But let me first of all as we talk about Veterans' Day acknowledge the extra $128 million that the veterans will get to expedite claims processing. If there is anything in our congressional districts that causes us great concern, it is our veterans coming in attempting to process their claims for needs that are immediate. I believe it is important to overcome that particular need.

In addition, I think it is extremely important that there is an increase in this particular legislation for veterans. I would argue to say that we can always, as I work with homeless veterans, do more for them. I am hoping as we move towards the next session and the next fiscal year, we can reemphasize the needs of our homeless veterans with whom I have worked on a regular basis.

But we are addressing some needs, and whenever I go home and interact with my community, they are always speaking about another issue and that is dealing with housing. I would like to refer to the housing for the Nation's elderly, section 202 which has received an increase, the homeless program which has been fully funded at $1.23 billion, the housing, the HOPWA program. I might say that we will be working with HUD to ensure that those dollars get to communities that are diverse, that we ensure that those programs are spread throughout, that we are reaching the communities that are impacted. We realize that in the African American community, HIV–AIDS is the one killer in ages 25 TO 44. We need those dollars to be spread in a diverse way. We have community development block grant money, and I am delighted that is there, as well as the Superfund monies which have been funded.

As a member of the Committee on Science, Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, express my extreme disappointment that we have not seen fit to fully fund our Space Station and provide the extra safety and the extra crew module. We fought against this cut, and I am hoping that the administration will see the error of its ways with respect to the Space Station. We have fought long and hard, and in this time the Space Station may become even more valuable. We realize that we have to be fiscally responsible as relates to NASA, but we need to do more.

In Houston, in particular, we are very gratified that the conference has seen fit to focus on beautification. The Heights Association in Houston receiving $100,000; to focus on recreation, $25,000 for the Acres Home Citizen Council Recreational Complex that will enhance economic development in that area, create a whole buzz of activity, compete with of course our great sports arenas by going into a neighborhood and focusing, and recognizing that the whole Nation needs to be wired and to put in an intercity area, the home of Barbara Jordan and Nicky Leland, the Fifth Ward Technology Center in cooperation with the Houston Community College seed money of $50,000 to help us recognize that economic development technology are interwoven. I look forward to these ideas and these monies moving forward to help build our country and as well build a better quality of life.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the conference report for VA–HUD. The bill funds many important agencies, and much has been said about those agencies, particularly about Veterans' Affairs. But I would like to specifically recognize the hard work of the members of the conference committee for their work in approving funding increase for aeronautics research.

We know that dollar for dollar, investments in aeronautics research pays off. Every aircraft worldwide uses NASA technology, and the research center located in Hampton, Virginia, has been at the forefront of developing these cutting-edge technologies. Engineering principles developed from the past research at Langley have contributed to overall aircraft safety and efficiency, including things like wind design, noise abatement, structural integrity, and fuel efficiency. It is important to remember that these principles were developed 5, 10 and 20 years before they led to improvements in the aircraft we see today.

In recent years, NASA's research has been reduced by about one-third. Reversing that declining trend in aeronautics funding now will enable the aggressive research and technology programs that are needed to lead the United States into the 21st century, as the world's leader in aeronautics and space research, a key cornerstone of our future economic prosperity.

Again, I extend my appreciation to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) and the other conferees for their strong support for the national investments in aeronautics research, and I urge Members to support the conference committee report.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good conference report. It balances a number of very important priorities. It protects our environment and keeps the United States at the forefront of space exploration. It provides needed funding to ensure new scientific discovery and addresses our Nation's critical housing needs.

Finally, it provides for the benefits and assistance of our Nation's veterans that they have earned and that they should enjoy. It is a fitting and timely tribute as we prepare for Veterans' Day this November 11.

Mr. Speaker, once again our hats should be off to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) and the entire appropriations committee. I urge a yes vote on this rule and the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2620, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 279, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 6, 2001, at page H7787.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH).

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to present for consideration of the House the conference report on H.R. 2620, the VA–HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for 2002.

In the interest of time, I will try to be brief. I would like, however, to begin by saying that this is a good bill. I think the fact that we had a unanimous vote on the rule is symbolic of what is to come. Like those presented in each of the past few years, it is very much a solid, bipartisan effort of the

House and Senate. In this regard I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), as well as to our very able Senate colleagues, Senators MIKULSKI and BOND.

While we clearly had differences and many difficult decisions on several aspects of the bill as passed by each body, the conference report nevertheless represents a true collaboration of effort and an honest negotiated compromise. Again, I am grateful to my colleagues for their candor, perseverance, and friendship.

With the House's indulgence, I would like to take a few minutes to briefly outline the highlights of the proposal. First and foremost, the conference report is within the 302(b) allocation for budget authority and outlays. The bill's discretionary spending is $85.4 billion in new budget authority, which is an increase of just over $2 billion above the budget submission and some $2.9 billion over last year's bill.

I would note for the House that this level of discretionary spending includes emergency spending for $1.5 billion for FEMA for disaster relief requirements.

We have tried as best we can to spread the proposed increases throughout the bill: discretionary veterans programs overall are increased by over $1.4 billion compared to 2001. This follows on some very substantial increases in the last 2 years, with $1.05 billion of the increase going to medical care and the remainder spread to research, processing veterans' compensation, pension and education claims, operating our national cemeteries, and increasing necessary construction at VA facilities by over $160 million over last year.

Housing programs have increased in HUD by over $1.67 billion compared to 2001, with increases in the housing certificate program, public housing operating subsidies, the HOPWA program, HOME investment partnerships, the housing for the elderly and disabled programs, and the disabled program is a significant increase, and the lead hazard reduction program. It is important to note that this proposal also includes some very difficult but I believe extremely important and highly defensible changes in policy direction which are represented by reductions in the Public Housing Capital Fund and the Drug Elimination Grant Program. Neither of these programs is serving the best interests of the people they were intended to serve, and it is our job to take whatever steps are necessary to remedy the situation.

In the case of capital funds, it meant getting tougher on public housing authorities to spend the dollars intended for the residents of public housing authority. There are literally hundreds of millions of dollars worth of code violations and hazards not getting fixed.

In the case of the Drug Elimination Grant Program, it meant taking an honest look at whether HUD is the best entity to run this type of program.

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Based on HUD's track record, we did not believe that it was. Instead, this bill increases funding in the operating fund so that all PHAs will see an increase. They then have the discretion to use those funds as they see fit.

The Environmental Protection Agency's funding increases some $586 million over the budget request, and $74 million above last year. This proposal continues to provide a strong research program as well as increased resources for the many State categorical grants, including section 106 water pollution grants, section 103 and 105 air pollution grants, and the new BEACH grant program. The Clean Water SRF program has been funded at $1.35 billion and the Safe Drinking Water SRF has received $850 million. These are substantial commitments. However, they are dwarfed by the need that is out there in combined sewer overflow projects throughout the country.

FEMA's operating programs increase by nearly $135 million over the 2001 funding level and we have provided $2.1 billion in emergency and nonemergency dollars for disaster relief. I should also mention that $150 million has been provided for the new firefighter grant program which, as my colleagues can imagine, is a very, very popular and competitive program.

NASA's programs will receive a net increase of $508 million over last year, and we have proposed several structural changes in the agency's account structure to provide them greater programmatic flexibility and the committee, better oversight capability.

Finally, I am proud to say that we have raised the overall funding for the National Science Foundation by just over $316 million to a total program of $4.789 billion. That is an increase of 8.2 percent compared to last year. Doing a little research myself, 10 years ago that budget was half, so that the National Science Foundation budget has doubled in the past 10 years. The bulk of this increase will go to improve available resources for National Science Foundation's core research programs, bringing the total research program to nearly $3.6 billion, while the remainder would be spread to major research, construction and equipment, education and human resource programs, and salaries and expenses for NSF's capable staff.

I would like to add that I personally would have liked to do more here, as I know my colleague, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), would. However, to do so only could have been done at the expense of other very important programs found in other agencies throughout the bill. Having said that, given the increase proposed by the administration of 1 percent, we have done a remarkable job.

All Members are, of course, aware of the difficulty in putting these bills together, especially with so many diverse and competing interests. Developing the perfect bill is probably impossible. Nevertheless, I believe we have done a tremendous job developing a bill that represents the interests of both the legislative and the executive branch.

