



Policy Brief.....September 24, 2003

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CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2657—Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2004

**Conference Report on H.R. 2657—Legislative Branch Appropriations Act
for Fiscal Year 2004 (Kingston)**

Order of Business: The Conference Report is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, September 24, subject to a unanimous consent agreement waiving all points of order.

Items of Key Concern:

- The Conference Report exceeds its allocation (its 302(b)) by \$36 million. In order to avoid breaking the overall Budget limit, \$36 million will now have to be cut from another bill.
- The Conference Report includes \$938 million in emergency spending for Fiscal Year 2003 (which ends on September 30 of this year) as follows:
 - The Judiciary (Salaries & expenses, defender services, and fees of jurors): \$32.23 million;
 - Corps of Engineers Flood Control Projects: \$60 million;
 - FEMA Disaster Relief: \$441.7 million (Note this is not in response to Hurricane Isabel and is in addition to the \$983.6 million provided in the Supplemental passed before the August recess);
 - Wildfire Management (BLM & Forest Service): \$319 million;
 - Oil Spill Cleanup on Atoll Island: \$5 million;
 - NASA (Shuttle Colombia Expenses): \$50 million;
 - Assistance for Apple Farmers in Michigan Affected by Fire Blight: \$9.7 million;
 - Mormon Cricket Infestation in Nevada, Utah, and Idaho: \$20 million
- The Conference Report includes an additional \$48.8 million for the Capitol Visitor Center

Summary:

BY THE NUMBERS:

Budget Authority in Millions of Dollars

	FY '03 Enacted	FY '04 Request	FY '04 House	FY '04 Senate	Conf Report
Appropriations	3,343	3,851	3,512	3,575	3,548
<i>Emergency Spending</i>	<i>37,758</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

House Level Reflects 302(b) allocation

Excluding Emergency Spending for the Legislative Branch, the Conference Report is:

- **\$205 million or 6.1% above last year;**
- **\$303 million or 7.9% below the request (Note: Congress submits a request to itself through OMB);**
- **\$36 million or 1% above the House level; and**
- **\$27 million or 0.8% below the Senate level.**

Including this Conference Report, funding for this bill has increased by an average of 9.3% a year each of the past four years. (Source: Budget Cmte)

Funding Increases to House Only Items: Since both the House and Senate set the funding levels for their own respective chambers and by tradition do not make changes to funding for the other body, spending on House-Only items should not increase past the House-passed level. The Conference includes several increases totaling \$3.698 million for House-Only Items above the House-passed level including:

- Office of the Speaker – an additional \$582,000 above the House-passed level;
- Minority Leader – an additional \$366,000 above the House-passed level;
- Cloakroom Personnel – an additional \$100,000 above the House-passed level;
- Standing Committees, except Appropriations – an additional \$1,130,000 above the House-passed level;
- Office of Emergency Preparedness – an additional \$200,000 above the House-passed level;
- Office of the Clerk – an additional \$820,000 above the House-passed level;

The Conference Report also includes a new office within the House, entitled the “Office of Interparliamentary Affairs” which is receiving \$500,000. The Office, which is also authorized in the Conference Report, is tasked with coordinating official visits of Members to foreign nations and visits of foreign officials to the U.S. and reports directly to the Speaker.

Funding Decreases to House-Only Items: The Conference Report also includes several funding decreases totaling \$3.698 million to the House-passed bill for House-Only Items, including:

- Chief Administrative Officer – a reduction of \$2,000,000 below the House-passed level;
- Government Contributions for Social Security, Health Care and Retirement for House Employees -- a reduction of \$750,000 below the House-passed bill.

The Conference Report also eliminates funding for the Corrections Calendar Office, which in the House-passed bill received \$948,000.

For a detailed summary of the House bill visit:

<http://www.house.gov/burton/RSC/LegFY04.pdf>

FUNDING SUMMARIES:

