

Floor Statement
The Honorable Ralph Regula, M.C.
Fiscal Year 2005 Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies Appropriations
September 08, 2004

Overview

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present before the House today the fiscal year 2005 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. By taking into consideration the priorities of the President and the Members of this House, we have produced a bill that meets the needs of all Americans. We are appreciative of the efforts of the Leaders of the House and the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. Young, to provide a workable allocation for this bill. And, I am proud to say that the bill was unanimously approved on a bipartisan basis in both the Subcommittee and the Full Committee.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work, dedication, and expertise of my subcommittee staff as well as the minority staff in putting together this bill.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is about hope. It gives hope to every child seeking a good education, hope to everyone searching for a good job, and hope to the ill seeking a cure.

This bill provides \$142.5 billion, a 2.2 percent increase over fiscal year 2004, to over 500 discretionary programs. It is a responsible, fair, and balanced bill.

We have prioritized spending for education in four important areas: education for disadvantaged children, special education for disabled children, reading programs, and higher education—especially, Pell Grants. Funding to the Department of Education is increased by \$2 billion over last year for a total of \$57.7 billion. The Department of Labor is funded at \$14.9 billion, including \$1.5 billion for Dislocated Worker Assistance and \$1.5 billion for Job Corps programs. Funding for the Department of Health and Human Services totals \$62.2 billion.

Education

Education is essential to the preservation of democracy, and an investment in education is an investment in human capital. Mr. Chairman, federal education spending has more than doubled since fiscal year 1996—from \$23 billion to nearly \$60 billion today.

This is a significant commitment to the future of our Nation. However, we must be prudent in our funding priorities to ensure that these dollars are targeted to programs that most directly improve our children's education.

We have focused spending in this bill in the key areas that most directly improve our children's education. First and foremost, I believe that no child will be left behind if he or she has a quality teacher. Almost every teacher in our Nation's classrooms today is there for one reason--they love children and want to help them reach their full potential. We applaud their hard work and dedication, and support them in this bill by providing funding to encourage people to enter the field of teaching and to strengthen and maximize the skills of those already in the classroom.

The bill also supports teachers and students by increasing funding for Title I by \$1 billion. Title I provides additional resources to low-income schools to help principals, teachers and students close education achievement gaps. At the school level, Title I helps provide additional staff, ongoing training in the latest research, computer equipment, books or new curricula that, coupled with strong accountability measures, help disadvantaged children meet the same high standards as their more advantaged peers.

In addition to the funding increases in Title I, this bill also increases funding for scientifically-based reading programs so that all children can read well by the end of the third grade. In three short years, funding for reading programs has tripled to over \$1.3 billion dollars. This investment will assist parents, teachers, and school districts in meeting the reading challenges of our children.

Mr. Chairman, many of my colleagues speak with me about the financial demands of special education on their local school districts. We also hear from parents about the need to support adequate special education funding to ensure their special needs children receive a quality education. In this bill, funding for special education totals over \$11 billion, a nearly 380 percent increase since fiscal year 1996.

Many of you may already know that First Lady Laura Bush supports the Troops to Teachers program with visits to military bases to inform our troops about the opportunity to enter the field of teaching upon completion of their military service. With maturity, training in mathematics or science, and assistance in appropriate courses for teaching, members of our armed forces

make outstanding classroom teachers in fields where we currently have teacher shortages.

During the 1999-2000 school year, approximately 40 percent of the Nation's schools were located in rural areas or small towns and approximately 30 percent of all students attended those schools. The average rural or small town school serves 355 students, compared to 610 students served by the average urban school. The small size of many rural schools and districts present a different set of problems from those of urban schools and districts. For example, rural schools and districts do not benefit from the same economies of scale and thus can face greater per-pupil costs to provide staff or transportation services. This bill provides over \$167 million to meet the needs of schools in rural communities.

Impact Aid provides funding to school districts that have federal facilities, including military facilities, within their jurisdictions. Funding for this program is increased by \$20 million, bringing the fiscal year 2005 total to \$1.3 billion.

TRIO and GEAR UP programs assist low-income, first-generation students in preparing for higher education through proper course selection, mentoring and tutoring services. TRIO receives \$843

million and GEAR UP \$318 million in this bill, which represents the highest level of funding ever produced to help postsecondary institutions in the challenge of preparing and supporting disadvantaged students to enter and succeed in college.

Title III programs are designed to strengthen institutions of higher education that serve high percentages of minority students and students from low-income backgrounds. Federal grants made under these programs go to eligible institutions to support improvements in the academic quality, institutional management, endowments, and fiscal stability. Funding is targeted to minority-serving and other institutions that enroll a large proportion of financially disadvantaged students and have low per-student expenditures. Fiscal year 2005 funding to Title III programs is at \$519 million dollars; combined with funding for Howard University and other HBCU financing programs, our commitment to minority serving institutions exceeds \$975 million.

