8159 of the Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Appropriations Act.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that section 135 was written after extensive negotiation with the Department of Defense and the administration and that that section represents a common understanding between the conferences and the administration on the terms under which this tanker program will be executed.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, it is my further understanding that section 135 was written after extensive negotiation with the Department of Defense and the administration and that that section represents a common understanding between the conferences and the administration on the terms under which this tanker program will be executed.

Mr. Speaker, the letter sent to the Committee on Armed Services by Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz is as follows:
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 

The Hon. John Warner, 
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you again for your consideration of the Department of Defense's proposal to lease 100 KC–767A aircraft. There has been spirited debate on the best way to get this program started. Your most recent amendment would have the Air Force lease no more than 20 of the 100 tankers. The Air Force has developed a proposal to implement that arrangement, and I hope that you will find it acceptable.

Our proposal strikes a necessary balance between the critical need for new air-refueling tankers and the constraints on our budget. As reflected in the enclosed chart, we intend to lease the initial 20 aircraft and then buy aircraft at a steady rate of 11 to 13 aircraft per year until delivery of the 100th. We commit to add $2.4B, in Fiscal Years (FY) 2008 through 2010, to the funding profile for the original proposal to lease 100 aircraft. We will also add $1.4B in FY 2012 to 2013. The combination of these added funds achieves an immediate start to the program and allows us to purchase the last 80 aircraft at time of delivery.

I appreciate the support that you have provided in the past and look forward to working with you in the future. If you require further assistance do not hesitate to contact me. A similar letter has been sent to the chairman and ranking minority members of each of the defense committees.

Sincerely,

Paul Wolfowitz

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Edwards).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, one of the most time-honored traditions of America's servicemen and women is to keep their promise to leave no troops behind on the battlefield. This revered tradition is based on the principle that it would be wrong to leave those behind who have served in sacrifice for their country. Our Nation should honor this tradition, this principle of respect for our servicemen and women is to America.

Unfortunately, the Republican compromise on the disabled veterans tax known as concurrent receipt leaves over 397,000 veterans behind, 397,000 veterans, most of whom have served our Nation in uniform 20 to 30 years. They would not benefit whatsoever from this so-called compromise that represents a lot of broken promises and a lot of patriotic veterans left behind. Many of these military retirees who might be benefitted from this compromise will never see its benefits because it is phased in over 10 years. How many World War II veterans will even be alive 10 years from now?

When Republicans passed a $230,000 tax break just earlier this year for wealthy Americans making over $1 million a year in dividend income, those massive tax benefits were made effective immediately. Why then are veterans forced to wait 10 years to see a limited reduction in the disabled veterans tax? Where is the fairness in that?

One hundred sixty Republicans in this House have co-sponsored the Bilirakis bill to fully repeal the disabled veterans tax. Unfortunately, only two of those 160 Republicans have signed the discharge petition to require a vote on that bill.

Well, today there is a second chance to do what is right for veterans. By voting yes on the motion to recommit we can repeal the disabled veterans tax. If just a few of the 160 will join with Democrats, we can repeal the disabled veterans tax fully and we can do it today. We can keep the promise we made to veterans when we co-sponsored the Bilirakis bill.

Keeping promises and leaving no troops behind, those are quintessential American values. On the eve of Veterans Day, let us apply those American values to the treatment of our veterans. Our promise to veterans should be more important than Republican Party loyalty. Our promise is the motion to recommit. Vote yes to keep our promises to America's veterans.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Projection Forces.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Projection Forces, I am pleased to highlight the issues within the jurisdiction of our subcommittee.

This conference report increases the requested authorization for programs within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Projection Forces by $1.3 billion to $30 billion dollars. Authorization is included for the administration's request of one Virginia class submarine, 3 DDG–51 destroyers, one LPD–17 amphibious assault ship, and two cargo and ammunition ships.

Additional authorizations of $75 million for advanced procurement of LPD–17 and $248 million for SSN refueling overhaul are also included. Our conference report addresses 100 aircraft KC–767 Air Force proposed lease program by restricting the lease portion of the program to 20 aircraft, requiring the Air Force budget to procure the remaining 80 aircraft. This approach will save the taxpayer at least $2 billion over the originally-proposed program.

We have also taken several initiatives to improve the posture of the Department of Defense. An additional $20 million to sustain a force structure of 83 B–1's, 23 aircraft above the level planned; and an additional $208 million for Tomahawk missiles, an additional $40 million for the Affordable Weapon, an additional $100 million bomber R&D initiative for the next generation, follow-on stealth, deep strike bomber.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to support the conference report. I would like to thank the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) for all his support in completing in conference report. I would also like to thank our chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), and our ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), for their leadership, commitment and steadfastness in completing this process.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the minority leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished member of the Committee on Armed Services for yielding me time and for his great services to our country throughout his whole life which continues here in Congress. As a representative, his service on the Committee on Armed Services is very informed and we thank him and recognize his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the commitment of our Nation's veterans. We will have a motion to recommit, as has been indicated, and it is to support our veterans.

No group of Americans has stood stronger and braver for our Nation than our troops and our veterans. From the bitter cold winter at Valley Forge to the boiling hot Iraqi terrain, our soldiers have courageously answered when called, gone where ordered, and defended our Nation with honor.

As a Nation we have a sacred pact with those who have served us in uniform. They have taken care of us, and, in return, we will always take care of them. That is our solemn pledge.

Today, just before Veterans Day, we stand on the floor of the House of Representatives prepared to vote on the Department of Defense authorization conference report. And on this day we have young men and women, the sons and daughters of America on the ground, engaged in war in Iraq. We salute them for their courage, their patriotism and the sacrifice they are willing to make for our country. But this bill in many respects does not honor their service.

Democrats are fighting to live up to our promise to our veterans by ending the unfair practice of the disabled veterans tax. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL) will be offering the motion to recommit to this effect. He is leading our flight for a complete and total repeal of the disabled veterans tax for all of our veterans. We have made this long-standing issue too hot to handle for the Republicans and they have offered a proposal in today's conference report in response. Their proposal is a step, but it is not nearly good enough.
The Republicans haveput forth a proposal that leaves far too many veterans behind. Under their Republican proposal, two-thirds of our veterans, two-thirds of our veterans still will not receive one penny of compensation for their disabilities.

The Republican deal will address the tax for some veterans but not for others. For the select few it does address, the tax may not fully end for them for 10 years. Many of these are veterans of World War II. Ten years is a long time to wait, but especially if you are a World War II vet. That is not good enough.

America’s veterans deserve better. On the battlefield of war our soldiers pledge to leave no one behind. As a Nation, it must be our pledge that after our soldiers come home we will leave no veteran behind. Our veterans served for all of us. We must be there for all of them.

In June, Democrats launched a discharge petition to give Members a chance to vote to end completely the disabled veterans tax for all military retirees. Two hundred and three Members, 201 Democrats, only 2 Republicans, signed the discharge petition, despite the fact that 160 Republicans have co-sponsored the legislation. So we know that our Republican colleagues believe that this is the right course of action. Democrats are giving you a way to honor our own commitment, a way to rise in support of an obvious then when this discharge petition was signed to completely end the disabled veterans tax.

The right thing to do today, just before Veterans Day, is also obvious. Vote to recommit this bill with inclusions for disabled veterans.

Mr. HUNTER, as well as the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), distinguished member of the Republican Caucus.