By the way, I would like to thank the executive branch for allowing us to do our job without a great deal of interference. They have been very cooperative. Their priorities were made. We tried to honor those priorities; in many cases we did. But the relationship this year was excellent.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want once again to thank all my colleagues for allowing us the privilege of presenting this conference report on the fiscal year 2002 appropriations for veterans, housing and independent agencies. I urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following material for the RECORD:

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
TITLE I						
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS						
Veterans Benefits Administration						
Compensation and pensions	23,355,689	24,944,288	24,944,288	24,944,288	24,944,288	+1,588,599
Readjustment benefits	1,981,000	2,135,000	2,135,000	2,135,000	2,135,000	+154,000
Veterans insurance and indemnities	19,850	26,200	26,200	26,200	26,200	+6,350
Veterans housing benefit program fund program account (indefinite)	165,740	203,278	203,278	203,278	203,278	+37,538
(Limitation on direct loans)	(300)	(300)	(300)	(300)	(300)	.....
Administrative expenses	162,000	164,497	164,497	164,497	164,497	+2,497
Administrative savings from prohibiting new Vendee Home Loans	.....	-1,000	.....	.....	.....	.....
Education loan fund program account	1	1	1	1	1	.....
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	.....
Administrative expenses	220	64	64	64	64	-156
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	52	72	72	72	72	+20
(Limitation on direct loans)	(2,726)	(3,301)	(3,301)	(3,301)	(3,301)	(+575)
Administrative expenses	432	274	274	274	274	-158
Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program Account	532	544	544	544	544	+12
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	25,685,516	27,473,218	27,474,218	27,474,218	27,474,218	+1,788,702
Veterans Health Administration						
Medical care	19,381,587	20,304,742	20,382,587	20,704,742	20,656,164	+1,274,577
Delayed equipment obligation	900,000	675,000	900,000	675,000	675,000	-225,000
Total	20,281,587	20,979,742	21,282,587	21,379,742	21,331,164	+1,049,577
(Transfer to general operating expenses)	(-28,134)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+28,134)
(Transfer to Parking revolving fund)	(-2,000)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+2,000)
Medical care cost recovery collections:						
Offsetting receipts	-639,000	-691,000	-812,000	-691,000	-691,000	-52,000
Appropriations (indefinite)	639,000	691,000	812,000	691,000	691,000	+52,000
Total available (excludes offsetting receipts)	20,920,587	21,670,742	22,094,587	22,070,742	22,022,164	+1,101,577
Medical and prosthetic research	351,000	360,237	371,000	390,000	371,000	+20,000
Medical administration and miscellaneous operating expenses	62,000	67,628	66,731	67,628	66,731	+4,731
Total, Veterans Health Administration	20,694,587	21,407,607	21,720,318	21,837,370	21,768,895	+1,074,308
Departmental Administration						
General operating expenses	1,050,000	1,194,831	1,195,728	1,194,831	1,195,728	+145,728
Offsetting receipts	(36,520)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-36,520)
Total, Program Level	(1,086,520)	(1,194,831)	(1,195,728)	(1,194,831)	(1,195,728)	(+109,208)
(Transfer from medical care)	(47,134)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-47,134)
(Transfer from national cemetery)	(125)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-125)
(Transfer from inspector general)	(28)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-28)
National Cemetery Administration	109,889	121,169	121,169	121,169	121,169	+11,280
(Transfer to general operating expenses)	(-125)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+125)
Office of Inspector General	46,464	48,308	52,308	48,308	52,308	+5,844
(Transfer to general operating expenses)	(-28)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+28)
Construction, major projects	66,040	183,180	183,180	155,180	183,180	+117,140
Facility rehabilitation fund	.....	.....	300,000	.....	.....	.....
Construction, minor projects	162,000	178,900	178,900	178,900	210,900	+48,900
Miscellaneous appropriations (P.L. 106-554)	8,840	.....	.....	.....	.....	-8,840
(Transfer to Parking Revolving Fund)	(-4,500)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+4,500)
Total	170,840	178,900	178,900	178,900	210,900	+40,060
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	100,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	.....
Grants for the construction of State veterans cemeteries	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	.....
(Transfer from Parking Revolving Fund)	(6,500)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-6,500)
Parking Revolving Fund	.....	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	+4,000
Total, Departmental Administration	1,568,233	1,805,388	2,160,285	1,827,388	1,892,285	+324,052
Total, title I, Department of Veterans Affairs	47,948,336	50,686,213	51,354,821	51,138,976	51,135,398	+3,187,062
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,029)	(3,604)	(3,604)	(3,604)	(3,604)	(+575)
Consisting of:						
Mandatory	(25,522,279)	(27,308,766)	(27,308,766)	(27,308,766)	(27,308,766)	(+1,786,487)
Discretionary	(22,426,057)	(23,377,447)	(24,046,055)	(23,830,210)	(23,826,632)	(+1,400,575)

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002 — continued

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
TITLE II						
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT						
Public and Indian Housing						
Housing Certificate Fund:						
Direct appropriation	9,740,907	15,717,392	11,494,242	11,458,769	11,440,975	+1,700,068
Advance appropriations provided in previous acts	4,200,000	.....	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,200,000	.....
Subtotal, discretionary	13,940,907	15,717,392	15,694,242	15,658,769	15,640,975	+1,700,068
(Advance appropriation)	(4,200,000)	.....	(4,200,000)	(4,200,000)	(4,200,000)	.....
(Mandatory reclassification of prior year advance)	.....	(4,200,000)	.....	.....	.....	.....
Rescission of unobligated balances: Section 8 recaptures (rescission)	-1,947,300	.....	-886,000	-615,000	-1,200,000	+747,300
Public housing capital fund	3,000,000	2,293,400	2,555,000	2,943,400	2,843,400	-156,600
Public housing operating fund	3,242,000	3,384,868	3,494,868	3,384,868	3,494,868	+252,868
Subtotal	6,242,000	5,678,268	6,049,868	6,328,268	6,338,268	+96,268
Operation Safe Home (rescission)	.....	.....	.....	.....	-11,000	-11,000
Drug elimination grants for low-income housing	310,000	.....	.....	300,000	.....	-310,000
Revitalization of severely distressed public housing (HOPE VI)	575,000	573,735	573,735	573,735	573,735	-1,265
Native American housing block grants	650,000	648,570	648,570	648,570	648,570	-1,430
Indian housing loan guarantee fund program account	6,000	5,987	5,987	5,987	5,987	-13
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(71,956)	(234,283)	(234,283)	(234,283)	(234,283)	(+162,327)
Native Hawaiian housing loan guarantee fund	.....	.....	.....	1,000	1,000	+1,000
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	.....	.....	.....	(40,000)	(40,000)	(+40,000)
Total, Public and Indian Housing	19,776,607	22,623,952	22,086,402	22,901,329	21,997,535	+2,220,928
Community Planning and Development						
Housing opportunities for persons with AIDS	258,000	277,432	277,432	277,432	277,432	+19,432
Rural housing and economic development	25,000	.....	.....	25,000	25,000	.....
Empowerment zones / enterprise communities	75,000	150,000	.....	75,000	45,000	-30,000
Rural empowerment zones	15,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-15,000
Miscellaneous appropriations (P.L. 106-554)	110,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-110,000
Total	200,000	150,000	.....	75,000	45,000	-155,000
Community development block grants	5,057,550	4,801,993	4,811,993	5,012,993	5,000,000	-57,550
Miscellaneous appropriations (P.L. 106-554)	66,128	.....	.....	.....	.....	-66,128
Section 108 loan guarantees:						
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(1,261,000)	(608,696)	(608,696)	(608,696)	(608,696)	(-652,304)
Credit subsidy	29,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	-15,000
Administrative expenses	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	.....
Brownfields redevelopment	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	.....
HOME investment partnerships program	1,800,000	1,796,040	1,996,040	1,796,040	1,846,040	+46,040
Homeless assistance grants	1,025,000	1,022,745	1,027,745	1,022,745	1,122,525	+97,525
Shelter Plus Care Renewals	100,000	99,780	.....	99,780	.....	-100,000
Total, Community planning and development	8,586,678	8,187,990	8,153,210	8,348,990	8,355,997	-230,681
Housing Programs						
Housing for special populations	996,000	1,001,009	1,024,151	1,001,009	1,024,151	+28,151
Housing for the elderly	(779,000)	(783,286)	(783,286)	(783,286)	(783,286)	(+4,286)
Housing for the disabled	(217,000)	(217,723)	(240,865)	(217,723)	(240,865)	(+23,865)
Manufactured housing fees trust fund	.....	17,254	13,566	17,254	13,566	+13,566
Offsetting collections	.....	-17,254	-13,566	-17,254	-13,566	-13,566
Savings from canceling S.1029	.....	.....	-8,000	-8,000	-8,000	-8,000
Federal Housing Administration						
FHA - Mutual mortgage insurance program account:						
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(160,000,000)	(160,000,000)	(160,000,000)	(160,000,000)	(160,000,000)	.....
(Limitation on direct loans)	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	.....
Administrative expenses	330,888	336,700	330,888	336,700	336,700	+5,812
Negative subsidy 1/	-2,246,000	-2,323,000	-2,323,000	-2,323,000	-2,323,000	-77,000
Administrative contract expenses	160,000	160,000	145,000	160,000	160,000	.....
Additional contract expenses	4,000	1,000	.....	1,000	1,000	-3,000
Streamlined down payment requirements	7,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-7,000