The sharp rise in college costs continues to be a barrier to many students. Pell Grants help ensure access to postsecondary education for low and middle-income undergraduate students by providing grants that help meet college education needs. The bill continues to support a maximum Pell Grant level of \$4,050 while

also including funding of \$12.9 billion for Pell Grants, an increase of \$823 million over last year.

Health and Human Services

If you have good health, you have hope; and if you have hope, you have everything. Healthcare is a critical part of a nation's economic development. To assist in protecting the health of all Americans and provide essential human services, the bill provides the Department of Health and Human Services over \$62 billion dollars for fiscal year 2005. Mr. Chairman, similar to the Department of Education, we have more than doubled the funding for HHS since fiscal year 1996--\$28.9 billion in fiscal year 1996 to \$62.2 billion for fiscal year 2005.

At the forefront of new progress in medicine, the National Institutes of Health supports and conducts medical research to understand how the human body works and to gain insight into countless diseases and disorders. It supports a wide spectrum of research, from learning how the brain becomes addicted to alcohol to discovering causes of rare and unusual diseases to combating heart disease.

As a result of our commitment to NIH, our citizens are living longer and better lives. Life expectancy at birth was only 47 years in 1900; by 2000, it was almost 77 years. In the past several decades, NIH led efforts have played a major role in achievements such as the following:

- Between 1975 & 2000, death rates from heart disease fell by 40%, and deaths from stroke fell by 51 percent.
- The overall five-year survival rate for childhood cancers rose to nearly 80% during the 1990s from under 60% in the 1970s.
- The number of AIDS-related deaths fell by about 70% between 1995 and 2001.
- Sudden infant death syndrome rates fell by more than 50% between 1994 and 2000.
- Infectious diseases – such as rubella, whooping cough, and pneumococcal pneumonia – that once killed and disabled millions of people are now prevented by vaccines.

In every state across the country, the NIH supports research at hospitals, universities and medical schools. The 5-year doubling of the NIH budget, completed in fiscal year 2003, both picked up the pace of discovery and heightened public expectations. We now expect NIH to carefully examine its portfolio and continue to be a

good steward of the public's investment. Funding for NIH is increased by over \$700 million, bringing its total budget to \$28.5 billion.

All the information and advances we have gained from NIH, however, will be useless if it does not make its way to health care providers and individuals—those most responsible for their own health. Thus, the work of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is critical to protecting the health and safety of people, at home and abroad.

Infectious diseases, such as SARS, West Nile Virus, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, have the ability to destroy lives, strain community resources, and even threaten nations. In today's global environment, new diseases have the potential to spread across the world in a matter of days, or even hours, making early detection and action more important than ever. CDC plays a critical role in controlling these diseases, traveling at a moment's notice to investigate outbreaks abroad or at home.

Recognizing the tremendous challenges faced by CDC, we have provided over \$915 million for the prevention and control of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis

and tobacco use, and \$640 million for immunizations. CDC's total allocation for fiscal year 2005 includes nearly \$4.5 billion dollars.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, many of the Community Health Centers have served as America's health care safety net for the Nation's underserved populations. This is the fourth year of a five year expansion plan by the President to significantly increase health care access for those who are most in need.

Health Centers, operating at the community level, provide regular access to high quality, family oriented, comprehensive primary and preventive health care, regardless of ability to pay, and improve the health status of underserved populations living in inner city and rural areas. The Health Center target populations have lower life expectancy and higher death rates compared to the general population. These patients have less purchasing power, and many are unable to afford even the most basic medical or dental attention. By the end of fiscal year 2004 it is estimated that these facilities around the country will have served more than 13 million patients. Funding for the Community Health Centers is \$1.8 billion, an increase of over \$218 million over last year.

Children’s hospitals across the nation are the training grounds for our pediatricians and pediatric specialists. Many of these hospitals are regional and national referral centers for very sick children, often serving as the only source of care for many critical pediatric services. The bill provides over \$303 million to train these important caregivers who will care for America’s youngest population—its children.

