

Passing the Defense Appropriations Bill First

~ Talking Points ~

- For the first time in modern history, the defense appropriations bill was passed first, before all other appropriations bills. In the past, this bill was left to last.
- Why is it so important for the defense appropriations bill to go first?
 - When the bill was left to last - defense never had the ability to negotiate funds from other agencies because all the money had already been appropriated
 - Fiscally conservative, pro-defense legislators were often trapped in a corner with the defense appropriations bill. The bills are often full of pork barrel, pet project spending initiatives. So a pro-defense, fiscally conservative legislator who would normally vote against pork barrel spending had to vote for this appropriations bill
 - Examples of pork spending projects in the FY02 defense appropriations bill:
 - \$1,500,000 for a large millimeter wave telescope – to help researchers study the formation of stars and galaxies and compare it to how stars and galaxies were formed billions of years ago.
 - What’s interesting about this is that in FY01, \$4 million were appropriated for this same project.
 - \$1,500,000 for research and development of business and technical manuals.
 - \$1,000,000 for “math teacher leadership” – no definition attached to this line item.
 - What do these pet projects cost the defense department?
 - Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW) accounted for \$18.5 billion in pork barrel spending and interestingly enough, Pentagon officials predicted an \$18 billion shortfall in the defense budget to fight the war on terrorism.
 - Secretary Rumsfeld and the Pentagon officials work diligently to allocating scarce resources for the greatest benefit. The DoD FY04 budget theme is “Meeting today’s threats while preparing for tomorrow’s challenges.”
 - The FY04 budget reflects Secretary Rumsfeld’s insistence on realistic funding for all DoD programs. By making tough strategy-driven decision, the Department has established a program that can be executed with the funding projected in the President’s budget.
 - Because of the effort and restraint practiced by the agency, Congress should give priority to the defense appropriation – particularly in a time of war.
 - One note on this resolution: The Coast Guard is included in one of the clauses even though the CG is under the Department of Transportation’s budget. It is included because it is part of the homeland defense team despite the separate operating budget.

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House of Representatives
**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Allan Egolf *AE*

DATE: January 31, 2003

SUBJECT: Resolution Cosponsorship
National Defense First

In the near future I intend to introduce a resolution asking Congress to give first priority to supporting and passing the Defense Appropriations Bill first.

With our nation at war, it is imperative that defending our nation be our first and foremost priority. During the 1990's, the defense appropriations were more often than not short-changed by being last on the voting list. In addition to being last, the defense appropriation bills were full of "pork spending." Legislators who firmly believe in the passing of a defense bill were often forced to vote on an appropriations bill that was full of "pet projects" that had nothing to do with national defense. By urging Congress' passage of the Defense Appropriation Bill first, we are helping to ensure adequate funding for national defense.

If you wish to join me in cosponsoring this resolution, please contact Teri Root at 3-1593, via Groupwise or via e-mail at Troot@pahousegop.com.

Thank you for your consideration!