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002 — continued

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
FHA - General and special risk program account:						
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(21,000,000)	(21,000,000)	(21,000,000)	(21,000,000)	(21,000,000)	.....
(Limitation on direct loans)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	.....
Administrative expenses	211,455	216,100	211,455	216,100	216,100	+4,645
Negative subsidy	-100,000	-225,000	-225,000	-225,000	-225,000	-125,000
Subsidy	101,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	-86,000
Guaranteed loans credit subsidy (emergency funding) (P.L. 106-554)	40,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-40,000
Non-overhead administrative expenses	144,000	144,000	139,000	144,000	144,000	.....
Additional contract expenses	7,000	4,000	.....	4,000	4,000	-3,000
Total, Federal Housing Administration	-1,340,657	-1,671,200	-1,706,657	-1,671,200	-1,671,200	-330,543
Government National Mortgage Association						
Guarantees of mortgage-backed securities loan guarantee program account:						
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(200,000,000)	(200,000,000)	(200,000,000)	(200,000,000)	(200,000,000)	.....
Administrative expenses	9,383	9,383	9,383	9,383	9,383	.....
Offsetting receipts	-347,000	-382,000	-382,000	-382,000	-382,000	-35,000
Policy Development and Research						
Research and technology	53,500	43,404	46,900	53,404	50,250	-3,250
Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity						
Fair housing activities	46,000	45,899	45,899	45,899	45,899	-101
Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes						
Lead hazard reduction	100,000	109,758	109,758	109,758	109,758	+9,758
Millenial Housing Commission						
Gifts and donations	.....	1,500	.....	.....	.....	.....
Management and Administration						
Salaries and expenses	543,267	556,067	546,067	546,032	556,067	+12,800
Transfer from:						
Limitation on FHA corporate funds	(518,000)	(530,457)	(520,000)	(530,457)	(530,457)	(+12,457)
GNMA	(9,383)	(9,383)	(9,383)	(9,383)	(9,383)	.....
Community Development Loan Guarantees Program	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	.....
Native American Housing Block Grants	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	.....
Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Fund Program	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	.....
Native Hawaiian Housing Loan Guarantee Fund Program	.....	.....	.....	(35)	(35)	(+35)
Total, Salaries and expenses	(1,072,000)	(1,097,257)	(1,076,800)	(1,087,257)	(1,097,292)	(+25,292)
Office of Inspector General	52,657	61,555	61,555	66,555	66,555	+13,898
(By transfer, limitation on FHA corporate funds)	(22,343)	(22,343)	(22,343)	(22,343)	(22,343)	.....
(By transfer from Drug Elimination Grants)	(10,000)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(-10,000)
(By transfer from Public Housing Oper Subsidy)	.....	(10,000)	(10,000)	.....	(5,000)	(+5,000)
Total, Office of Inspector General	(85,000)	(93,898)	(93,898)	(88,898)	(93,898)	(+8,898)
Consolidated fee fund (rescission)	.....	-6,700	-6,700	-6,700	-6,700	-6,700
Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight	22,000	27,000	23,000	27,000	27,000	+5,000
Offsetting receipts	-22,000	-27,000	-23,000	-27,000	-27,000	-5,000
Total, title II, Department of Housing and Urban Development (net)	28,476,435	30,580,617	29,979,968	31,014,459	30,147,695	+1,671,260
Appropriations	(30,423,735)	(30,587,317)	(30,872,668)	(31,636,159)	(31,365,395)	(+941,660)
Rescissions	(-1,947,300)	(-6,700)	(-892,700)	(-621,700)	(-1,217,700)	(+729,600)
(Limitation on direct loans)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)	.....
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(382,332,956)	(381,842,979)	(381,842,979)	(381,882,979)	(381,882,979)	(-449,977)
(Limitation on corporate funds)	(551,076)	(563,533)	(553,076)	(563,568)	(563,568)	(+12,492)
TITLE III						
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES						
American Battle Monuments Commission						
Salaries and expenses	28,000	28,466	35,466	28,466	35,466	+7,466
Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board						
Salaries and expenses	7,500	7,621	8,000	7,621	7,850	+350
Department of the Treasury						
Community Development Financial Institutions						
Community development financial institutions fund program account	118,000	67,948	80,000	100,000	80,000	-38,000
Consumer Product Safety Commission						
Salaries and expenses	52,500	54,200	54,200	56,200	55,200	+2,700

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002 — continued

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
Corporation for National and Community Service						
National and community service programs operating expenses	458,500	411,480	.....	415,480	401,980	-56,520
Rescission	-30,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	+30,000
Office of Inspector General	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	.....
Total	433,500	416,480	5,000	420,480	406,980	-26,520
Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims						
Salaries and expenses	12,445	13,221	13,221	13,221	13,221	+776
Department of Defense - Civil						
Cemeterial Expenses, Army						
Salaries and expenses	17,949	18,437	22,537	18,437	22,537	+4,588
Department of Health and Human Services						
National Institute of Health						
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences	63,000	70,228	70,228	70,228	70,228	+7,228
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention						
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	75,000	78,235	78,235	78,235	78,235	+3,235
Total, Department of Health and Human Services	138,000	148,463	148,463	148,463	148,463	+10,463
Environmental Protection Agency						
Science and Technology	696,000	640,538	680,410	665,672	698,089	+2,089
Miscellaneous appropriations (P.L. 106-554)	1,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-1,000
Transfer from Hazardous Substance Superfund	36,500	36,891	36,891	36,891	36,891	+391
Subtotal, Science and Technology	733,500	677,429	717,301	702,563	734,980	+1,480
Environmental Programs and Management	2,087,990	1,972,960	2,004,599	2,061,996	2,054,511	-33,479
Office of Inspector General	34,094	34,019	34,019	34,019	34,019	-75
Transfer from Hazardous Substance Superfund	11,500	11,867	11,867	11,867	11,867	+367
Subtotal, OIG	45,594	45,886	45,886	45,886	45,886	+292
Buildings and facilities	23,931	25,318	25,318	25,318	25,318	+1,387
Hazardous Substance Superfund	1,170,000	1,268,135	1,170,000	1,274,646	1,170,000	.....
Delay of obligation	100,000	.....	100,000	.....	100,000	.....
Transfer to Office of Inspector General	-11,500	-11,867	-11,867	-11,867	-11,867	-367
Transfer to Science and Technology	-36,500	-36,891	-36,891	-36,891	-36,891	-391
Subtotal, Hazardous Substance Superfund	1,222,000	1,219,377	1,221,242	1,225,888	1,221,242	-758
Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program	72,096	71,937	79,200	71,947	73,000	+904
Oil spill response	15,000	14,967	15,000	14,986	15,000	.....
State and Tribal Assistance Grants	2,620,740	2,232,943	2,355,000	2,572,234	2,658,900	+38,160
Categorical grants	1,008,000	1,055,782	1,081,899	1,030,782	1,074,376	+66,376
Subtotal, STAG	3,628,740	3,288,725	3,436,899	3,603,016	3,733,276	+104,536
Total, EPA	7,828,851	7,316,599	7,545,445	7,751,600	7,903,213	+74,362
Executive Office of the President						
Office of Science and Technology Policy	5,201	5,267	5,267	5,267	5,267	+66
Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Environmental Quality	2,900	2,974	2,974	2,974	2,974	+74
Total	8,101	8,241	8,241	8,241	8,241	+140
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation						
Office of Inspector General (transfer)	(33,660)	(33,660)	(33,660)	(33,660)	(33,660)	.....
Federal Emergency Management Agency						
Disaster relief	300,000	1,369,399	1,369,399	359,399	664,000	+364,000
(Transfer out)	(-2,900)	(-2,900)	(-2,900)	(-2,900)	(-2,900)	.....
Contingent emergency appropriations	1,300,000	.....	1,300,000	2,000,000	1,500,000	+200,000
Subtotal	1,600,000	1,369,399	2,669,399	2,359,399	2,164,000	+564,000
Radiological emergency preparedness fund	.....	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
Disaster assistance direct loan program account:						
State share loan	1,678	405	405	405	405	-1,273
(Limitation on direct loans)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	.....
Administrative expenses	427	543	543	543	543	+116