The Ryan White AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) funding is increased by over \$35 million, bringing its total to over \$800 million dollars. The increase in funding assists those infected with the virus in receiving vital medication through the drug assistance program. Overall, the Ryan White AIDS programs are funded at more than \$2 billion.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is the Federal agency responsible for overseeing Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. CMS is the largest purchaser of health care in the world and second only to Social Security in the level of Federal spending. Given the scope of their involvement, it is no surprise that last year CMS:

- Processed over 1 billion claims
- Answered 51 million inquiries

- Reviewed nearly 8 million appeals
- Conducted over 76,000 health care facility inspections and complaint investigations

And, while the mandatory funding for CMS programs comes from the Ways and Means Committee, this Bill provides the costs for their administrative functions. Funding for CMS is at \$2.7 billion.

Infant mortality rates in certain segments of our populations are at least one and a half times the national average. We have provided over \$97 million dollars for the Healthy Start program, which uses community-designed and evidence-supported strategies aimed at reducing infant mortality.

Our commitment to a child's well being does not rest with Healthy Start. We have provided nearly \$6.9 billion dollars for Head Start, a program designed primarily for preschoolers from low-income families. Head Start promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services.

The Adoption Incentive Program has been successful in contributing to substantial increases in adoptions in recent years. Between fiscal year 1998 and fiscal year 2002, a total of 236,000

children were adopted. While the overall number of children being adopted has grown dramatically, some children needing permanent homes remain less likely to be adopted. This bill provides \$32 million for Adoption Incentives Program so that states may continue their efforts to increase the number of children adopted by good families.

Additional support for the President's initiatives in this bill include:

- \$55 million for the Compassion Capital Fund, which helps faith-based and community organizations increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to provide social services to serve those most in need
- \$129 million for violent crime reduction programs
- \$110 million for Abstinence Education, an increase of nearly \$35 million over the fiscal year 2004 level

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program ensures that low-income households are not without heating or cooling, and provide protection to our most vulnerable populations, the elderly, households with small children, and persons with disabilities. The funds are distributed to the states through a formula grant program and we have provided \$2 billion for fiscal year 2005, an increase

of \$110 million over the fiscal year 2004 level. In addition, \$227 million is included for the weatherization program.

Mr. Chairman, our society is judged not only by the care we provide to our young, but also on how we treat our elderly. We owe a profound debt of gratitude to the generations of older Americans whose hard work, courage, faith, sacrifice, and patriotism helped to make this Nation great. This bill provides over \$1.4 billion dollars to the Administration on Aging to enhance healthcare, nutrition, and social supports to seniors and their family caregivers.

Labor

We ought to support the aspirations of people—good health, security, meaningful work, creative and intellectual pursuits. The Department of Labor plays a key role in many important worker training and protection programs. Therefore, we have restored funding to core job training and employment assistance programs.

A number of communities continue to experience plant closings and other layoffs, and we understand the need to support dislocated worker training programs that can assist workers to return to gainful employment. In the bill, we restored funding for

Dislocated Worker Assistance programs to nearly \$1.5 billion, \$25 million above fiscal year 2004 and an increase of over \$96 million over the budget request.

The Job Corps program provides a comprehensive and intensive array of training, career development, job placement and support services to disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 24. Many people who enroll in Job Corps Center never completed their high school education and may have other barriers to sustaining a job. This program ensures that disadvantaged young people are afforded an opportunity to successfully participate in the Nation's workforce.

This bill includes \$19 million for a Homeless Veterans Reintegration program to operate employment programs that reach out to homeless veterans and help them become employed.

Worker protection programs including OSHA and MSHA are funded at \$462 million and \$276 million, respectively.

Related Agencies

The Social Security Administration receives its mandatory allocation through the Ways and Means Committee; this bill

provides the funding for their administrative costs. Effective administration of this agency ensures efficient service to recipients. We have included a \$485 million increase in the funding for Social Security Administration to improve delivery of benefits and expedite the processing of disability claims.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides funding to our Nation's public libraries and provides grants for library and museum projects. American libraries and museums play a critical role in the education of the public in the United States. There are more than 122,000 libraries in the U.S. This country is also home to about 15,000 museums, including art, history and natural history museums, children's museums, science centers, zoos, and planetariums. America's libraries and museums preserve our rich cultural heritage and help to transmit it from one generation to the next. Their numbers and vitality are a testament to a great democracy. Funding for IMLS totals \$262 million, including \$23 million for the third year of a program to recruit and educate librarians.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, much more could be said about this bill which touches every American at some point in life. We are mindful of

the fiscal limitations on our bill and have tried to use the allocation to fund our highest priorities.

Tocqueville observed, “America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.” As I’ve stated earlier, this bill is about hope. “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” I believe the American people desire a good education for their children, meaningful jobs, and good health. Mr. Chairman, this bill does its best to meet to the American people’s needs. It’s a responsible, fair, and balanced bill, and I ask my colleagues to support it.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit a detailed table of the bill into the Record.