

Support for FY 2009 Budget Conference Agreement

20 County Child Support Agencies

AARP

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association of Port Authorities

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers

American Heart Association

American Hospital Association

American Legion

American Public Health Association

American Public Transportation Association

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

Audubon (and other environmental groups)

Center for Law and Social Policy

Coalition for Health Funding

Coalition on Human Needs

Committee for Education Funding

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Food Research and Action Center

Home Safety Council

Independent Budget

International Association of Fire Fighters

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

League of Conservation Voters

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)
National Association of Police Organizations
National Community Action Foundation
National Council of Social Security Management Associations
National Education Association
National Energy Assistance Directors' Association
National Narcotic Officers Associations' Coalition
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
National Volunteer Fire Council
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK
Religious Action Center
Student Aid Alliance
Transportation Construction Coalition
Trust for Public Land
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
UAW
United Spinal Association
United States Student Association
USAction
Wilderness Society
World Wildlife Fund



May 21, 2008

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 39 million AARP members, we urge you to support S.Con. Res. 70, the Concurrent Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2009. The fiscal year 2009 final budget agreement allows for fiscally responsible, targeted funding increases in programs that serve millions of Americans, while protecting them from a number of harmful spending cuts proposed in the Administration's 2009 budget.

The annual congressional budget helps prioritize our resources by establishing parameters for spending and revenues. The final budget agreement provides for several deficit-neutral reserve funds that would facilitate the enactment of critical health care legislation, while rejecting Medicare and Medicaid cuts proposed in the Administration's budget that would diminish the health security of many older and low-income individuals. The budget also provides a discretionary spending allocation that would allow funding increases for the Social Security Administration to help reduce the growing disability claims backlog, which now exceeds 750,000.

While budgetary challenges remain, S.Con. Res. 70 is a balanced effort to promote the health and financial security of millions of Americans. We urge your support of this budget resolution. If you have any further questions, feel free to call me, or please have your staff contact Cristina Martin Firvida of our Government Relations staff at 202-434-3760.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David P. Sloane".

David P. Sloane
Senior Vice President
Government Relations and Advocacy



**American Hospital
Association**

Liberty Place, Suite 700
325 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004-2802
(202) 638-1100 Phone
www.aha.org

June 3, 2008

The Honorable John M. Spratt
Chairman
House Budget Committee
United States House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA), I want to commend the House and Senate Budget conferees for rejecting the Administration's proposed Medicare and Medicaid cuts to hospitals in its fiscal year (FY) 2009 budget conference report. The AHA represents nearly 5,000 hospitals and health care systems, and 37,000 individual members.

By rejecting proposed Medicare and Medicaid cuts for hospitals, the Budget Conference Committee recognizes the serious challenges hospitals face. At a time when the number of uninsured individuals is rising, Medicare and Medicaid currently reimburse hospitals for less than the cost of providing health care services. At the same time, hospitals need to make significant investments to continue their mission, including improving information technology systems to address patient safety and quality of care, and preparing to respond to emergencies ranging from natural disasters to pandemic diseases or to the threat of terrorism.

We applaud the FY 2009 Budget conference report and appreciate your efforts to resist proposals to reduce payments for hospital services provided to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President



The American Legion



For God and Country

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(202) 861-2700 ★ FAX (202) 861-2728 ★

May 20, 2008

Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr., Chairman
Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

Dear Chairman Spratt:

The American Legion applauded the Budget Resolution for FY 2008 that provided the necessary funding to meet the needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in every aspect. For the first time in decades, the veterans' and military community had a budget resolution worthy of the sacrifice asked of America's veterans and their families.

Thank you and your colleagues for continuing to produce a Budget Resolution that is truly reflective of a nation at war. This Budget Resolution for FY 2009 reflects the continued commitment to those earned benefits provided by a grateful nation in recognition of honorable military service. Therefore, The American Legion fully supports the Budget Resolution for FY 2009 of \$48.2 billion for VA (function 700).

This would represent a \$4.9 billion increase over FY 2008 and some \$3.3 billion more than the President's budget request of \$44.9 billion.

Funding for VA medical care remains a top priority for The American Legion. Veterans must have confidence that they will receive timely access to quality health care at any VA medical facility they choose to visit. For many of these veterans, VA is their primary health care provider - their life-support system. This Budget Resolution would make sure every veteran, currently enrolled in the VA, would continue to receive the nation's best health care, mental health counseling and rehabilitation.