The current language again leaves two-thirds of our vets behind. The Democratic motion to recommit leaves no veteran behind. We have a moral obligation to those who have paid the high price for our freedom, those who have worn our Nation’s uniform. Our words must be as bold as their deeds, and we must honor what they have done for our country.

Let us give a great gift to our veterans on this Veterans Day. I urge my colleagues to honor our veterans service and vote yes when the opportunity comes for the motion to recommit.

Mr. HEFFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3½ minutes.

Let me just respond just a second to the gentlewoman who just spoke.

The Democrats controlled this House for 40 years, and I went to Sonny Bono’s residence, he was chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and I asked him years ago, why do we not do something about this concurrent receipt thing? And he said, we are not doing anything about that concurrent receipt and we are never doing anything about that concurrent receipt.

They had a Democrat President. They had a Democrat Senate. They had a Democrat House. They could have done it then, but they did not, and now we get this phony posturing after a deal has been worked out to really try to deal with the problem. I think that is a cheap shot, Mr. Chairman. But that is not why I rise today.

I rise to support H.R. 1588, the National Security Personnel System Act for Fiscal Year 2004. We are a Nation engaged in an ongoing global war on terrorism. American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are deployed all over the world in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The bill supports all of our service members who are fighting terrorism and defending our homeland.

H.R. 1588 strikes a careful balance between ensuring that our military is able to train in a realistic manner that maintains the security of the environment. The bill amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act so that it can be read and implemented in a common sense fashion. The Navy, for example, will now be able to use new sonar technology vital to the protection of U.S. ships, submarines and global interests, without harming marine mammals.

The bill also changes the Endangered Species Act to ensure that military training lands are used for their primary purpose, to train America’s troops in realistic environments. These changes will protect the environment and also enhance the readiness of our military personnel.

H.R. 1588 also recognizes that the military services will face significant challenges and equipment return home from war. The level of effort necessary to resurface this equipment at our maintenance depots will be extraordinary. This conference report recognizes these consequences and includes additional funding for key readiness accounts.

The bill includes $9.7 billion for military construction and family housing projects around the world. This is an increase in the President’s budget of more than $420 million, with additional funds targeted at projects to improve the facilities in which America’s service members live, work, train and operate. Such projects are extraordinarily important to the quality of life for our military personnel and their families, as well as U.S. military readiness.

The National Security Personnel System established in this bill will provide the Secretary of Defense flexibility to hire, fire and promote a more agile workforce; the authority to tie pay and allowances to cluster performance and alignment with strategic goals; the ability to improve research and development; and so both the House and Senate authorization bills proposed changes to allow research into...
low-yield nuclear weapons, but restricted any move into engineering development.

The Senate, on the other hand, repealed the so-called Spratt-Furse amendment entirely, but then backed into the conference report on the way we buy and purchase services form act element that will reform the acquisition of component parts, concurrent recess. It has a services acquisition re-investment fund that will reward concurrent performance. It has a $500 million human capital performance fund that will reward concurrent performance. It has a services acquisition re-investment fund that will reward concurrent performance.

By contrast, the House version amended existing law rather than repealing it. We explicitly authorized research, but we maintained a bar on development beyond detailed feasibility studies, the so-called 6.2a level of research and development.

Our compromise may have similar consequences to the Senate approach, but I think it was superior in form because it makes clear that it is the policy of the United States not to develop low-yield tactical nuclear weapons. The Senate compromise, thus, gives stronger assurance that Congress will be an equal partner if that policy is reversed, if that decision is taken, and if there is a move beyond research. When we adopted the Spratt-Furse amendment in the early 1990s, it came in the wake of an issue taken by the first President Bush whereby we withdrew a number of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe and the Soviets responded in kind. This was a step back and a step forward for nuclear security throughout the world. This initiative helped us later on to persuade Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus to forswear development of mini-nukes. I recomind support for this language not to scrap overtime pay; instead, they are asking for authority not to be bound by the voluminous restrictions and requirements in title V that dictate how, when, and where DOD is authorized to administer overtime pay. This will allow the Department of Defense to move into the modern age.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), who is chairman of the Committee on Government Reform.

Mr. DAVIES of Virginia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this legislation has a number of component parts, concurrent receipt. It has a $500 million human capital performance fund that will reward concurrent receipt. It has a $500 million human capital performance fund that will reward concurrent receipt. It has a services acquisition re-investment fund that will reward concurrent performance. It has a $500 million human capital performance fund that will reward concurrent performance.

In closing, I will be supporting H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2004. This is a solid bill that broadly serves our national security interests and addresses the needs of our armed forces as we continue the fight against terrorism. I am very proud of its strengths in a minute. But first I want to thank you Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON for the leadership you have provided in putting this bill together. And I particularly want to recognize the ranking member of the Strategic Forces subcommittee, Mr. REYES, for his efforts on this bill. Together we have tackled some very tough issues.

The first long range missiles and nuclear weapons were developed almost 60 years ago. Yet today, we have no means to defend the territory of the United States against even a single long range missile, and have only recently begun to deploy defenses against the other long range missile threats. In December of last year, the President announced his intention to enhance the capabilities of our Pacific missile defense bed to fielding a defensive operational capability to defend the territory of the United States by the end of fiscal year 2004. The President requested $9.1 billion to support that—and other—missile defense efforts.
funds from longer term, less mature efforts in order to accelerate nearer term fielding of systems like Patriot that are designed to protect our troops deployed worldwide who face increasing threats from theater range ballistic missile threat.

Some of the most difficult issues we addressed in this bill involve nuclear weapons. Since the end of the cold war, we no longer face a monolithic threat. The new national security environment in which we find ourselves requires that we adopt a more flexible and adaptive approach to planning for our strategic deterrents that allows us to adapt the weapons in our aging stockpile to determine if they continue to meet the Nation's needs for a credible and robust deterrent. Provisions of this bill would allow our scientists and engineers the freedom to explore the full range of options for defeating existing and emerging threats. At the same time, the bill includes "checks" that reserve for Congress the authority to approve the development of certain classes of new nuclear weapons.

The bill would also authorize the budget request for $4.4 billion for the weapons activities of the National Nuclear Security Administration. The United States has observed a moratorium on nuclear testing for over a decade, and NNSA programs continue to maintain the safety, reliability and performance of the nuclear arsenal in the absence of testing.

However, recognizing that circumstances may require a return to testing at some point in the future, and that the current test readiness posture of almost 3 years does not provide a real option for any President, the conference has included a provision that would require the Secretary of Energy to achieve and maintain a readiness posture of not more than 18 months.

The conference agreement provides strong support for the military space and intelligence activities that have proven so effective in Afghanistan, and more recently Iraq. Notably, the bill would promote development of the U.S. commercial space-based imagery industrial base, enhance space-based communications to support the warfighter, and robustly fund development of unmanned aerial vehicles for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women of our armed forces are doing their part everyday in places far from home. Let us do our part, and pass this bill.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Gingrey), a member of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report on H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. This critically important legislation provides our brave men and women in uniform the tools they need to accomplish their missions, but it also contains many provisions to improve their quality of life.

