

*This Week in Washington*



WITH CONGRESSMAN  
JO BONNER

### Troop Funding Bill Bloated With Unrelated Spending

Once again, the Democratic majority in Congress has chosen to force our troops to wait for the funding they need to continue their efforts in the Global War on Terror.

At the same time, the majority party's leadership is using this bill, which is intended to provide funding for our troops, as a means to appropriate billions of tax dollars in unrelated and unauthorized spending.

Perhaps the most egregious example of abuse of power during my tenure in Congress is the Democratic majority choosing to craft this supplemental spending bill – an estimated \$245 billion bill – behind closed doors, out of the public view, and without the participation of a large majority of elected Members of Congress.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid have chosen to bypass the normal and democratic processes enumerated by our founding fathers.

Instead, this bill, which will authorize upwards of \$245 billion in taxpayer money, will bypass the committee process altogether. Debate on the House floor will be limited, effectively shutting out all but a handful of legislators from having any say in what the final bill looks like.

In order to increase its chances of passage, Democrats are stuffing the bill with billions of tax dollars in unrelated spending.

News reports indicate the bill will include:

- \$9 billion in funding for the State Department, USAID, and other foreign assistance operations and programs overseas,
- \$500 million in increased funding over the president's request for international food aid,
- \$5.8 billion in funding to Louisiana levees,

- \$17 billion for energy tax credits,
- \$12 billion for an extension in unemployment payments,
- \$200 million in funding for the Bureau of Prisons, and
- \$200 million in additional dollars to fund shortfalls related to the Census.

While some of these projects may be worthwhile, it is irresponsible to add them to the bill intended to fund our troops. These provisions should go through the normal legislative process.

Our job is to ensure our troops currently engaged in the global War on Terror have the resources and reinforcements they need to succeed in their mission.

If the delays continue, 490,000 active duty military troops will face the prospect of no paycheck in June and 300,000 military families could lose their housing benefits.

Our generals on the ground have also made it clear there will be dire consequences facing our military unless they receive this funding in the next few weeks. I urge my colleagues to work to get these desperately needed funds to our troops.

### USS Independence Rolls Out

You may have noticed a recent addition to the waters of the Mobile River. Late last month, the Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), built by General Dynamics and Austal USA made its debut.

The USS Independence Littoral Combat Ship, an aluminum trimaran, was introduced to the public with a rollout at the Austal shipyard.

As you may know, the LCS is a brand new class of fast, highly maneuverable ship designed to carry the fight to the enemy in areas close to shore. It will be the world's most advanced high speed military sea craft.

The keel-laying, which is the first of four notable occasions in the life of a ship, took place just over two years ago. The second notable occasion, the christening, is scheduled for later this year.

I am extremely pleased that the Navy has shown such confidence in General Dynamics and its Mobile-based partner, Austal, USA, and I am proud of the people of southwest Alabama – and the entire Gulf Coast region - who built this new class of Navy combat ship.

Mobile has a strong naval heritage, and this program opens yet another chapter in that rich history. It is gratifying to see companies like Austal, USA create good, high-paying jobs that are so important to our local economy.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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