This Budget Resolution will provide funding for both medical and prosthetics research, especially for the newest generation of wartime veterans who bear both the physical and mental scars of combat. Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder provide major challenges in timely diagnosis and the most effective treatment.

Both major and minor construction continues to play "catch-up" due to years of underfunding while a thorough evaluation of VA's infrastructure was underway. For years, construction funding did not keep pace with the 7-year plan outlined in CARES recommendations. Combat-

injuries and other serious medical conditions occur daily without regard to processes like site selections, bids, construction schedules, authorization and finally appropriations. The demand is already there, we need the physical facilities to available to meet the current and future needs of veterans' and their families.

This Budget Resolution will provide funding for aggressive improvements within the Veterans Benefits Administration. This remains a major area of concern for The American Legion. This Budget Request would provide the VA Secretary with the necessary resource to implement recommendations to improve both the quality and timeliness of veterans' claims.

Thank you and your colleagues for producing yet another Budget Resolution focused on providing the necessary resources to sustain current services and allow for much needed improvements in timely access to quality health care, mental health counseling, long-term care, VA infrastructure and timely access to other earned benefits. The American Legion supports the Budget Resolution's funding for VA at \$48.2 billion in FY 2009.

Sincerely,



Steve Robertson, Director
National Legislative Commission

CC: Representative Paul Ryan, Ranking Member

THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET

A Budget for Veterans by Veterans

www.independentbudget.org

May 20, 2008

The Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.
Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6065

Dear Chairman Spratt:

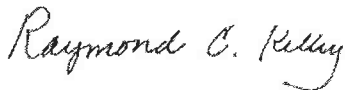
On behalf of *The Independent Budget*, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering support for our nation's sick and disabled veterans, as well as all of the men and women who have so honorably served this country.

We appreciate your efforts as Chairman of the House Committee on the Budget to achieve an excellent mark for total discretionary spending for the Department of Veterans Affairs for this year. Your support for discretionary funding levels consistent with *The Independent Budget* will allow the VA to better address the needs of the men and women returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as all veterans who have served in the past.

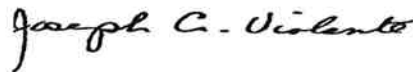
We particularly appreciate the fact that the Budget Resolution that you have advanced once again rejects the proposed fees and co-payment increases recommended by the Administration. *The Independent Budget* has long opposed these proposals and we are glad to see that Congress has chosen to reaffirm this opposition.

Your strong advocacy for our nation's service-connected disabled veterans, and all veterans and their families, is commendable and we will support you in any way to ensure that the funding levels you have established for this year as a benchmark will be achieved.

Sincerely,



Raymond C. Kelley
National Legislative Director
AMVETS



Joseph A. Violante
National Legislative Director
Disabled American Veterans



Carl Blake
National Legislative Director
Paralyzed Veterans of America



Dennis Cullinan
National Legislative Director
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States

A Joint Project of:

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OF THE UNITED STATES
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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER
General President

VINCENT J. BOLLON
General Secretary-Treasurer

May 21, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad, Chairman
Senate Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Spratt, Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Conrad and Spratt:

On behalf of the nation's more than 287,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel, I am pleased to express our support for the conference report on the budget for fiscal year 2009, and am particularly pleased that the budget protects crucial investments in our nation's homeland security.

The budget agreement rightly rejects the President's cuts to critical first responder programs, including the FIRE and SAFER grant programs. As America continues to face threats from both natural and man-made disasters, these funds are vitally important to ensuring the nation's preparedness.

By providing sufficient resources to equip, train and support first responders, the FY09 budget agreement will help provide our nation's fire fighters with the resources they need to protect the safety and security of our nation.

Again, thank you for your leadership in providing for America's homeland security and for your continued support of our nation's fire fighters.

Sincerely,

Harold A. Schaitberger
General President

CC: The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
The Honorable Bennie Thompson



IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA

Chairman John Spratt
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Budget
Room 207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

Chairman Kent Conrad
U.S. Senate
Committee on the Budget
Room 530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

Distinguished Gentlemen,

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America is our nation's first and largest organization representing the service members and veterans who have served in these conflicts. IAVA's mission is to improve the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families. More than 1.6 million American troops have served in Iraq or Afghanistan, and about half a million troops have deployed more than once. Taking care of our nation's veterans is a cost of war and that is why we are pleased to see the advancements made in this year's budget cycle.