This bill increases the combat capabilities of our Armed Forces with appropriate levels of spending for readiness, procurement, research and development. The conference report funds programs such as the M1 Abrams tank and Bradley fighting vehicles that are used in current conflicts, and transforms our military to meet the threats of tomorrow with future systems like the Air Force's F/A-22 Raptor. The bill provides funding to make our homeland safe by combating terrorism at home and abroad and continuing to develop a ballistic missile defense.

Most important in this legislation, however, are the provisions aimed to benefit our current and past servicemembers. H.R. 1588 provides a 4.1 percent pay raise, and it increases imminent-danger pay. It also funds important military family housing, education and military facilities. H.R. 1588 directs improvements to the TRICARE system and survivor benefit, and it contains many other provisions for members of the National Guard and the Reserves.

I thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Total Force, the gentleman from New York (Mr. Mchugh), for his generous dedication to these quality-of-life issues.

This bill also recognizes the inherent unfairness that disabled military retirees have their retirement benefits offset by the amount of their disability benefits by providing concurrent receipt for more veterans than have ever been covered before.

Finally, I thank the gentleman from California (Chairman Hunter) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton), for not only their leadership of our committee but also for their work in shepherdling this bill through the legislative process. They recognize that we owe all of our safety and security to our brave men and women in uniform, and that Congress can help them in a major way with the passage of this bill. They also know how important this bill is to my district and Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, the home of the infantry where 37,000 active duty troops go to work every day.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1588.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. Hooley).

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report, and I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) for yielding me this time.

I am happy to see we are finally making some progress on eliminating the unfair military retirement system. It is not enough. We must keep working to ensure that no disabled veteran has to give up their hardearned military retirement pay just because they earn disability compensation.

Under the Republican plan, veterans who are more than 50 percent disabled will begin to receive a benefit that will be phased in over the next 10 years; but this still leaves two-thirds of disabled veterans behind. In Oregon, 5,500 disabled veterans are currently penalized by this sick tax. Under this compromise, 2,000 veterans will receive some sort of relief at some point over the next 10 years, but the remaining 3,500 retired disabled veterans in Oregon who are currently penalized by this sick tax will receive no benefit under this Republican compromise.

While I am pleased we were able to take this first step, we cannot stop until all disabled veterans who are disabled as a result of service to this country are able to receive the compensation they have earned and deserve. This is a promise we must keep.

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. O'Hoye).

Mr. O’HOTY. Mr. Speaker, the conference report before us is one I will support. It will provide adequate pay, housing and training for the men and women serving our country on active duty and in the Guard and Reserves. It funds important modernization priorities that will ensure that the weapons with which we equip our troops are the most advanced and capable in the world for years to come.

However, the report is not perfect. I am disappointed by the way in which the conference report treats civilian employees of the Department of Defense. Simply stated, the report will strip more than a third of our Federal civilian employees, over 700,000 hard-working men and women, of their most basic worker protections and rights.

I am sorry the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Tom Davis) left the floor. He indicates 71 and some of the other articles that protect Federal employees will not be waived. That is technically true, but the bill allows them to be suspended for the next 10 years. So although they technically cannot be waived, they will not be in effect at the decision of the Secretary. Let me be clear. I am not opposed to thoughtful reform of our civil service system. However, the report goes too far. It will undo decades of some of the most important worker protections enacted by Congress and supported for decades by Republican and Democratic Presidents alike.

Notwithstanding these concerns, Mr. Speaker, I will support this important agreement. I expect it to pass by a wide margin with broad support from both House Democrats and Republicans who stand squarely behind our troops and in favor of protecting our national security.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield ½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Smith), chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic motion to recommit is among the most cynical and political motions I have seen in my 23 years in Congress. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is a chant shot刻意 designed and crafted to politicize disabled veterans and to mock the historic benefits increase contained in
Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maine (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support on the eve of Veterans' Day of a full compensation and total concurrent receipts for all veterans who have lost or lost in action. I do not like the fact that 390,000 of our veterans will be left behind in this bill and will be supporting the motion to recommit but will add my support to this legislation because I hope that we can take a baby step in order to make a giant step toward providing for all our veterans.

I would ask my colleagues to go back to the drawing boards on helping our disabled veterans. There is worse than paying for our military, worse than paying for our disabled veterans. This is a matter of keeping sacred the value of our military to this Nation and to our veterans who have so bravely served.

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Mr. Speaker, I feel that this Authorization bill while supporting the needs of our Armed Forces may not address the need for greater protection for the Chinook helicopter that is widely used by our Armed Forces. The tragic loss of life that occurred by the downing of Chinook helicopters in Iraq illustrates the need for the implementation of defense technology to provide greater protection for the Chinook helicopters. Indeed, the Chinook is a vital instrument used by our Armed Forces to transport troops and supplies to our fighting forces on the ground. It is also one of our most vulnerable pieces of our military arsenal. The infrared technology aboard the Chinook makes it more susceptible to ground-to-air missile attack. I am disappointed that this Authorization bill may not add the risk for modifications to the Chinook helicopter that can counteract its vulnerability. We must not allow our Armed Forces to lose more brave men and women because we did not address this glaring need, let’s move to insure the safety of all fighting equipment.

When I voted against this momentous legislation I am voting in support of this Authorization. I do so because we must support our Armed Forces, as well it is long overdue that our civil service and defense employees receive pay increases. I am also heartened by the purchase compromise reached with Boeing in this legislation. Boeing and their supporting suppliers who are based in Texas are innovative, when called upon, they are capable of responding to national security and civil market needs. It is also important in the future that contracts with the Department of Defense rely on both the lease and purchase of this vital equipment.

Mr. Speaker I hope in the future that such significant legislation as this will involve the debate and full consideration of this entire body.

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

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I profoundly applaud the hard work that has gone into this legislation but, my friends, we know that it is 1,200 pages long, it spends $400 billion of the taxpayers’ money and no one in this body save the conference members have had more than 3 hours to read this.

It is a fine thing to stand up and say we support our troops, and we all do. But the fact is we should not be voting on this today because we have not read it. We should vote next week on this, after we have the time to think about this seriously. If we truly care about our veterans, let us care enough to read the legislation, and if we truly care about our troops, let us care enough to read this legislation.

I will have other concerns because I do not have enough information to vote yea or nay, and I regret that profoundly.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.
It leaves the entire bill intact. It changes nothing in the bill with the exception of one thing: It instructs that the House conferees go as far as they can toward the Senate position with regard to the disabled veterans tax, also known as concurrent receipt. I do that in order to effectively eliminate the disabled veterans tax. We are not doing that in this bill.

We do give a tax cut to disabled veterans in this bill. It is the compromise, frankly, that has been forced as a result of all of the attention brought to this issue during this session by many veterans groups, by many on the Democratic side, by the discharge petition that I filed earlier, and because so many people have supported the Bilirakis bill in the past. Right now we have got about 370 cosponsors of the Bilirakis bill. House Resolution 303 is designed to end the disabled veterans tax. There are many on the other side of the aisle who have signed on as cosponsors of H. Res. 303 to end the disabled veterans tax. We have got an opportunity to do that right now with this motion to recommit. It is a rifle shot. It does only one thing, and that is do right by our veterans.

I have said that we cannot afford more than this. I like tax cuts. While I was the mayor of Macon, I led the fight to lower our property taxes for the first time in 20 years. I think I am one of the few Democrats, fewer than 10, I suspect, that voted for the compromise administration tax cut that we passed earlier this year. I will vote for other tax cuts as well.

