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Appropriations Policy Brief

H.R. 2985 — Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2006 Conference Report

BY THE NUMBERS:

In Millions of Dollars

	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Request	FY06 House Bill*	FY06 Senate Bill	FY06 Conf Report
Appropriations	3,545	4,028	2,864	3,834	3,804
Emergency	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,545	4,028	2,864	3,834	3,804

*Excludes Senate-only items.

The Committee Bill is:

- \$259 million (7.3%) **more** than last year
- \$224 million (5.7%) **less** than the President requested

Budget Compliance: According to CBO, the bill **violates the FY06 budget resolution by \$85 million** by exceeding the 302(b) allocation provided for legislative branch appropriations. As a result, Members **will** be asked to waive points of order lying against H.R. 2985 (and thus waive the budget resolution) in voting for the rule governing consideration of the bill. **Note:** The RSC rule change applies only to House-passed appropriations – not conference reports.

If the House Appropriations Committee intends to recoup this \$85 million from later conference reports, it should provide a “road map” on how it intends to do so, for example, by providing an informal revised set of 302(b) allocations. The Budget Act precludes the Committee from formally adjusting its 302(b) because any such alteration must be consistent with “any actions already taken by its House.” In other words, because the Committee is exceeding this allocation, it will need to change the allocation levels for other bills so that the House does not end up breaching the entire amount budgeted for appropriations (302(a)). The Committee cannot officially fix the problem by simply erasing the House-passed Legislative Branch allocation and inserting the allocation assumed in the Conference report, because Budget rules prevent it. Without seeing a road map from the Committee on how it will fix the problem and come in at the overall FY06 level of spending, Members concerned about violating the budget are forced to trust that the savings will be found later in the appropriations process, at the a time when significant differences exist between the remaining House-passed appropriations bills and the more costly Senate bills.

Items of Note:

Continuity in Representation Act: Includes text almost identical to H.R. 841, which passed the House of Representatives on March 3, 2005, by a vote of 329 to 68. The one change involves the section requiring that, in “extraordinary circumstances,” the executive authority of any state that has a vacancy for the House of Representatives issue a writ of election to fill such vacancy by special election within 49 days (H.R. 841 said within 45 days) of the U.S. House Speaker’s announcement of the vacancy (unless a regularly-scheduled election or other special election for the vacant office is already due to occur within 75 days of the Speaker’s announcement).

The RSC Legislative Bulletin for H.R. 841 can be found at:

<http://johnshadegg.house.gov/rsc/LB%2003-03-05--continuity%20in%20representation.pdf>

Excess MRA Funds for Deficit Reduction: Continues language carried in previous years providing that excess funds in the Members’ Representation Allowance Account shall be used for deficit reduction.

Senate Consultants: Increases the number of consultants from eight to nine that is allowable for the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders.

Mounted Horse Unit: Prohibits the Capitol Police from operating its mounted horse unit and transfers all horses, equipment, and supplies to the U.S. Park Police.

New Inspector Generals: Establishes an Office of the Inspector General within the Capitol Police and within the Library of Congress (LOC).

Private Vehicles: Prohibits funds in this bill from being used to maintain or otherwise care for private vehicles.

***New* Digital Collections into Educational Curricula Program:** Authorizes a new program to teach educators and librarians how to incorporate the digital collections of the Library of Congress into their curricula. The provision (section 1306) would authorize “such sums as may be necessary” for FY06 and each year thereafter.

LOC Rescission: Rescinds \$6.9 million from the Library of Congress.

LOC Earmarks: \$300,000 for the University of South Carolina for the Cooperative Preservation and Conservation Project and \$250,000 for the Middle Eastern Text Initiative to translate and publish middle eastern texts.

Capitol Hill Visitors Center: Provides \$44 million to complete the cost of construction for the Visitor Center, roughly \$7 million more than the House originally provided.

Funding Summaries:

In Millions

	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request	FY 2006 House	FY2006 Senate	FY2006 Conf	Conf Vs. Request	Conf Vs. FY 2005	Conf Vs. House
House of Representatives	1,041	1,128	1,092	1,092	1,101	-27	60	9
Senate	720	822	0	785	785	-37	65	785
Capitol Police	231	290	239	265	249	-41	18	10
Congressional Budget Office	35	36	35	36	35	-1	0	0
Architect of the Capitol	344	507	311	420	422	-85	78	111
Library of Congress	545	591	543	580	560	-31	15	17
Government Printing Office	120	131	117	127	123	-8	3	6
Government Accountability Office	468	486	482	484	482	-4	14	0
Other	41	48	45	45	47	-1	6	2
Grand Total	3,545	4,028	2,864	3,834	3,804	-224	259	940

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