As service members return from Iraq and Afghanistan, they face many challenges with reintegration into civilian society. The rising toll from combat related stress conditions, and battlefield wounds such as Traumatic Brain Injury is placing a significant strain on the Department of Veterans Affairs and its ability to serve our nation's heroes. Now more than ever, it is critical to ensure that we as leaders stand up and support those who fight for us. By increasing the Veterans Affairs discretionary budget to \$48.2 billion dollars in FY 2009, Congress is making a stand for our nation's veterans and affirming its support for the men and women of the armed services.

We thank Congress for their unwavering support of our nation's newest generation of veterans. With an increase in veterans funding, we will be making a sound investment not only in our veterans, but our nation as a whole.

Respectfully,

Paul Rieckhoff
Executive Director and Founder



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

May 20, 2008

THOMAS J. NEE

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Patrolmen's Association

MICHAEL J. PALLADINO

Executive Vice President

Detectives' Endowment

Association of New York City

MICHAEL J. MADONNA

Recording Secretary

New Jersey State Policemen's

Benevolent Association

SEAN M. SMOOT

Treasurer

Police Benevolent & Protective

Association of Illinois

MICHAEL McHALE

Sergeant-at-Arms

Florida Police

Benevolent Association

CHRIS COLLINS

Executive Secretary

Las Vegas Police

Protective Association

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON

Executive Director

The Honorable John M. Spratt
Chairman, House Budget Committee
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt,

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) representing more than 238,000 law enforcement officers throughout the United States, I would like to thank you for your efforts to increase funding for vital state and local law enforcement assistance programs in the fiscal 2009 Budget Resolution. By providing approximately \$2.1 billion more than the President's fiscal 2009 budget request for the Administration of Justice Programs, the budget conference agreement will help off-set the drastic and ill-advised cuts proposed in the President's budget to programs such as the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

The President's proposed budget would drastically cut federal support to vital assistance programs designed to assist state and local law enforcement in their fight against crime and terrorism by nearly 60% percent compared to fiscal 2008 levels. Additionally, it would eliminate the two primary law enforcement assistance programs – Byrne-JAG and COPS – that state and local law enforcement officers and the agencies they serve have come to depend upon to assist them in effectively serving and protecting our communities.

Today, state and local law enforcement endure growing state budget constraints even as they assume more duties to protect our nation's communities against terrorist threats, as well as continue their daily fight against drugs and domestic crime. Federal support and assistance is essential to help state and local law enforcement agencies hire new officers, obtain equipment and training, as well as allow them to continue and expand successful community and regional initiatives.

NAPO believes that including \$2.1 billion above the President's fiscal 2009 budget request for the Administration of Justice function is an important step towards ensuring that local law enforcement is given the effective and user friendly funds it needs the most. We also believe that fully funding programs such as Byrne-JAG and COPS is imperative and that the next step that needs to be taken is funding these vital programs at their authorized levels.

I thank you for your support of America's law enforcement. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, Andrea Mournighan, at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director



Reg Weaver
President

Dennis Van Roekel
Vice-President

Lily Eskelsen
Secretary-Treasurer

John L. Wilson
Executive Director

May 21, 2008

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association (NEA), we urge your support for the concurrent Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution. We believe this Budget offers a critical downpayment toward meeting the needs of underfunded programs and fulfilling every child's basic right to a great public school. Votes associated with these issues may be included in the NEA Legislative Report Card for the 110th Congress.

We are pleased that the Budget agreement:

- **Provides \$8.4 billion above the President's request for Function 500, and includes significant increases for education programs to help students from early childhood through post-secondary education.** In doing so, the agreement rejects the President's proposed cuts to Function 500, including the plan to eliminate scores of critical education programs. Instead, the Budget will provide critical resources to proven programs such as Title I, services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Head Start, and Pell Grants.
- **Rejects the President's priority requests for new private school voucher program** as well as rejecting Senate-proposed assumption for tripling the merit pay Teacher Incentive Fund.
- **Rejects the President's cuts to the student loan programs, and includes reserve funds to accommodate legislative changes that make college more affordable.** These reserve funds will provide the House and Senate Education Committees maximum flexibility in finding offsets to any new spending as they complete reauthorization of Higher Education Act.
- **Repeats last year's inclusion of a reserve intended to protect children currently covered by the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and to serve more of those eligible.**
- **References a tax credit for school construction bonds as a possible use for a deficit-neutral reserve fund for middle-income tax relief and economic equity** as well as in a policy statement on middle-income tax relief.

Again, we urge your support for the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution

Sincerely,

Diane Shust
Director of Government Relations

Randall Moody
Manager of Federal Advocacy