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002 — continued

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
Salaries and expenses	187,000	203,801	197,900	203,801	203,801	+16,801
Defense function	28,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	+2,000
Subtotal	215,000	233,801	227,900	233,801	233,801	+18,801
Office of Inspector General	10,000	10,303	10,303	10,303	10,303	+303
Emergency management planning and assistance	249,652	334,623	384,623	409,623	384,623	+134,971
Defense function	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	.....
Miscellaneous appropriations (P.L. 106-554)	100,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-100,000
Subtotal	369,652	354,623	404,623	429,623	404,623	+34,971
(By transfer)	(2,900)	(2,900)	(2,900)	(2,900)	(2,900)	.....
Emergency food and shelter program	140,000	139,692	140,000	139,692	140,000	.....
National Flood Insurance Fund:						
(Limitation on administrative expenses):						
Salaries and expenses 1/	25,736	28,798	28,798	28,798	28,798	+3,062
Flood mitigation 1/	77,307	76,381	76,381	76,381	76,381	-926
(Transfer out)	(-20,000)	(-20,000)	(-20,000)	(-20,000)	(-20,000)	.....
National Flood Migration Fund (by transfer)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	.....
Emergency Response Fund (P.L. 107-38)	2,000,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-2,000,000
Total, Federal Emergency Management Agency	4,439,800	2,212,945	3,557,352	3,277,945	3,057,854	-1,381,946
Appropriations	(1,139,800)	(2,212,945)	(2,257,352)	(1,277,945)	(1,557,854)	(+418,054)
Contingent emergency appropriations	(3,300,000)	.....	(1,300,000)	(2,000,000)	(1,500,000)	(-1,800,000)
General Services Administration						
Federal Consumer Information Center Fund	7,122	7,276	7,276	7,276	7,276	+154
National Aeronautics and Space Administration						
Human space flight	5,462,900	7,296,000	7,047,400	6,868,000	6,912,400	+1,449,500
Crew return vehicle	.....	.....	275,000	.....	.....	.....
Science, aeronautics and technology	6,190,700	7,191,700	7,605,300	7,669,700	7,857,100	+1,666,400
Mission support	2,608,700	.....	.....	.....	.....	-2,608,700
Office of Inspector General	23,000	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,700	+700
Total, NASA	14,285,300	14,511,400	14,951,400	14,561,400	14,793,200	+507,900
National Credit Union Administration						
Central liquidity facility:						
(Limitation on direct loans)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	.....
(Limitation on administrative expenses, corporate funds)	(296)	(309)	(309)	(309)	(309)	(+13)
Revolving loan program	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	.....
National Science Foundation						
Research and related activities	3,287,000	3,263,981	3,579,340	3,451,481	3,530,270	+243,270
Defense function	63,000	63,000	63,000	63,000	68,070	+5,070
Subtotal	3,350,000	3,326,981	3,642,340	3,514,481	3,598,340	+248,340
Major research equipment	121,600	96,332	135,300	108,832	138,800	+17,200
Education and human resources	787,352	872,407	885,720	872,407	875,000	+87,648
Salaries and expenses	160,890	170,040	170,040	170,040	170,040	+9,150
Office of Inspector General	6,280	6,760	6,760	6,760	6,760	+480
Total, NSF	4,426,122	4,472,520	4,840,160	4,672,520	4,788,940	+362,818
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation						
Payment to the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	90,000	95,000	105,000	100,000	105,000	+15,000
Selective Service System						
Salaries and expenses	24,480	25,003	25,003	25,003	25,003	+523
Total, title III, Independent agencies	31,918,670	29,404,820	31,407,764	31,197,873	31,459,444	-459,226
Appropriations	(28,618,670)	(29,404,820)	(30,107,764)	(29,197,873)	(29,959,444)	(+1,340,774)
Rescissions	(-30,000)	.....	.....	.....	.....	(+30,000)
Contingent emergency appropriations	(3,300,000)	.....	(1,300,000)	(2,000,000)	(1,500,000)	(-1,800,000)
(Limitation on direct loans)	(1,525,000)	(1,525,000)	(1,525,000)	(1,525,000)	(1,525,000)	.....
(Limitation on corporate funds)	(296)	(309)	(309)	(309)	(309)	(+13)

H.R. 2620 - Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2002 — continued

(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2001 Enacted	FY 2002 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. enacted
OTHER PROVISIONS						
Filipino veterans provision	3,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	-3,000
Grand total (net)	108,346,441	110,671,650	112,742,553	113,351,308	112,742,537	+4,396,096
Appropriations	(107,023,741)	(110,678,350)	(112,335,253)	(111,973,008)	(112,460,237)	(+5,436,496)
Rescissions	(-1,977,300)	(-6,700)	(-892,700)	(-621,700)	(-1,217,700)	(+759,600)
Contingent emergency appropriations	(3,300,000)	.....	(1,300,000)	(2,000,000)	(1,500,000)	(-1,800,000)
(By transfer)	(85,560)	(66,560)	(66,560)	(56,560)	(61,560)	(-24,000)
(Transfer out)	(-22,900)	(-22,900)	(-22,900)	(-22,900)	(-22,900)	.....
(Limitation on direct loans)	(1,828,029)	(1,828,604)	(1,828,604)	(1,828,604)	(1,828,604)	(+575)
(Limitation on guaranteed loans)	(382,332,956)	(381,842,979)	(381,842,979)	(381,882,979)	(381,882,979)	(-449,977)
(Limitation on corporate funds)	(551,372)	(563,842)	(553,385)	(563,877)	(563,877)	(+12,505)
Total mandatory and discretionary	107,976,025	114,867,650	112,617,553	113,347,308	112,738,537	+4,762,512
Mandatory	25,518,279	31,504,766	27,183,766	27,304,766	27,304,766	+1,786,487
Discretionary	82,457,746	83,362,884	85,433,787	86,042,542	85,433,771	+2,976,025

NOTE: FY2001 includes FHA negative subsidy of -$2,246,000,000 (BA & Outlays).

1/ Not included in FY2001 CSBA tables.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of the 2002 VA, HUD and independent agencies conference report and all of its fundings.

I want to begin by thanking Chairman WALSH who, as usual, has done an excellent job with this legislation. We appreciate his courtesies and the opportunity for input in the bill throughout the process. He has had an especially full plate this year, managing this bill with restricted allocations and at the same time providing leadership in the appropriations process to ensure that New York receives adequate funding to address its emergency needs arising out of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

I want to begin by thanking the majority staff, Frank Cushing, Tim Peterson, Dena Baron, Jennifer Whitson, Jennifer Miller and Ron Anderson, for their hard work and openness during the development of this conference report. I must make particular note of their generosity in sharing their Capitol office space with the minority staff during the time that Members and staff were prohibited from occupying our office buildings. I also want to thank my excellent staff, Mike Stephens, Michelle Burkett, Angela June Ohm and Gavin Clingham, for their hard work during this process. All staff have really done an excellent job on a very difficult bill.

Given the resources, Mr. Speaker, that this subcommittee was allocated, we were forced to work together in a constructive manner to reach reasoned compromises. No Member got everything that they wanted, each sacrificed on issues of importance, to us and to our caucuses, but we have produced a conference report worthy of the body's support.

The bills passed by the House and the Senate were not significantly different in allocation but did contain significant substantive differences. In each case, a middle ground was sought and improvements have been made.

I want to take a minute to discuss a few of the programmatic numbers in this conference agreement.

Veterans remain a top priority of the members of this subcommittee. We have provided $21.3 billion for the medical care account. This is $350 million over the President's request, an increase of $1.5 billion over the current year, and almost $50 million over what was in the House bill when it left this body. We also increased the medical and prosthetic research account by $20 million over 2001 funding.