We have got to prioritize our tax cuts. We will have an opportunity right now to give tax cuts to disabled veterans that they well deserve and that we can afford if we are willing to put that tax cut toward the top of the priority list. Others have voted for tax cuts beside this one. Notice is an opportunity to do this. That is why I am doing this motion to recommit.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who is not a Johnny-come-lately on concurrent receipt. He has led this fight longer than I have been a Member of the United States Congress.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as to the issue of concurrent receipt, which the other side keeps referring to as a tax on disabled veterans, as the Members know, and I appreciate all the kind remarks that I have received from both sides of the aisle, but I have worked on this for 18 years, and during the first half of those 18 years, the other party was in charge, and we have to ask ourselves what was done during all that period of time. I say to the Members not to think about searching my mind to try to find out how many hearings we were able to have on this issue during that period of time. We may have had one. I am not even sure we had even that. Never in any of their budgets had they even put a single penny into their budgets for full concurrent receipt, even the most recent ones. The discharge petition would bring H.R. 303 to the floor. There is going to be a motion to recommit, which basically says we have got to have the entire amount.

Why did you all not crank those dollars into your budget? You have not chosen to do so.

This motion to recommit has talked about his discharge petition. My discharge petition back in the early 1990s, 1993 I believe it was, failed. Where were all the signers from that side of the aisle back in 1993, or whatever that year was, when we had that discharge petition? Politics, I might say, politics, politics. Starting 1 January 1 of next year, the proposal will phase in full concurrent receipt for all retirees who have disability ratings 50 percent or more. It also expands the combat-related special compensation program to cover all 100 percent combat-related disability categories, as opposed to those that are 60 percent now. It also extends these benefits to the Reserve and National Guard, who have not been getting it up to now.

Despite this breakthrough, Mr. Speaker, full concurrent receipt remains a priority goal for all of us. Only let us show it. Rather than just disburse the dollars into the budget, if we will, on both sides of the aisle if we are really serious.

I ask everybody to vote for this bill and to oppose the motion to recommit, Mr. Speaker, for the reasons stated.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Department of Defense authorization conference report. But before I address the issues raised by this bill, I want to thank the staff for their hard work on this bill. I especially want to give a special thank you to Faye Virostek, who has worked in my office as a Brooking Fellow for almost a year. Faye is tremendously talented and dedicated.

I also want to extend a special thank you to Faye Virostek, who has worked in my office as a Brooking Fellow for almost a year. Faye is tremendously talented and dedicated. She has contributed greatly to my work on the Armed Services Committee and to my office, and I wish her the best as she prepares to return to her permanent executive branch job.

I did not sign the conference report because I objected to the treatment of those Members of the Conference Committee from deliberations over several important issues. In some cases, we were able to work constructively to reach reasonable compromise, but in others the majority was unwilling to work with us in an attempt to produce a consensus position. I do not believe that our Nation's interests or this institution are well-served by this process.

For example, the conference report mirrors the House report language to rewrite the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act. Two critical environmental laws.

In addition, the resolution on concurrent receipt of disability and retirement benefits fails to resolve the unfairness and hardship faced by many veterans. I believe the debate needs to be continued on this very important issue, and I was disappointed that the majority chose to adopt a half-measure rather than solving the problem in its entirety.

I also am dismayed that efforts to clarify the National Nuclear Test Ban Treaty failed. As the early product of the conference process, but it is a serious blow to the textile industry in Massachusetts and across the country.

Having said that, I believe the conference report is on the whole a solid proposal. At a time when members of our Nation's military are being asked to make tremendous personal sacrifices, this bill represents a step in the right direction.

I recognize the importance of providing a truly bipartisan authorization package in order to maintain the world's most capable military. To this end, the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, where I serve as ranking member, authorized increased spending on DARPA, chemical and biological defense, and special operations. I applaud Subcommittee Chairman SAXTON for his consistent efforts to provide increased funding to these programs.

I also want to thank Ranking Member SKELTON for all of his efforts.

While this bill generally represents a sound approach to most of the issues before the Committee, I am disappointed that its flaws were not corrected. In the coming months, I hope that we will be able to move forward and address the shortcomings in this conference report.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to offer my support to this conference report. The conference report does not include the stronger House language on Buy America and allows research on low-yield nuclear weapons—a practice prohibited by Republicans and Democrats over the last 20 years because it violates the non-proliferation treaty and makes it easier for questionable countries to obtain nuclear weapons. The conference report also exempts the military from complying with two of our most important environmental laws, the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

I asked the authorization process began, Secretary Rumsfeld came to Congress and told us that in order to maintain readiness, they needed exemptions from the Clean Air Act, the Resources Conservation Recovery Act, Superfund, the Endangered Species Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Fortunately, the Congress saw most of what the DOD asked for with regard to environmental exemptions.

The conference report directs the Secretary of Interior to substitute the Department of Defense's land management plan, known as an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, for critical habitat designation under the Endangered Species Act, if the plan provides a "benefit" for threatened species. Further, the conference report does not require that the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan benefit the species.
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things it is supposed to know about, let alone fish and wildlife. If the military is able to escape the critical habitat designation, private property owners will have to bear the burden of providing for the recovery of threatened and endangered species. This is simply not right.

Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member S KELTON for their leadership in completing action on this legislation, which provides our military—and the men and women who serve in it—the resources they need to keep America strong in the 21st century. The military pay increase and the enhanced benefits for active and reserve personnel recognize the valiant efforts of the men and women who have ably served our Nation, and the development and procurement of state-of-the-art weapons systems will provide them with the tools they need to continue their mission of excellence.

I am particularly pleased with provisions in the legislation that demonstrate Congress’s commitment to the role of submarines as an essential part of a strong naval fleet. Passage of the conference report today will represent the final step in a historic agreement to permit multi-year procurement for the Virginia-class submarine. This agreement will encourage more rapid and cost-effective production of this important system—saving the U.S. taxpayer an estimated $115 million per submarine—while giving the United States Navy new capability to respond to future threats. Multi-year procurement will also provide greater stability in southeastern New England’s defense industry, and I know that the people of Rhode Island are proud to have a role in this important aspect of military transformation. I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to Congressman HUNTER and Ranking Member S KELTON for the Armed Services Committee, as well as Chairman JERRY LEWIS and Ranking Member JACK MURTHA of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, for their work to help this effort reach fruition.

This legislation takes another step toward providing concurrent receipt to our Nation’s disabled military retirees, though the language falls short of our obligations. As a cosponsor of H.R. 303, I believe we must fulfill our promises to our military by allowing them total access to both their retirement pay and disability benefits. Next Tuesday, our Nation honors those Americans that have protected our Nation, and we must honor their service by providing them with the benefits they have earned.

Unfortunately, today’s agreement contains language that may undermine important civil service safeguards for civilians within the Department of Defense, as well as existing environmental protections. I urge Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member S KELTON to conduct schedule hearings on these topics in the coming months so that our committee may exercise appropriate oversight authority and ensure that the implementation of these new policies does not undermine decades of efforts by Congress and the military to protect our environment and federal workforce.

Overall, this legislation represents an important investment in the defense of our Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ. Mr. Speaker, the Defense Authorization Conferences should be commended for rejecting efforts to undermine the agreement signed by President Bush that provides important protections for how Naval Station Roosevelt Roads is to be closed. It was particularly critical because this is a very sad week in Puerto Rico, as Puerto Rico has lost three of our young men and one woman who were serving on active duty in Iraq. It would have been a cruel irony for the Defense authorities to remove fundamental BRAC protections for Puerto Rico at the same time Puerto Ricans were paying the ultimate sacrifice by serving our country.

