

Jo Bonner



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CONGRESS APPROVES EMERGENCY SPENDING BILL



Earlier this month, Congress passed the emergency spending bill providing \$94.5 billion in funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, hurricane recovery, avian flu preparedness, and border security.

After several weeks of negotiations, House and Senate conferees were able to reduce the price tag of the Senate's bill by \$14 billion, bringing it in line with the president's request and the original version passed by the House.

The House bill totaled \$91.9 billion while the bill passed by the Senate was almost \$109 billion. In order to reduce the size of the Senate's bill, many items had to be cut or reduced.

One of the projects removed from the bill, I'm pleased to report, would have provided more than \$700 million to reroute an existing rail line in the Mississippi/Alabama Gulf Coast region. The CSX rail line was immediately repaired following Hurricane Katrina at the expense of CSX and in its existing location serves the Gulf Coast industries well. Re-routing this privately owned rail line, at this time, would not be a good use of federal dollars.

The purpose of this legislation was strictly to fund defense, military, and hurricane relief priorities, and House conferees assured that H.R. 4939, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery for Fiscal Year 2006, accomplishes that goal.

The emergency spending bill contains key funding for disaster relief based on the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. With the 2006 hurricane season already upon us, we must ensure the Gulf Coast region is fully prepared.

Among other things, the bill provides:

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2006 ACADEMY APPOINTMENTS

One of the more rewarding aspects of my job is the privilege of nominating south Alabama's brightest young men and women to our nation's service academies. This year, I nominated 17 men and women for the Academies' consideration, and so far, eight have received appointments to the Class of 2010:

U.S. Air Force Academy

Daniel Nelson Hickox, Mobile

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

William Torbert Cadden, Mobile

Samuel Brian Shea, Gulf Shores

U.S. Military Academy

Christine Mae Hernandez, Bay Minette

Milton Tarrell Nettles, Monroeville

William Kidd Smith, Theodore

U.S. Naval Academy

Nathan Farish Campbell, Mobile

William Francis Guilfoyle, Jr., Orange Beach



The students I nominated this year to our nation's service academies joined me for dinner. Picture with me are William Smith and Sam Shea.

Jim Martin, president of the 60 Plus Association, presented me with a Guardian of Seniors' Rights award at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. earlier this month.



Spending Bill, continued from page 1

▶ \$19.8 billion for disaster relief efforts that continue throughout the Gulf Coast, including

▶ \$6 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief fund to remove debris, reimburse states and localities for infrastructure repairs, and assist individuals and families impacted by last year's hurricanes,

▶ \$235 million to help elementary and secondary school students displaced by last year's hurricanes, and

▶ \$500 million in disaster assistance for farmers, ranchers, and producers.

▶ \$2.3 billion to prepare for a potential avian flu pandemic.

▶ \$1.9 billion for border security, including \$708 million to deploy 6,000 National Guard troops to the border. This funding will serve as immediate assistance to help enforce immigration laws that are already on the books.

▶ \$65.8 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including

▶ \$800 million for armored humvees for our troops,

▶ Nearly \$2 billion for the development of countermeasures to prevent Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) attacks on our troops, and

▶ \$4.5 billion to train and equip Iraqi and Afghani security forces.

This bill ensures that our troops will continue to have the tools they need. We must remain committed to supporting our troops, winning the war on terror, and defending our nation from every threat, both at home and abroad. The bill was signed into law by the president on June 15.

BALDWIN COUNTY CATTLE & FAIR ASSOCIATION TO BUILD NEW COMMUNITY SHELTER

Last month, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency was awarded \$7.5 million by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is to be used for the construction of a new community shelter at the Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association.

Hurricane season is now upon us and shelter space in Baldwin County is at a critical low. The lessons learned from the past several hurricane seasons have shown we must have safe, accessible shelters available.

The shelter will be built according to "FEMA 361 Design and Construction Guidelines," and will be able to accommodate 1900 occupants and withstand wind gusts of up to 200 miles per hour. Construction is scheduled to begin later this month and is expected to be completed by May 30, 2007.

The \$7.5 million grant, administered through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant program, represents a 75 percent federal share of the total project cost of \$10 million. The Baldwin County Commission and the Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association will provide the remaining 25 percent of the project's cost.



Earlier this month, I met with the Alabama 4-H youth delegation. Three of the students pictured with me are from the First District: Jeseeph Gary and Tia Alexis Black of Monroe County and Natalie Delois Woods of Washington County.

"CONGRESSIONAL REPORT" OFF THE AIR

WKRK has announced that it will not be airing the "Gulf Coast Congressional Report" until at least after the November election. This weekly thirty-minute public affairs television program, which began in 1973 as a collaborative effort between Representatives Trent Lott (R-MS), Jack Edwards (R-AL), and Bob Sikes (D-FL) has continued, and I am honored to be the current host of a show that, to my knowledge, is the longest-running congressional affairs show in the United States. I look forward to resuming the program and continuing to feature guests that are relevant to the people of south Alabama.



Students from Knollwood Christian School were in Washington, D.C. last month, and I was able to visit with them and take a picture on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

WASHINGTON, D.C. SUMMER INTERNS



The first group of my summer Washington interns joined me on the steps of the Capitol for a photo. Pictured with me are (l to r): Carson Moseley, Johnston Oppenheimer, Aliyah Hakima, Maegan Thornton, and Cameron Weavil.



Interns Maegan Thornton, Carson Moseley, and Johnston Oppenheimer pictured with the House Majority Leader John Boehner at a recent taping of the Gulf Coast Congressional Report.



The second group of my summer interns joined me for a dinner held at the Washington Convention Center at which the president spoke. Pictured (l to r) are: Chris Boutries, Brett Williams, Madeline Barter, and Cole Rutledge.

DISTRICT OFFICE INTERNS



We are also proud to offer an internship program in our District Office. Pictured with me are James Wenzel, Joy Easterling, and Allison Busbee.

ALABAMA RANKS #1 IN SOUTHEAST IN MEDICARE PART D SIGNUPS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that Alabama ranked number one among southeastern states and fourth in the nation in enrollment in the Medicare prescription drug plan.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) set the enrollment goal for Alabama at 538,002. Alabama exceeded that goal and enrolled 620,300 or 115.3%. Nationally, only three states finished ahead of Alabama: California (118.6%), Colorado (117.0%), and New Mexico (115.4%).

Because of Medicare Part D, Alabama's seniors are now seeing real savings on their prescription drug bills.

From the mailbox...

Dear Congressman Jo Bonner,

It is with extreme happiness that I write to let you know that I have begun to receive my disability payments. I received my initial check for past years of being unable to work. I have also received my first monthly check and Medicare card.

I honestly believe you and your staff are "THE" reason I have begun to get what I have payed into the system for over 35 years.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the time, letters and the willingness of my Congressman and his staff to cut through the red tape and help me solve this difficult problem.

Many thanks again to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A satisfied constituent

April 22, 2006