Dollars in Thousands

	FY 2003 Enacted	House Bill	Senate Bill	Conference Report	Percent Over Last Year	Percent Over House	Percent Over Senate
Senate	663,404	NA	718,369	716,769	8.04%	NA	-0.22%
House	960,871	1,014,464	NA	1,014,464	5.58%	0.00%	NA
Joint Items							
Inaugural Ceremonies	0	0	1,250	1,250			0.00%
Joint Economic Committee	3,658	3,805	3,988	3,988	9.02%	4.81%	0.00%
Joint Committee on Taxation	7,593	8,112	8,112	8,112	6.84%	0.00%	0.00%
Attending Physician	2,981	2,236	2,236	2,236	-24.99%	0.00%	0.00%
Capitol Guide Service	3,035	3,511	3,511	3,511	15.68%	0.00%	0.00%
Capitol Police Salaries	174,533	189,913	207,000	197,600	13.22%	4.05%	-4.54%
Capitol Police General Expenses	27,917	21,917	33,000	23,500	-15.82%	7.22%	-28.79%
Office of Compliance	2,157	2,255	2,255	2,255	4.54%	0.00%	0.00%
Congressional Budget Office	31,892	33,820	33,612	33,820	6.05%	0.00%	0.62%
Architect General Admin	58,957	84,513	71,697	77,053	30.69%	-8.83%	7.47%
Capitol Building	32,985	23,307	27,777	28,188	-14.54%	20.94%	1.48%
Capitol Grounds	8,302	6,886	6,986	6,886	-17.06%	0.00%	-1.43%
Senate Office Buildings	64,449	NA	63,388	63,388	-1.65%	NA	0.00%
House Office Buildings	60,564	54,564	NA	62,816	3.72%	15.12%	NA
Library Buildings and Grounds	37,277	34,750	41,620	39,159	5.05%	12.69%	-5.91%
Capitol Police Buildings and Grounds	63,885	3,808	3,808	3,808	-94.04%	0.00%	0.00%
Botanic Gardens	6,063	6,062	6,239	6,189	2.08%	2.10%	-0.80%
Capital Visitor Center	0	0	47,800	48,839			2.17%
Library of Congress Salaries & Expenses	361,644	366,520	367,539	370,897	2.56%	1.19%	0.91%

Copyright Office	38,971	47,290	48,290	48,290	23.91%	2.11%	0.00%
Congressional Research Service	88,250	93,590	91,726	91,726	3.94%	-1.99%	0.00%
Books for the Blind	50,632	51,706	51,706	51,706	2.12%	0.00%	0.00%
Gov't Printing Office	89,557	91,111	91,111	91,111	1.74%	0.00%	0.00%
Superintendent of Documents	29,468	34,456	34,456	34,456	16.93%	0.00%	0.00%
GPO Revolving Fund	0	5,000	10,000	10,000		100.00%	0.00%
General Accounting Office	456,031	464,539	468,118	466,328	2.26%	0.39%	-0.38%
Open World Leadership Center Trust Fund	12,915	13,000	14,000	13,500	4.53%	3.85%	-3.57%

LANGUAGE AND FUNDING OF NOTE:

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

New Office of Interparliamentary Affairs in the House: The Conference Report also includes a new office within the House, entitled the "Office of Interparliamentary Affairs" which is receiving \$500,000. The Office, which is also authorized in the Conference Report, is tasked with coordinating official visits of Members to foreign nations and visits of foreign officials to the U.S. and reports directly to the Speaker.

SEC Audit Payments: The Comptroller General could accept payments from the Securities and Exchange Commission for the performance of any GAO audit of SEC financial statements.

Continues funding for the Senate President Pro-Tem Emeritus (an office created for Senator Byrd): \$150,000 for office expenses and a \$7,500 expenses allowance.

Increases Compensation for Various Senate Offices and Increases the Amount for Expenses to Majority and Minority Conferences of the Senate

Authorizes Data Lines to Be Installed at Taxpayer Expense in the Homes of Senators and Senior Senate Staff.

Members Retirement: Authorizes Members who are not in the Federal Employee Retirement System to enter the system during a 60-day window

Tightens the Prohibition in the Senate Regarding Use of Unofficial Expenses Accounts

Corrections Calendar Office in the House: Transfers 3 of the positions and 63.5% of the funding for the Office to the Speaker and 2 positions and 36.5% of the funding to the Minority Leader.

Jurisdiction of the Capitol Police: Expands the jurisdiction of the Capitol Police for a truck interdiction program in the District and to include crimes of violence committed in the presence of a Member in the performance of their official duties and to prevent the imminent loss of life or property if the officer is in the performance of their official duties.

Capitol Police Recruitment: Repeals the requirement enacted in the February Omnibus that the Capitol Police recruit without regard to age.

Tunnel for the Capitol Visitors Center: The bill limits expenditures for the tunnel between the Capitol Visitor's Center and the Library of Congress to \$10 million. *Rep. Kingston and many Members opposed funding the tunnel.*

Dental and Vision Insurance: Prohibits the funding of Supplemental dental and vision health insurance for House Members and employees.

Earmarks: Earmarks out of funds for the Library of Congress: \$250,000 is earmarked for the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, \$500,000 is earmarked for the Knox College Abraham Lincoln Studies Center, and \$500,000 is earmarked for the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism for the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial.

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