Important to members of my caucus, we were able to improve the House-passed funding levels for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, and provide the Corporation for National and Community Service funding comparable to its fiscal year 2001 funding. The Public Housing Capital Fund was increased $290 million from the House-passed funding level, and we maintained the $250 million increase in the operating fund that was contained in the House bill. Funding to renew all existing Section 8 vouchers is included, as is funding to provide 18,000 new Fair Share vouchers and 7,000 new vouchers reserved for the disabled.

Within EPA, we restored the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to the funding levels of past years, $1.35 billion, and provided an overall increase of $75 million over this fiscal year, nearly $600 million over the administration's request.

These improvements have not come at the expense of scientific research. The National Science Foundation will receive an increase of $362 million, an 8.2 percent increase over 2001, an increase that is distributed broadly by research category and includes adequate funds for major new science initiatives.

For NASA, a 3.5 percent increase is provided. While I continue to have concerns that we are not providing NASA the resources needed to undertake the missions that have been identified for that agency, I would suggest that this minimal increase is a recognition of the budget constraints we face. I believe that we as a Congress should look closely at NASA in the next year and provide additional resources to that agency.

This conference report is the product of a balancing act, and I believe that we have done a good job ensuring that the needs of each agency are met. I ask for the body's support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise, number one, to congratulate Chairman WALSH for having done such a tremendous job in taking a 302(b) allocation that was not nearly as much as these agencies could have used but in providing a bill that really gets the job done. He has done an outstanding job. He could not have had a better partner than the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN). They worked together in just a very strong, bipartisan fashion. Their staff support was equally bipartisan, and we produced a good bill. And so I would hope that we would get a very good vote for this conference report.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an announcement to the Members that we are nearing the end of the appropriations process for fiscal year 2002. I think everyone would breathe a deep sigh of relief over that, especially the chairman of the committee.

Briefly, we have produced two major supplemental bills since we received the details of the President's budget on May 9, which was about 2 months later than we normally get it, but I think we all understand the lateness of the new administration being put in place. But we were 2 months late in actually getting the detailed numbers that we need as appropriators to work these bills. But since that time on May 9, we have produced the two supplementals that were major supplementals through the entire process and to the President.

We have also concluded all of our work on the Interior appropriations bill, the Military Construction appropriations bill, the Energy and Water appropriations bill, the Legislative Branch appropriations bill, the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill, and today we will conclude our business on the VA–HUD bill that is before us.

Also today we received unanimous consent to take up the appropriations bill for Agriculture, to file it by midnight tomorrow night; we will complete the conference on Commerce, Justice and State later today; we appointed the conferees for the District of Columbia appropriations bill; and we appointed the conferees for the Labor, HHS and Education appropriations bill. We hope to conclude those conferences by the middle of next week and hopefully will be on the floor before or by Friday of next week.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that part of the slowdown here also has been that the other body, while its appropriations committee had reported out most of its bills, the other body held appropriations bills for a long time and did not pass them. And so we cannot go to conference on an appropriations bill until the other body passes it as well. But while the committee did pass out its bills, the full Senate did not take them up.

We still have to do the Transportation conference, and there is one issue that is delaying us there, and that has to do with a difference of opinion between several Members of the other body and the President of the United States on the issue of trucks entering the United States from a foreign land. That has to be resolved yet, but we think that will happen also by the end of next week.

The major outstanding issue, having said all of this is the Defense bill. It has yet to be done in the Committee and in the House, but I believe we will also have it through the House by Friday of next week. I do not think we will be able to have it conferenced by Friday of next week. The Defense bill itself has been completed for over a week, but we are using it as a vehicle to deal with last $20 billion of the second supplemental we did.

This gets a little confusing and complicated, but on the $40 billion supplemental that we passed in the days after the terrorist attacks, if Members recall, we required that the last $20 billion of that Act actually go through the appropriations process once the President decided how he would like to use that $20 billion to respond to the terrorist attack of September 11. So while the Defense bill has been completed for about 10 days, we have been

holding it as the vehicle for that $20 billion. We will mark up that $20 billion part of that Defense bill on Tuesday of next week and hopefully will have it on the floor Wednesday or Thursday. That is our plan.

Again, Mr. Speaker, because of the good work of members of the Committee on Appropriations on both sides of the aisle and the support that we received by both sides of the aisle on our appropriations bills this year, again I say, we can breathe a sigh of relief. We are reaching the end of that process for fiscal year 2002.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), the minority whip.

Mr. BONIOR. I thank my colleague for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, congratulations to my colleague from West Virginia and my colleague from New York for the job that they did on the bill. Today is a historic day for public health and safety and it is a great day for the environment. Today, after a decade-long battle, we are finally lowering the level of arsenic in our drinking water. The United States will finally join the rest of the developed world in cleaning up its drinking water.

□ 1230

Arsenic is a toxic poison that can cause lung cancer, bladder cancer, skin cancer; and according to the National Academy of Sciences, the threat to our children and pregnant women and anyone who drinks this carcinogen is even greater than we had originally thought. Arsenic simply has no place in our drinking water.

I am very pleased that the VA–HUD conference report includes language that I offered on this floor to cut the level of arsenic by 80 percent without any further delay. EPA now cannot drag its feet any longer. We need to get to 10 parts per billion immediately. Not next year, not next month, but now. EPA should never have blocked this ruling in the first place. In fact, based on the science, we should actually go lower than 10 parts per billion to adequately protect the public health.

Because of the actions we are taking here today, millions of Americans will be drinking cleaner water. This is a serious problem in my home State of Michigan. There are only four other States that have a higher exposure to arsenic in the entire Nation. According to the EPA, we have 367,000 Michigan residents in 176 communities who may be drinking water containing arsenic in amounts higher than 10 parts per billion. We are finally taking action to protect those people.

I want to thank those who helped bring this victory about, including those cosponsors of my original amendment in the House: the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE). Senator BOXER in the other body led the fight. My good friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), was a steadfast supporter to get the strongest possible language that we could get in conference.

I also want to thank again my friend, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), and the appropriations staff for all the assistance and help that they put in. This was a bipartisan victory. We had many supporters on the other side of the aisle as well.

The report language accompanying the arsenic standard raises a concern that we all share, and that is what that impact will be on small communities. The science is clear. No community would want to expose their citizens to higher levels of arsenic. But these communities need financial help to meet the new standard, not exemptions and waivers from the law. That is why authorizing legislation that the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and I and others introduced would double the amount of funds available to help meet this new standard.

When it comes to getting poison out of our drinking water, no community should be left behind. Next year, we need to step up to the plate and help these small water systems with additional resources.

This is one of the most important environmental and public health victories to come out of this Congress. It is a tremendous step forward in making sure that our drinking water is as clean and safe as it can be. I applaud and thank my colleagues for their support on this important measure.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the distinguished dean of the New York Republican delegation.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

As my colleague is aware, the New York State Department of Health recently released its findings from its Cancer Surveillance Improvement Initiative. That report showed that Rockland County and the East Side of Manhattan have among the highest breast cancer incidents in our State.

Specifically, the report shows that a majority of these two areas are characterized by elevated incidence and are 15 to 50 percent higher than the State average for breast cancer incidence.

In response to that alarming finding, I have been working with my colleague from Manhattan, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), to secure funding from the EPA for the NYU School of Medicine to conduct an assessment to determine if the observed excess incidence of breast cancer in my area of Rockland County and in the East Side of Manhattan, the area of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), are associated with air pollution and electromagnetic radiation generated from the local power plants.

I am gratified the VA–HUD appropriations conference report contains $500,000 for Rockland County, New York, for an assessment of environmental hazards in Rockland County and the East Side of Manhattan. It is my intention and that of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) that this money be allocated to the NYU School of Medicine for this important study.

Therefore, I am asking our good chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), to clarify this is the intent of this proposal.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for bringing this issue to my attention. I share his concern for the findings in the New York Department of Health's report which show the high incidence of breast cancer in Rockland County and the East Side of Manhattan.

I want to assure my colleagues, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), that it is the intent of the language included in the conference report for this study to be directed to the New York School of Medicine.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I want to thank our good friend, the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH), for his support.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I yield to the gentlewoman from New York.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for his strong efforts in working with me to secure funding for this very, very important project. One in seven women die of breast cancer, and we have a huge incidence in our two respective districts.