Last spring the U.S. Navy announced downsizing plans for Roosevelt Roads. The Navy followed its announcement with the planned departure from the Vieques training range—a result that was the fruit of innumerable debate and struggle. In subsequent testimony to Congress, the Navy professed high operational costs and personnel requirements stemming from the continued operation of Roosevelt Roads and implied the base should close.

Of course, downsizing and the implications of closure have taken their toll and it has been a sad year for Roosevelt Roads, those who work or worked there and Ceiba, Puerto Rico—the community the base has called home for the past 60 years. The Navy’s own pronouncements estimated the base brought $300 million annually to the local economy. The region around base, with 14 percent unemployment, can ill afford a drawn out redevelopment process.

During negotiations with defense appropriators and the U.S. Navy, we reached a compromise that was enacted under which Roosevelt Roads would close in a 6-month time-frame in accordance with the BRAC (base realignment and closure) process. This compromise would afford the Navy a quick departure and cost savings, while keeping with the important protections and procedures required by BRAC. It would also provide Puerto Rico with the much-needed economic development and the opportunities provided by redeveloping the base. This proposal was agreed to and signed into law on September 30.

In the midst of the defense authorization conference, out of scope proposals surfaced to thwart such progress. The proposals ranged from providing a report to Congress and subsequent 360-day waiting period for any and all Roosevelt Roads property disposals to mothballing, or leaving the base on inactive status, allowing the land to waste away without a clear plan for redevelopment and creating additional uncertainty among the community. While I appreciate that all out of scope items in conference have been dropped, I fear that punitive efforts may surface yet again as base closure and redevelopment continues.

The recent proposals are stalling tactics void of merit and driven by angry politics stemming from deep resentment held by those who strongly opposed closing the Vieques training range. Let the past become the past. Let’s move forward with the best interest of the U.S. military and the American citizens in Puerto Rico in mind.

If enacted such tactics would have continued to cost the Navy money and drain personnel resources, while hindering meaningful economic opportunity for Puerto Rico. Under such a scenario, American citizens in Puerto Rico would remain without jobs while base redevelopment plans sat in limbo.

Puerto Ricans care deeply about their common citizenship and continue to serve valiantly in our military. What should soldiers think of such punitive, political squabbling about a base closure at home, while they fight overseas? As it was President Bush who authorized the Navy’s departure from Vieques, he too has stated on many occasions that we all should avoid politicizing military affairs when our troops are abroad.

I included for the RECORD a letter co-signed by fellow Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Such support is much appreciated. Further, I want to thank Ranking Member Ike S KELTON and his Senate counterpart CARL LEVIN for their strong commitment and leadership on this issue.

I find it troubling that the bipartisan deal that took place on Defense Appropriations might someday be undermined by such resentful politics, especially given the difficult challenges we now face, and the sacrifices we ask of our troops. I will continue to fight against these punitive efforts with the same energy I will pursue dialogue with those colleagues who may still consider punishing action against my constituents.

It certainly would be in the best interest of the Navy, the people of the local community, and the people of Roosevelt Roads to set aside the new proposals aside, and continue working to redevelop the base and rejuvenate the local economy. We Members of Congress have more pressing matters to concern our time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, given our current military situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe it is incumbent upon us to send an unequivocal message of support for our troops...
who are currently in the field. It is equally important that we provide veterans—those who have made sacrifices in order to protect the safety of our country, the benefits they have rightfully earned.

Not since the Korean War have we as a country properly thanked our members of our reserve forces and National Guard as we do now. We are depending on them to preserve the peace in Iraq and protect our safety at home. We have uprooted them from their families, taken them away from their jobs and put them in the line of fire. Yet, it is not uncommon that after serving their obligation in Afghanistan, members of the Reserve forces return home without the basic benefits they so rightfully deserve. While this legislation is far from perfect, it takes an important step by ensuring that activated members of the Reserve forces and National Guard and their families receive health benefits.

Importantly, this legislation extends the increase in “combat pay” and a Family Separation Allowance for all of our troops who are currently serving in the military. Given the sacrifice that these brave men and women make in the name of protecting our country, it is only right to guarantee that they and their families have adequate financial resources in their time of need.

Additionally, this legislation addresses the unfair Disabled Veterans Tax. It allows certain disabled veterans to receive both their retirement and disability benefits. However, it only allows concurrent receipt of these benefits for one-third of the approximately 700,000 disabled veterans. I believe this is solely inadequate and is the reason why I voted to recommit this bill. If veterans could have the chance to repeal the entire Disabled Veterans Tax and let all disabled veterans rightfully receive both their military benefits as well as their retirement benefits.

While I do not believe this bill is perfect and I am particularly concerned with certain provisions regarding civil service reform and the environment, I do believe that given our current military obligations, it is essential that we support our troops. By extending benefits for our troops and veterans, we are guaranteeing that those who have dedicated their lives to serving our country are not left behind during this critical time.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Conference Report of H.R. 1588, the Defense Authorization Act. This bill contains anti-environmental provisions that roll back fundamental protections of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

H.R. 1588 exempts the military from protecting endangered species. Provisions in this conference report undermine the success of some 300 threatened and endangered species living on military lands by prohibiting the designation of critical habitat as mandated under the ESA. Instead, military lands will be managed under Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, prepared by the Secretary of Defense. Currently, such plans have no definitions, no standards, and no limits.

Such sweeping changes in the management of species living on military lands are completely unnecessary. Sea otters and toads do not and will not prevent our military from being the best trained and prepared in the world. But if for some reason the toads rise up, the military already has, but never has used, a national security exemption as part of ESA. The military has shown so little previous concern with this issue that it was only in March of this year that the Department of Defense began developing guidance on how to assess and process exemptions requests inappropriate situations.

Marine mammal protection is under its greatest fire today. Although unnecessary from the start, a full exemption from the MMPA was granted for military readiness activities in the version of this bill that passed the House on May 22, 2003. The Senate version of the bill contains an exemption for antisubmarine warfare with no reason. How then did it come to pass that the Conference Report we debate today broaders the exemption to include scientific research activities by the Federal Government? The Conference Report, agreed to by Republican conference behind closed doors, opens gaping loopholes in the management of marine mammals and creates unequal standards for ocean users. This is both unfair to the marine mammals struggling to survive and to the shipping, fishing, and tourism industries, which will now be held to different standards under MMPA than scientific researchers and the Navy.

The “encroachment” of civilian communities on military managed lands is a serious problem as the separation between where people live and where the military trains decreases. As such, there has never been a more necessary time for the public’s best interest. The public wants and needs a healthy and well-managed environment and for the military to be held to comply with our nation’s fundamental environmental protection laws. The military should be listening to its neighbors and respecting their requests, and Congress should have listened to its constituents and prevented the weakening of the ESA and MMPA.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1588, to authorize military spending for fiscal year 2004. This bill authorizes the funding necessary to defend our country and promote our interests throughout the world. The bill makes significant enhancements to our combat capabilities, continues our efforts to transform the military to meet the terrorist threats of the 21st century, and provides a number of new benefits to American soldiers throughout the world.

