

Coburn Amendments to Emergency War Supplemental

#717 - This version strikes everything in Title II, III, and IV – this amendment would strike **\$19 billion** from the bill.

#718 - this version strikes everything in Titles II, III, and IV except the Military Construction, and VA funding (Chapter 9) and the funding for Capitol powerplant asbestos remediation – this amendment would strike **\$14 billion** from the bill.

Talking Points

- This was originally intended to be an “Emergency War Supplemental” virtually all of the additional provisions have nothing to do with the War in Iraq, the War in Afghanistan, or the great task of securing our homeland.
- If we did not have troops engaged in combat today, we would not be debating this emergency bill. No other funding request in this bill would merit a “stand alone” emergency appropriation bill.
- I have continually recommended that even funds for the War in Iraq and Afghanistan be covered within the regular budget process. I am glad that the Department of Defense will do that next year.
- Instead of simply funding the President’s request for the War, the Senate has added nearly \$19 billion dollars to fund what the Committee refers to as “Domestic Emergencies”. The President’s request of \$103 billion has ballooned to \$121.6 billion. The President has characterized these added projects as “largely unjustified and non-emergency”.

Amendment #717

- This Amendment will strip everything in title II, III, and IV of this bill.
- This Amendment will cut \$19.3 billion from this bill.
- \$19.3 billion that does not fall within the budget caps.
- \$19.3 billion that will be charged directly to our grandchildren
- Title II for Katrina, Veterans and other purposes includes \$14.9 billion of additional requests:
- Title III “Other matters” – this includes \$100 million of new funding for Agriculture, DHS, HHS, HUD and other purposes
- Title IV - The “Emergency Farm Relief Act of 2007” contains a whopping \$4.2 billion of Agriculture Disaster funding
- This amendment will strip funding that does not constitute an emergency such as:
 - \$100 million for Presidential Conventions
 - \$2 million for a University of Vermont Earmark
 - \$3.5 million for guided tours of the Capitol
 - \$24 million for sugar beets
 - \$3 million for sugar cane for Hawaii
 - \$13 million for Ewe Lamb replacement and retention
 - \$100 million for Dairy production
 - \$166 million for fisheries disaster relief
 - \$425 million for Secure Rural Schools
 - \$640 million for Heating Assistance (LIHEAP)
 - \$23 million for geothermal research
 - \$13 million for mine safety
 - \$115 million for Forestry Conservation
 - \$2.1 billion for crop losses
 - \$1.5 billion for livestock losses
 - \$13 million for mine safety
 - \$31 million for the Milk Income Loss Contract program

Amendment #718

- This Amendment will strip everything in title II, III, and IV of this bill with the critical exceptions of \$3.1 billion in BRAC funding, \$1.3 billion in VA funding, and \$25 million for Capitol asbestos remediation.
- This Amendment will cut **\$14 billion** from this bill.
- This amendment will maintain the necessary \$3.1 billion funding for Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), as many members have pointed out, delaying BRAC will only result in increased cost, lost efficiencies, and more funding required to cover additional costs of inflation. Although, I would prefer that we use the offsets that the President has provided to provide this funding, I recognize that this funding should not wait.
- This amendment also ensures that the additional funds for the VA are maintained this including prosthetic research. The cost of VA healthcare have gone through the roof in the past few years, with this bill we continue the practice of adding money to the VA without ensuring that the VA become more efficient. Last year the VA budget exceeded \$80 billion. It will not be long before the VA budget exceeds \$100 million. We need to look for ways to give Veterans a choice in their healthcare providers, not tying them to an inefficient and bureaucratic organization. Competition will save Veterans healthcare, but that change will not happen today; therefore, my amendment does not cut this added VA funding.
- This amendment cuts the litany of non-emergency, and questionable spending that the Appropriations committee has added to this “War Supplemental”.
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Some Military Costs

- This bill cuts \$1.3 billion from military Operating funds (Operations & Maintenance) these funds are the most basic war funds for day to day operations of our military around the world.
- The bill cuts \$150 million from Marine Corps requests for squad radios. In urban combat, small units often have to fight from different buildings on different streets, this makes it imperative that small four man “fire teams” have their own radios to stay in touch with their squad leaders. This bill will cut half of these radios that our Marines need.
- It is important to point out that we could fully fund a great number of military requirements with the money some are adding for domestic issues.
- The Commandant of the Marines will come to Capitol Hill on Wednesday to brief the Defense Appropriations Committee, and he will ask for additional funds for Mine Protected Vehicles – the so-called “MRAP” vehicles [Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles]. These vehicles cost about \$500,000 – with the amount of Ag Disaster spending - about \$4 billion – the services could have over 6,000 of these vehicles to ensure that our troops are safe from Improvised Explosive Devices.
- A soldier’s rifle costs about \$1,000, but our National Guard troops still have to train on older M-16 rifles which are different from the rifles they will use in combat. We could fully fund their request for more rifles and keep this bill less than \$121 billion.
- A complete set of body armor costs about \$3,000, our Guard units have sets of body armor when they deploy, but they do not have enough to train with the same body armor at home.
- The Senate could have fully funded these critical military requests in this war supplemental, but instead they have chosen to fund parochial “pet projects”.