I also especially thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH), who worked very hard with us in the VA–HUD bill, along with the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN); and we appreciate very, very much their support. I believe we will save lives eventually.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK), a distinguished member of our subcommittee.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to serve on the subcommittee on VA, HUD and independent agencies.

The gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), have done the work of a dynamic duo. First of all,

they were able to bridge the gap of bipartisanship that is so sorely needed in this Congress, and they did it, and they got a good job done because of that.

I have been in the majority, and I have been in the minority. I have seen many talented and skilled leaders in this body on both sides of the aisle, and I always praise them. But I have rarely seen the kind of effective bipartisan leadership that these two Members had. They are serious about their responsibilities. They want to make government work, and they want to make it work well. They could not please all of us. I am never always fully pleased. But they are serious about it, and we do have a very good committee, and they are always willing to listen and they want to help. They are problem solvers, and we are fortunate to have them. We had many constraints on this subcommittee, but they were able to overcome most of them.

I would like to thank on the majority side Frank Cushing, Tim Peterson, Dena Baron, Jennifer Miller and Jennifer Whitson; and on the Democratic side, Mike Stephens and Michelle Burkett. They showed confidence, they showed experience; and the help and good cheer is greatly appreciated.

This does a lot of good, Mr. Speaker, because sometimes as Members we want things, and sometimes our reach exceeds our grasp. But, as Tennyson said, after all, what is heaven for?

It funds the Federal urban empowerment zones, which assist our oldest, poorest neighborhoods. It increases veterans health care, environmental protection, our space program and FEMA.

This conference report should be fully endorsed by the Congress. I fully support it. All Members should. It increases the funding for the National Science Foundation's Historically Black Colleges Undergraduate Program from $17 million in the House-passed bill to $28 million in the conference report. It will have a lot to do with science education in historically black colleges and universities.

This conference report funds for the first time a program to help historically black colleges and universities with doctoral programs in science and engineering. This will improve their competitiveness and their capabilities in getting Federal research dollars. This has always been a problem among historically black colleges and universities, and this conference report saw that as a need, and they funded it. The doctoral candidates and the doctoral persons who are pursuing it in these universities will certainly be helped.

This conference report also includes $27 million, an increase over the House level, for the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program to help increase the number of minority students in basic science, math and engineering. This subcommittee saw the need for this kind of improvement with historically black colleges and also all minority institutions.

I support this conference report, not because it is the best we can do, but I support it in spite of that. This committee did very well with what it had. With a final allocation that is $200 million below our House-passed bill, there was not much they could do to make this bill as good as it should be, but they did the very best they could do. We should have done better, but my mother used to say, you cannot get blood out of a turnip when it is not there.

True, our bill is a marked improvement over what we initially passed in the House. Initially the House zeroed out HUD's Shelter Plus program, which provides rental assistance for homeless people and their families. This conference report fully funds that program.

The point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that these major programs that were so strongly needed, even though this particular committee did not have the funding it needed to fund these, it did its very best to serve these programs, and not just stop them after some success with them.

Initially, the House zeroed out the Corporation for National and Community Service programs, which is a program that many of the Members are so proud of and help out in their communities, and that is the AmeriCorps program. It is like a domestic Peace Corps. This conference report funds AmeriCorps, but reduces it by 6 percent.

Far more serious, the House vetoed out the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program which was designed to help stamp out drug dealing in public housing because local police were not doing enough policing in these areas. Many of us would like to see that program reinstated, but the wisdom of the committee, following the administration's advice, were not able to keep this program in. That is something that I wish very much had been in the conference report.

It also zeroes out Public Housing Drug Elimination Grants. The $110 million that we added to the public housing operating subsidies would not begin to make up for the loss of this $300 million program. What I am saying is the PHOs would not be able to take the money they are receiving to make up for the drug elimination grants.

Still, this conference report is the best we could do with the resources we had to work with. So many programs in our VA–HUD bill are designed to assist the poorest people in our society with basic needs. Much of the country takes this for granted. They take for granted a decent place to live, decent jobs. Many of our Congresspeople feel that way, access to credit that they can borrow.

Mr. Speaker, these programs are needed to help poor people. I wish this Congress would remember, these are not just add-ons and they are not superfluous bureaucracies. These things are needed.

I want to thank this committee, and I hope we will adopt this conference report and laud our two wonderful chairpeople and our staff.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN), a very hard-working and distinguished member of the subcommittee.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I rise in support of the VA–HUD conference report and want to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), for their leadership and the good work of their staff.

I support this conference report for any number of reasons, but particularly because it contains a $1 billion increase for veterans medical care over last year's level. This is critically needed funding, especially for my home State of New Jersey, but for the rest of the Nation; and it will help provide men and women who served in the military with better access to the medical care that they have so richly earned and deserve. Over the past 3 years under the leadership of the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH), the committee has provided $4 billion in increase for medical care.

The conference report also takes an important first step towards providing veterans with schizophrenia medicines that are far more valuable and very important to their lives. It encourages the VA to inform its doctors, pharmacy managers and, hopefully, its VISN directors as well, not to use the cost of atypical antipsychotics as a measurement of job performance, and instead, to reinforce VA policy that physicians use their best judgment when prescribing medicines for mentally ill veterans. If anyone deserves access to all the latest, most advanced medicines available, it is our veterans. They deserve the best possible treatments we can provide them.

□ 1245

I also support this conference report because it provides a much-needed funding increase for the Section 811 program, housing for disabilities. I am pleased that the House provided $29 million more for this program than the Senate, and in the end, the conferees agreed to provide the higher level. There is a great need in our Nation for housing of all types, but particularly housing dollars for nonelderly individuals with disabilities.

I support this conference report because it also contains an important set-aside: $40 million within the Section 8 voucher program to further increase housing options for individuals with disabilities.

Combined with the increase in the Section 811 program, these two provisions will continue our efforts to provide housing for some of those who are in greatest need, who wish to live with independence and dignity.

I also support this conference report because it increases funding for the National Science Foundation by $363 million over last year's level. Basic scientific research is critical, and this funding will help continue the NSF's work, including a number of projects in my home State, a State with a long history of scientific research and development.

This conference report also deserves support because it continues to provide funding for critical environmental programs, including $1.27 billion for the Superfund program to expedite cleanup of hazardous waste sites. My State has the dubious distinction of having more of these sites than any other State in the Nation.

Further, this proposal provides nearly $95 billion for the brownfields program, which will help clean up contaminated sites to allow them to be used and returned to productive use in many of our cities and urban centers.

This conference report builds upon what we have done in the past while staying within the confines of our allocation and within the overall level agreed upon last month by the Congress and the President.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity, and I am sure all committee Members do, to commend FEMA Director Alpaugh, VA Secretary Principi, and EPA Administrator Whitman and their respective agencies and personnel for all of their collective efforts addressing so many tragic, tragic events related to September 11. All of these agencies sprang into action to offer the resources and their dedicated personnel in the wake of these attacks.

For these and many reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the conference report and I urge everybody to vote for it.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this subcommittee was ably led for many years by Chairman Boland, who recently passed away. I would like to acknowledge what a pleasure it was for me to serve under Eddie Boland, and what an outstanding job he did leading this subcommittee, as well as his leadership in Congress.

He served for many years, and he was an outstanding member of the body. As we consider this bill, which would have been his bill, we would like to note his passing with great sadness.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), a distinguished member of the Massachusetts delegation, and the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, who served many years with Mr. Boland.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the subcommittee for yielding time to me, and I join him in expressing our sorrow at the death of Ed Boland. He was for many years one of the voices of housing in this body.

He served, along with his roommate, close friend, and legislative classmate, Tip O'Neill, for more than 30 years and made an enormous contribution in the areas of housing, intelligence, and science; and we mourn his passing. He was one of the people who made democracy work in a very positive way.

As I think back to those days, I think back also with regret. We have not only lost Ed Boland, we have lost as a nation the commitment to using the resources of the wealthiest country in the world to help people who are in distressed circumstances, and to meet common problems.

I want to be very clear: I congratulate the chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), and the others. Given the constraints within which they had to work, they did an excellent job.

I am particularly gratified that they took care to provide adequate resources to public housing. The people who live in public housing are among the most needy and abused in our society. We are the ones who created public housing. We, the society, are the ones who created what many of us now understand, almost all of us now understand, were not very good places to live in the first place, and put the poor in there because they could not afford anything else. We are trying to change that.