Congress has a responsibility to work with the President to protect the national security of our nation. When our soldiers are sent in to war, it is the Congress’s responsibility to make sure that all resources necessary are provided to carry out their missions.

I stand behind our brave men and women who have performed admirably in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have made tremendous sacrifices, and we should have served longer deployments than expected. Much of the funds in this bill will go directly to support our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Under this bill our men and women in uniform will receive a 4.15 percent average increase in base pay. At the same time the bill reduces the average amount of housing expenses paid by service members from the current 7.5 percent to 3.5 percent, and eliminates out-of-pocket expenses completely by fiscal year 2005. The bill also extends special pay and bonuses for active duty personnel through the end of 2004. The special pay rate for service members with dependents is increased, from $100 to $259 per month. The special pay rate for those subject to hostile fire and imminent danger is increased from $150 to $225 per month. The legislation also extends TRICARE health coverage to National Guard members and reservists and their families if such servicemembers have been called to active duty. The bill also authorizes nearly $2 billion for military construction, family housing, medical facilities, and child development centers.

This legislation also continues the transformation of our military to meet new challenges of the global war on terror. The bill funds research and procurement of countermeasures to protect troops and the homeland from chemical, biological, and nuclear attack. It increases weapons and equipment procurement for Special Operations Forces. It funds programs to dismantle, secure, and eliminate weapons of mass destruction and facilities in Russia and the former Soviet republics.

There are several significant shortcomings in this legislation, however, that I would like to discuss.

This conference report contains an inadequate proposal to address the Disabled Veterans Tax imposed on our military retirees. Under current law, military retirees are taxed one dollar of their retirement pay for every dollar they receive in veterans compensation. Denying service-disabled men and women the benefits they have earned breaks our promise to those who placed their lives on the line for America’s freedom. Any veteran with a service-connected disability, regardless of the length of his or her military service, can retire from a federal civilian job and receive both retired pay and disability compensation without penalty.

America’s troops are united as they serve in Iraq and Afghanistan and Russia and the former Soviet republics. Our veterans were united as they fought for our country. They remain united today in their love for our nation. But the Disabled Veterans Tax compromise before the House today seeks to divide them. It leaves behind more than 390,000 disabled military retirees—more than two-thirds of those who would receive full compensation under HR 303. Those retirees with a Purple Heart or combat-related disability would be eligible this January. Others who have 50 percent or greater disability would have to wait for ten years to receive their benefits. Those fully disabled veterans who receive less than 50 percent disability still will not receive one penny of compensation for their disabilities.

Because this compromise is phased in over a ten-year period, many of our older veterans, particularly those from World War II and the Korean War, may not live long enough to receive the full benefits to which they are entitled. In my district in Maryland, there are 1,519 veterans who are now subject to the Disabled Veterans Tax. This bill leaves 1,000 of them behind.

More than 85 percent of the members of this House have cosponsored HR 303, yet the compromise before us falls far short. Many of my colleagues also signed the discharge petition that would compel the House to consider the compromise, and we urge my colleagues to support the motion to recommit. It would have stripped from the bill the inadequate compromise language that only helps two-thirds of America’s veterans, and replace it with full, immediate concurrent receipt. Our disabled military retirees deserve no less.
Under this agreement, more than 700,000 civilian workers in the Defense Department will lose fundamental protections that have been in place since President Kennedy's administration. These protections were put in place to safeguard against the patronage, political favoritism, and nepotism that were rampant before the advent of the civil service system. These DoD employees will lose many of their current due process rights. The conference report retains the right of employees to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board but only as an appellate body. As a result, employees would have far fewer rights to appeal personnel actions than other civilian employees have. They would lose guarantees on overtime pay, hazard pay, weekend pay, and holiday pay. Finally this provision empowers Secretary Rumsfeld and all future Secretaries of Defense to create an entirely new personnel system for DoD civilians. I am also very concerned that enactment of these provisions will set a dangerous precedent that will lead to erosion of protections in other federal department and agencies. In these times of uncertainty and turmoil, we are asking more of our civil servants than ever before in our history. To remove these important safeguards now is the wrong thing to do.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that we have failed to provide the full concurrent receipt that they deserve and that we have eroded some of the civil service protections for Defense Department employees. However, I will support this legislation because it provides additional resources for our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world as they prosecute the global war on terrorism and will be given every available tool for its arsenal as it combats emerging threats to our soldiers and our homeland. Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1588, the FY 2004 Department of Defense Authorization bill. However, I believe that this bill is far from perfect. It does not fully support veterans’ disability issues, collective bargaining for civilian personnel, and protection for the environment. It is unfortunate that these issues suffered due to the fact that I did support the motion to recommit in hopes that these critical issues could be further discussed, but that motion failed. If we were not in a time of war I would not support this bill. Yet, our brave men and women deserve all the protections and assistance we can provide, and I will do all I can to support them.

While I am voting against the report, I do support the outcome of the Conference Committee regarding overseas voting provisions for the military. I am pleased that language referring to ballots submitted by members of the military stationed overseas was not included in the report. The issue of ensuring the integrity of overseas military members’ ballots has been addressed in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and I believe we must await the full implementation of HAVA before considering any changes. Therefore, I did not believe that some of the suggested changes were necessary.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disappointment in this conference report that I oppose it that I must oppose it. I support our troops and our veterans, and applaud the conference report’s improvement in pay for our troops, but there are far too many things wrong with this bill. For example, under H.R. 1588, environmental standards are weakened and worker rights are severely limited. Yet again, the Republicans have placed a higher priority on partisanship and special interests than doing what is right for our country and our environment. But, of all the many problems with this conference report, the most disappointing is the section on concurrent receipt that fails to end this horrendous policy for many of our disabled veterans. For months, the Republicans in the Senate have tried to pass a bill which would end the disabled veterans tax for all of our veterans. But now in a half-hearted attempt to appear responsive to the overwhelming demands of Democrats and veterans groups to repeal this tax, the Republicans have thrown our veterans a bone—a partial repeal of the concurrent receipt policy. It is estimated that, under the Republican plan, two-thirds of disabled veterans will not receive one penny of compensation for their disabilities. This is unacceptable. Our veterans deserve all of the benefits that they have earned. Our veterans have sacrificed in order to ensure our freedom and safety. Congress must now do its part. Congress can and must completely end the disabled veterans tax—immediately.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Democrat IKE SKELTON for their leadership on this important bill.

Our young men and women in uniform are performing magnificently right now in Iraq in a difficult and developing mission. They are also performing magnificently in Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world where the global war on terror takes us. It falls to the Congress to make sure that they need to prosecute this war on all fronts. Certainly all of Congress agrees that our soldiers in the field deserve to get all they need, no matter what. The central feature of today's bill is a huge step forward on the issue of concurrent receipt. Finally, we are acknowledging the inherent unfairness of having long-time service members chose between retiree pay and disability. We didn't get nearly what we wanted, nor what these military retirees deserve. But we made significant progress on advancing the cause of expanding the phase-in of concurrent receipt. This bill provides much needed support for our military including: a pay raise of 4.15 percent for uniformed services, further reducing out-of-pocket expenses for servicemembers, increasing allowances for family separation and danger pay, and modestly increasing the force structure of the Army and active Reserves and National Guard.

This conference report also calls on the Secretary of Defense to submit to the House Intelligence Committee a report on the prepa-
Armed Services colleagues. Unfortunately, this bipartisan spirit did not extend to the more controversial aspects of the Defense Authorization Act, especially the reworking of the civil service system and yet another compromise on the Disabled Veterans Tax. On the balance, however, this bill establishes good policy for our troops when they need it the most.

H.R. 1588 offers the pay and benefit measures that our Armed Forces deserve. We put together another healthy across-the-board pay raise—15 percent—well as bill provided raises of up to 6.25 percent for mid-grade and senior noncommissioned officers and select warrant officers. We have also extended special pay provisions for the men and women deployed around the world. Hostile fire and imminent danger pay will be raised from $150 per month to $225 per month through December 1, 2004, while family separation allowance (FSAA) will increase from $100 to $250 per month.

In an effort to address the issue of military readiness, H.R. 1588 also includes TRICARE health benefits for deploying Reservists. We have been undermining our own system by relying on Reservists to be ready to go when called but failing to provide them the required medical and dental screening and care for selected Reservists who are assigned to a unit alerted or notified of mobilization. Non-mobilized Reservists currently without health insurance will also be able to enroll in TRICARE on a cost-share basis. With the burden on our Reservists at an all-time high, providing basic coverage is the least we can do for those called to serve.

One of the worst aspects of this legislation is the wholesale dismantling of our Department of Defense civilian workforce. Under the conference report before us, some 700,000 federal employees will be stripped of their rights and protections in the current civil service system and placed at the mercy of political appointees in DoD. The Defense Authorization Act, as written, provides no guidelines for a new civilian personnel system; rather, it gives political patronage and cronyism to Secretary Rumsfeld to develop a system of his own design. We almost unchecked power to Secretary Rumsfeld to create a system of his own design. We have also undermined the bipartisan spirit did not extend to the more controversial aspects of the Defense Authorization Act, especially the reworking of the civil service system and yet another compromise on the Disabled Veterans Tax. On the balance, however, this bill establishes good policy for our troops when they need it the most.

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the administration and the Republicans in Congress are taking on an easier target, dolphins. Using defense as cover, they are proposing changes to environmental laws that have nothing to do with defense readiness.

As the largest owner of infrastructure in the world, the military is the single biggest polluter of the Department of Defense. It already waives environmental standards or exemptions for DOD. The Department can already waive environmental standards or exemptions for DOD. The House committee with exclusive jurisdiction over military matters on the Resources Committee voted to weaken the environmental laws when it had the opportunity to use the Department of Defense to set the highest standards. Given adequate resources and the right order of priorities, our Department of Defense can achieve any mission. We are missing that opportunity. As the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, we ought to be able to figure out how to better address this problem without compromising the environmental survival of what we are fighting to protect.

It is arrogant and hypocritical to let the Federal Government off the hook for environmental regulations. We will impose them on small business or local governments but not on ourselves.

I oppose this conference report because we are spending too much on the wrong things and not enough on strategies that will make our Department of Defense more sustainable over time. The spending is too heavy on weapons research and too light on relieving the stress on our fighting forces. We can and must do a better job shaping our Nation’s defense.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1588, the Department of Defense Authorization bill. The legislation provides a concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees and veterans. Currently, disabled retiree and veterans’ benefits are offset by the amount of disability pay that they are eligible to receive. The legislation corrects that unfairness.

Members of Congress recognize the health and financial problems that face the millions of veterans who have served our country. The concurrent receipt agreement follows that tradition and honors those who have served our country.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I have always been a strong supporter of the military and I’m well aware of the unconventional war we face against terrorists. However, I continue to oppose the nuclear weapons related provisions in this year’s defense authorization bill.

No one is arguing about the need to find new technologies with which we can combat the deeply buried targets, particularly those held by terrorists. At issue is whether Congress needs to resort to repealing the Spratt-Furse prohibition on nuclear weapons development and encouraging the production of new weapons.

There is a disconnect in the federal government between weapons development and the realistic application of nuclear weapons. Advocates of new nuclear weapons see them as just another tool in the War on Terror, without realizing the risks that such weapons present.

Supporters of the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator and new nuclear weapons argue that the current authorization language is strictly limited to weapons research and development in Department of Energy labs. This claim ignores the obvious end result of weapons development—weapons design does not occur in a vacuum. In order for our soldiers to use nuclear weapons in combat, these weapons must be physically present in the Nevada Test Site. The federal government’s poor record on weapons testing and containment of fallout is lengthy and disappointing, at best.

Like many Utahns, I come from a family of downwinders. My father, as well as other loved ones, developed terminal cancer after he was exposed to radiation from Cold War nuclear weapons tests conducted by the federal government. I do not believe that we should even consider a resumption of nuclear weapons testing when rational alternatives have not been fully explored.

I have already seen too many Americans succumb to then- unforeseen consequences of weapons testing. Advances in containment technology are certainly possible, however, that does not change the risks they expose themselves to a resumption of nuclear weapons testing and I will do everything in my power to avoid that end result.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today in opposition to the very limited proposal to address the veterans tax in the Defense Authorization Act.

Currently, veterans who retire with 20 years of honorable service and who also have a
service-connected disability are not permitted to collect both military retired pay and VA disability compensation. In essence, they are paying for their own retirement. We must stop penalizing our disabled veterans in this cold and unfeeling manner.

Our retired officers and many, many Members of this House have been fighting for so long for the elimination of this tax for all retirees. We are now so close to victory. We cannot settle for the partial concurrent receipt measure that is included in this bill.

This proposal is simply unacceptable. It gives less than half a loaf and spreads it over ten years. It is naive at best and callous at worst.

The proposal leaves approximately 400,000 military retirees without relief. In my state of California, fully 38,000 are left out of this Republican proposal.

Many of the deserving veterans will die before the ten years are up and before they receive their full concurrent receipt. This bill will set up yet another complicated administrative system for our veterans to wade through.

And worst of all, this bill as presented today unfairly pits veterans against other veterans.

We must restore earned and deserved benefits to all eligible military retirees. If this Defense Authorization Conference Report continues to leave out two-thirds of deserving veterans, I cannot vote for its passage.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Conference Report on the National Defense Authorization Act. It was a pleasure to serve as an outside conferee to H.R. 1588 for education provisions that will benefit our nation’s military schools and students across the world.

In addition to Impact Aid, H.R. 1588 provides additional assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) that benefit dependents of members of the Armed Services and Department of Defense civilian employees. $30 million is authorized to be used as general revenue by LEAs that are impacted by the presence of military installations.

Every member recognizes the importance of funding for special education. H.R. 1588 recognizes that the Department of Defense also has a role in helping school districts provide special education services to children with severe disabilities who have a parent who is on active duty in the uniformed services or who is a foreign military officer.

Now more than ever our military families rely on Department of Defense schools overseas. H.R. 1588 expands the eligibility for space-available, tuition-free attendance at Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS) overseas to the dependents of mobilized reservists who are called to active duty and whose overseas tour is voluntarily or involuntarily extended beyond one year. Current admissions policy permits the dependents of reservists deployed overseas to continue to increase, it is imperative that we recognize the needs of these men and women as well as the educational needs of their children.

Finally, today’s Conference Report recognizes the future needs of our military. H.R. 1588 enables the Secretary of Defense to develop more comprehensive and attractive array of educational programs in science, mathematics and engineering. Educational programs and research fields will help to train the next generation of scientists, engineers, and technical entrepreneurs, all of whom may contribute to the future technological superiority of our military forces.