But those who would cut back on funding for public housing are blaming the victims for penalties imposed upon them, and so in this particular appropriation public housing does well, and I thank the gentleman for doing that. This is not a politically popular goal, but it is an important one.

Mr. Speaker, in general, as I said, given the inadequate resources which they were given, they have done a very good job of putting them where they are needed. I appreciate their doing that. They have taken care of new Section 8s, they have taken care of public housing, they have tried to protect some of the other important activities. I am grateful to them for doing it.

But having said that, I must return to the other point; namely, that we as a Congress, we as a society, are erring gravely in withholding the resources we need for so many important problems.

The very prosperity that gave us such wealth, and it is temporarily on the other side of the ledger, but it is going to come back because this remains a very strong economy, the very prosperity that generated such revenues for the government caused housing problems for some people, because for many of those in this country, prosperity was a wonderful thing and it added to their incomes. But for some, when it did not add to their incomes, they were not only not better off, they were worse off because they lived in communities where housing prices were suddenly driven beyond what they could reasonably afford.

We have not, and it is not the subcommittee's doing, and it is not even the Committee on Appropriations' doing, but we as a Congress have not given the resources necessary that we could use to alleviate that.

In the environmental area, I represent some working-class communities, communities not terribly wealthy. They are the ones who now have to correct years of national neglect of clean water. They are facing very significant economic problems. We do not do enough to provide Federal funding to help them meet the Federal mandate of cleaning up the water and cleaning up international waters.

So just in summary, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York and the gentleman from West Virginia and the members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the hard work they put into trying to meet our needs, but I have to close by lamenting the unwillingness of this society and this Congress to do the appropriate thing with our wealth.

Yes, we will have many needs that can best be satisfied by individual spending, by money in our own pockets. But a civilized society that cares about the quality of its environment, has some compassion for the poor, for homeless children, that cares about adequate medical care for those who served our country, we have to understand that these needs cannot be fully met individually, that these needs require a Federal Government that is well funded.

We have to get over this kind of contradiction where everybody hates government spending, but then laments the fact that we do not have enough government spending for housing, for Community Development Block Grants, for veterans medical care, for cleaning up Superfund sites, for clean water, and for other important programs.

I hope as members contemplate this piece of legislation they will express their appreciation for the work that was done, but also their understanding of the inadequacy of the resources with which it was done, and help us change national policy in that regard.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge support of the conference report that contains within it the increased development of affordable housing.

I would like to congratulate the Chair, my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), and I would also congratulate the ranking member, my colleague, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN).

The FHA loan limits have not been raised since 1992 despite dramatic increases in construction cost and critical demand for affordable rental housing. In a number of cities nationwide,

and those in West Virginia as well, there has been no new construction under the FHA program in 4 years.

The need for affordable housing is well documented, and today 13.7 million households face a critical housing need. The availability of decent housing has been deeply harmed by the lack of financing to produce these units. By increasing the multifamily loan limits, FHA will stimulate not only new construction, but rehabilitation of existing infrastructure in many cities across the country.

I look forward to giving my wholehearted support to this conference report. I thank the Chair and the ranking member.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), for the work they have done. I recognize that it was a very difficult job to try and live within the framework that was foisted upon them.

Mr. Speaker, this VA–HUD conference report is certainly an improvement over the House version. However, the funds are still terribly inadequate to fulfill HUD's mission to support the most needy people in this country.

This report cuts funding for public housing, terminating $310 million for the successful drug elimination program, and $157 million for the capital fund that provides for the rehabilitation of housing units to bring them up to today's standards.

This bill will also cut all of the jobs of public housing residents that are associated with the rehabilitation.

In addition, this conference report cuts funding for proven economic development programs that are sorely needed to stimulate the economy. For example, the Community Development Block Grant has been cut by $58 million; Empowerment Zones funding has been cut by $45 million; the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund has been cut by $38 million.

Funding for these programs should be increased, rather than decreased. These programs inject capital into communities that need it the most, creating jobs and stimulating the economy. Cutting these programs at a time like this is simply inexplicable.

This conference report, while certainly, again, an improvement over the House, is still troubling. It is troubling because of our need to support poor people, rather than abandon them at this time. We have to remember that at the same time that we are doing this, there are some Members in this House who are proposing obscene tax cuts for the richest corporations in America.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge a vote on this bill, because this is the best that we can do. But we must have a better vision for the future. We must work harder to change our priorities for the future and empower and support the most needy citizens in this Nation.

Let me just close by saying I worked very hard for about 10 or 15 years with all of the public housing programs in my district. I knew and I know today that there are still drug problems and that drug traffickers find their way to poor people, encouraging them to get involved in this underground of drug selling.

It is unconscionable that we would cut drug elimination in these public housing projects at the same time that we want to strengthen them, we want to clean them up, we want to encourage people to go to work and get in job training programs. They cannot do it without the kind of support that is offered through the drug elimination program and other like programs.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on this issue.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS).

Mr. WATKINS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I appreciate the distinguished chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), for the fine job he has done, and also the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), and also the subcommittee staff for their tremendous help on this legislation, and for assisting with the legislative language to provide $490,000 to construct the Harold Chitwood multipurpose cafetorium facility to match approximately $1 million, to be provided locally, to build the additional facilities of the complex.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the chairman, is it his understanding that this multipurpose facility would be owned and operated by the Bennington school district and constructed on land of the district for educational, community, and Native American activities?

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WATKINS of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WALSH. That is exactly what my understanding is of this expenditure.

Mr. WATKINS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the chairman engaging in this colloquy.

□ 1300

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) for yielding the time, and I thank the chairman of the committee and the ranking member for their commitment to our Nation's veterans. They have had significant increases in this budget in the last 2 years and they have worked very hard. Given the constraints, they have had to do the best in this year.

Let us put this in context as we are about to adjourn for our Veterans' Day. This budget appropriates barely sufficient funds for the VA to keep up with inflation, barely sufficient funds. At a time when we are all going to go out on next Sunday and Monday to say how much we support our veterans, we are falling behind in our commitment.

This budget is $2 billion below what the veterans groups have come together to try to argue for in their independent budget. This budget is below what both the House and the Senate have in their resolutions, this at a time when we are producing more veterans as they defend our country in this war against terrorism, and this comes at a time when the VA has already informed its field people that they are going to fall $800 million behind in this budget and they better prepare for that.

The VA is being called to help with emergency efforts at a time of potential casualties in this Nation. Not only do they not have sufficient resources, not only are they falling behind, but they are called upon to do new things in this war against terrorism.

So what occurs is backlogs for disability adjudications are building at the rate of 10,000 a week, 10,000 a week. Appointments have to be made 6, 8, 9, 10 months in advance that our veterans have to wait for. This is not a way to give a signal to those who are fighting in Afghanistan that we are going to treat them right when they come home.

This budget is disappointing. We should not vote for it, and we should put this in context. When people tell me we do not have the resources, this House just passed a $25 billion subsidy for retroactive tax increases for the biggest corporations in America, $25 billion dollar. A check for $2 billion was given to IBM, and we do not have money for our Nation's veterans.

We cannot do anything about Persian Gulf War illness and our veterans are homeless on the street. I am going to vote no on this budget because on November 11 this is not a way to honor our veterans.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JEFF MILLER) one of our newer Members. We are delighted to have him with us today.

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding the time, and I rise today in support of this conference report because it does work to take care of our Nation's veterans, and it does work to protect our environment.

For our Nation's veterans, this bill provides for over a billion dollars in increases over last year's bill for veterans health care. The bill also provides additional funding for the veterans benefits administration to expedite claims processing.

Also, important to my home district, this bill provides $850,000 for the University of West Florida through EPA to conduct an environmental health study in Escambia County. In 1998, EPA wrote Escambia County ranked 22nd out of more than 3,300 counties nationwide in the amount of toxic releases reported by the agency.

Over the last couple of years, there has been mounting anecdotal evidence suggesting that these toxic levels have attributed to an increase in illnesses in northwest Florida. It is time to find some real answers. The study will compile environmental information, coordinate research, evaluate risks to the health of our citizens, and provide the information necessary to remedy the situation.

I want to express my thanks to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the members of the committee and the staff for their work on this important legislation and for recognizing the need for a science-based evaluation of toxic levels and illnesses in northwest Florida.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) for yielding me the time.

I rise in strong support of the bill. Let me start out by saying that I appreciate the fact that the chairman and the ranking member increased the amount of funding for NASA than what was in the President's request. We did not get everything we wanted for NASA, but we got more than what was originally proposed.