Congress and the American people support our brave military for their commitment and their sacrifice. In Iraq shows the importance of preparation and equipment for our military as they work to defend freedom and liberty across the globe. In addition to these vital education provisions, the Conference Report to be passed today will provide the necessary resources and training for our troops at home and abroad.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in re- luctant opposition to this Conference Report. While I have continuing problems with the process of how this bill was negotiated, extended and voted on today, I appreciate the appointment of conferees, and how no time has been allowed for Members of this body to review the final version of the bill on which we are voting this morning, it is not for reasons of process that I oppose this bill.

I oppose the bill because it does not do right by our disabled veterans; it does not do right by the hard-working, faithful, and patriotic civilian workforce of the U.S. Department of Defense; and it does not do right by our commitment—including the declarations of our current president—to halt the global proliferation of nuclear weapons.

However, first I would like to summarize several of the items in this bill that I strongly support and for which I have fought for many years. I support the extension of TRICARE for non-deployed National Guard and Reservists and their families. Under current law and Pentagon policy, reservists become eligible for TRICARE, the Defense Department’s health care system, once they are on active duty. This conference report ensures that TRICARE is provided to those Guard and Reservists who lack coverage or who are not eligible for coverage offered by an employer. Guard and Reservists will be required to pay 28 percent of TRICARE premium and can stay in the program for one month before and six months after mobilization. This program is authorized for one year, until September 30, 2004, but I will continue to fight to ensure these changes become permanent.

I also support the provision in this conference report that mandates the Department of Defense to notify resident military members to achieve naturalized citizenship after serving honorably for one year in the regular components of the military and our Ready Reserves. It also allows non-citizen spouses, unmarried children, and parents of citizens and non-citizens serving in the U.S. military who are billed as a result of such service, to file or preserve their application for lawful permanent residence. This provision does not provide any benefits if family members are out of status or are illegal aliens.

I support the increases in the Minimum Danger Pay and Family Separation Allowance. The higher rates authorized in this bill will be $225 per month for hazardous duty pay and $250 for family separation allowance. These higher rates will be provided to all eligible military members, not just those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I strongly support the 4.1 percent pay increase for military personnel and the targeted increases for mid-grade and senior non-commissioned officers and mid-grade officers.

I also strongly support the increased authorizations for the equipment, supplies, logistical support so badly needed by our deployed military personnel and those in training, as well as the increases in research, development, test- ing and evaluation of new equipment and materials that will be required for an effective and modern fighting force. Our uniformed men and women deserve the very best equipment to carry out their duties and missions, and I believe this bill helps provide them with these materials.

Unfortunately, I cannot support a bill that will still leave out two of every three disabled veterans subject to the so-called Disabled Veterans Tax. This conference report includes a plan to provide concurrent receipt of military retirement and Veterans Disability benefits to military retirees with disability ratings of 50 percent or high that would be phased in over the next ten years. According to a report released by Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Lane Evans, a veteran himself of the Vietnam War, the plan authorized in this bill would provide over $160,000 of the approximately 560,000 disabled military retirees that are subject to the tax. To be eligible for relief, retirees must have 20 years of service and disability ratings of 50 percent or above. As is already provided for in current law, veteran officers who need the criteria for a Combat-related disability, popularly known as “Purple Hearts Plus,” will receive full disability and retirement benefits, if they have twenty years or more of service.

I believe that the Conference Report should have included the provisions of H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2003, which I and the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives attempted to bring to the House floor for action earlier this year. It would cover all of our disabled veterans, not just one out of three. Within three days from now, veteran/non-veteran veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan will be left behind and will be required to continue to pay tax on their disability.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this conference report that scraps existing civil service laws and protections for the more than 746,000 civilian employees whose daily work and sacrifices ensures the effective running of the Department of Defense. This conference report removes all basic due process protections for employees; it strips Defense Department employees of basic appeal rights; and it removes the requirement that Defense Department employees receive additional pay for working overtime, working on holidays or weekends, or working in jobs involving unusual physical hardship or hazards. Mr. Speaker, this is simply wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose the Conference Report on H.R. 1588 because it lifts the ban on research and development of a new generation of so-called low-yield nuclear weapons that was first enacted in 1989 during...
the Administration of President George H.W. Bush. This new program will allow the United States to pursue a new generation of nuclear weapons of a type most likely to be used in battle, which I fear may lead to a new nuclear arms race on a global scale.

I also have other concerns regarding this bill, such as the weakening of the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which I do not have time to go into this morning.

I regret that I must vote in opposition to this very important bill, but I simply cannot support it. It would help our disabled veterans, the Defense Department workers, and the very security of our nation and the world from nuclear attack. Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in strong support for the conference report on H.R. 1388, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. This Member would like to offer particular thanks to the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), and the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. KELLY), and the Chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Readiness, the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY), and the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Readiness, the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SUEWEN), for their critical work on this important bill. Furthermore, this Member would like to thank the Chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Readiness, the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ), for their critical work on authorizing $3 million for the front levee segment protecting the Nebraska National Guard Camp from flooding. Indeed, this Member is very appreciative for the inclusion of this provision in the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, the Nebraska National Guard Camp Frontage Levee Segment is a central element of the Clear Creek portion of the Western Sarpy Levee project. Completion of the Guard camp segment must coincide with the rest of the levee construction project to assure coordinate progress on completing this environmentally complicated flood protection project. Indeed, without building this section of the levee, the Army Corps of Engineers estimated that approximately 42,000 acres of land in the Platte River basin would flood annually.

Previously, the Clear Creek Project was authorized at $15.6 million in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000) to provide protection to the City of Lincoln, NE, and USNSF RR (Amtrak Line), telecommunication lines and other public facilities. In the FY2003 omnibus appropriations bill, Congress included $500,000 for construction start-up costs.

The Nebraska National Guard Camp at Ashland, Nebraska, provides training for Nebraska and other states’ Army guard units to maintain mission readiness. The Ashland Guard Camp levee is an essential element of the Clear Creek structure on the western side of the Platte River since it also is that part of Clear Creek nearest to the Lincoln waterfront. Planning for the Guard Camp design has been previously provided by the Congress to the Department of Defense through the military Construction appropriations bill. Planning has resulted in development of a more cost-effective frontage levee to replace a previous ring-levee approach.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this Member again expresses his appreciation and urges his colleagues to vote in support of the conference report for H.R. 1388.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. SIMPSON. All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. MARSHALL

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion to recommit is in order.

The Clerk reads as follows:

Mr. MARSHALL moves to recommit the conference report on the bill H.R. 1388 to the committee of conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the House to include, in any further conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference, provisions that, within the scope of the conference, maximize the number of personnel who will be eligible for full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans disability compensation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion to recommit is not debatable.

Mr. Speaker, the Nebraska National Guard Camp Frontage Levee Segment is a central element of the Clear Creek portion of the Western Sarpy Levee project. Completion of the Guard camp segment must coincide with the rest of the levee construction project.
Mr. WHITFIELD and Mr. TANCREDO of Georgia, Mr. HUNT, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARTLETT) the following motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 6.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) of the House, and Mr. ALLEN of South Carolina, attended the House, and were instructed to confer with the Senate on the following:

The Motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 6.