I also think that the committee was very wise in increasing the funding for basic science funding research through the National Science Foundation, which we now know that basic science research has been critical to the economic expansion that we enjoyed in the prior 8, almost 9, years.

Most importantly, I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee for accepting the higher level of funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and for natural disasters. As Members know, earlier this year before the events of September 11, which this Congress has very wisely and very strongly dealt with, we in Texas, and particularly in the greater Houston area, suffered a tremendous natural disaster as a result of Tropical Storm Allison. There were a number of Members including myself who were down here on the floor arguing for sufficient funding just as the effects of this storm were unraveling.

As we now know, nearly 80,000 people in the greater Houston area were affected by the storm; 50,000 homes took on water. The major hospitals were closed down, and the total cost was probably around $5 billion. The Federal share will be close to $2 billion as part of this storm; and I just want to commend the chairman and the ranking member for the work that they did, that they have stepped up to the plate and provided what is a basic function of the Federal Government in stepping to aid its people in times of crisis.

Just as we have done rightly so in New York and with the Pentagon, we have also done in this bill as it relates to the people of Texas and of the greater Houston area as a result of Tropical Storm Allison, and I appreciate the work that both sides did on this.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) for yielding me the time, and I certainly thank the chairman and the ranking member for their efforts in this bill.

I rise reluctantly to say that I intend to vote no on this bill. I recognize that the chairman made a very strong effort to stick to the original House mark on NASA, but without the support of the administration or the other body, it was very difficult for him to hold on that issue, and certainly I thank him for his efforts.

My greater concern is just that we are continuing the general trend that we have been on for the last 8 years when it comes to our investment in aerospace. At the conclusion of the first Bush administration, aerospace investment for the United States of America, 15 percent of the total Federal R&D went to aerospace.

At the conclusion of 8 years of the Clinton administration, it was down to a figure of only 7 percent, only 7 percent of our Federal investment goes into aerospace. Now today that figure is treading down even further. Indeed, this is a critical issue not only for our competitiveness, manufactured products that we make in the United States lead the way in our import/export balance sheet in the area of aerospace; but we are losing that competitive edge. Also, I think this is a critical issue for national security and national defense.

Specifically, if you look at this bill, NASA's budget barely keeps pace with inflation. This is a budget that has essentially been flat for 10 years. A budget that, when you adjust for inflation has an agency that has seen its purchasing power decline by close to 30 percent, barely gets an inflationary adjustment here.

Let us look at the some of the comparisons in this bill. EPA gets a 10 percent increase over last year; housing an increase of 6 percent over last year. Despite the fact that some people have come to this floor saying they want even more for housing, housing actually gets an increase that is double the inflation rate. The Science Foundation, certainly something I support, a 10 percent increase over the last year, but yet the NASA account barely keeps pace with inflation.

Let me just say there are some good things in this for NASA. There is a 25 percent increase to cover some expenses at the vehicle assembly building, a building that was built to support the Apollo program that is deteriorating. Fortunately, there is some money for new doors in that building. It needs a lot more: a new roof, a new facade. Certainly, I am very pleased that the chairman was able to hold the mark on the shuttle upgrades account which was very, very good news; but overall in the area of human space flight, it actually transfers money out of human space flight to cover NASA accounts elsewhere.

Overall, I cannot support this bill. I do not think the people in my district support this bill, and I intend to vote no.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, would the Chair advise us as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the conferees for the great job they have done on this VA–HUD conference bill. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, I am particularly pleased with the commitment by the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) to make sure that the NASA budget continues to make sure that America provides a leadership in space and keeps America number one in space endeavors.

The conferees showed good judgment in producing a bill that requires NASA to conduct many of the recommendations captured within the International Space Station Management Cost and Evaluation Report. I believe that this is the right course in establishing a credible Space Station program.

It is with this achievement that we should continue to press NASA to stay on course concerning the other aerospace projects that are of critical importance to the American taxpayer. That is why I have requested from NASA a letter delivered to me tomorrow that specifically outlines a program within the space launch initiative that ensures an orbital flight demonstration experiment involving the X–37 vehicle, so we can verify this cutting-edge technology and its benefit as a space transportation system.

In the past, NASA has been disappointing in producing space hardware and flight hardware that satisfied our launch needs. This time it is now time to move forward aggressively developing the means to access space affordably and effectively. The X–37

project represents a major milestone in moving us closer to this goal. Let us hope that this week marks a sea change in attitude at NASA to start thinking boldly and creatively as we enter the 21st century and beyond.

We need to have space launch, and we need to make sure we have the technology developed that will keep America the number one space power. We also must be concerned about the taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the conferees on their commitment to both of these goals.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would take a few seconds to close and, merely, I would like to thank our staffs, both minority and majority staff, for the remarkable amount of effort they put into this. We had six preconferences prior to conference. They worked very, very hard as did all of the members of the subcommittee. I would especially like to thank the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), who was very supportive all the way along. There was no partisanship at all in this bill.

I submit the bill to the consideration of the House. I urge its adoption.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of increasing the FHA Multifamily loan limits. The FHA multifamily loan programs support the new construction and substantial rehabilitation of much needed affordable rental housing.

Our Nation faces a growing affordable housing crisis for low- and moderate-income families. Yet the FHA multifamily loan limits have not been raised in 9 years. How can we expect the private sector to produce affordable rental housing, when they cannot receive affordable financing?

Construction costs have risen more than 25 percent since the last increase. One simple way to stimulate the development of affordable housing in our communities is to increase the multifamily loan limits. In my home State of New York, the current limit is $87,226 per two-bedroom unit. In the last 4 years not one unit has been produced under the FHA multifamily loan program, due to that low number. The 25-percent increase established in this conference agreement would raise the limit in New York to $106,952.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this necessary and important increase that will benefit so many working families throughout our Nation.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report on H.R. 2620, the Fiscal Year 2002 Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act. This bill provides $112.7 billion for these agencies, 7 percent more than current funding.

I support the bill because it provides $2.2 billion in disaster relief for FY 2002, which will be needed in part to recover from Tropical Storm Allison, one of the worst disasters to ever hit Houston and the State of Texas. The total is $800 million more than the President's budget request, and these additional funds will help the Houston area's continuing recovery from Tropical Storm Allison. While FEMA has spent almost $900 million in Texas as a result of Allison, they expect to spend an additional $800 million in the State before recovery is complete.

Most future FEMA disaster relief funds for Allison recovery will be for Public Assistance (PA), much of which will reach the nonprofit hospitals and institutions of the Texas Medical Center, which conduct millions of patient visits per year. When the House originally considered the VA–HUD, it contained only $1.4 billion in disaster relief. I greatly appreciate the willingness of the chairman and ranking member to provide the funds necessary to address our needs in Texas.

It is very important for Congress to maintain a healthy disaster relief capability at all times. I am proud that Congress has already made a major commitment to the recovery process for New York City. I am also proud that the war on terrorism has not caused us to forget the disaster relief needs of the rest of the country. I am confident that Congress can simultaneously help rebuild after the worst disaster in our Nation's history and the most expensive natural disaster in Houston's history.

Besides including additional disaster relief funding, I commend the chairman and the entire Appropriations Committee for going part way toward correcting a major flaw in the President's budget regarding funding for the International Space Station. The bill provides $14.8 billon in total for NASA, 3.5 percent more or $508 million more than current funding. Importantly, this legislation fully funds the space station at the $1.9 billion budget request. While the President's budget did not reduce NASA funding, it kept the increase below inflation, reducing purchasing power, and zeroed out the Crew Return Vehicle (CRV) and Habitation Module. These two integral parts of the space station are necessary to have a research presence on the station, which is why we have constructed this orbiting microgravity laboratory. While I am disappointed that the bill does not contain the $275 million for CRV form the House bill, I am pleased that at least $40 million will be spent on CRV in 2002.

I am relieved that the conference committee approved a major increase over the President's request for scientific research. This bill includes $4.8 billion federal funding for research through the National Science Foundation. The performance of the economy is largely the result of technological advances stemming from basic science research throughout our Nation. This fact underscores the necessity of increasing Federal basic scientific investments.

Although the conferees are to be commended for wrapping up their work on veterans' spending before Veterans' Day weekend, I am concerned that this measure does not provide enough funding for veterans programs. I will continue to consistently support health benefit expansion for our Nation's veterans, many who have made incredible sacrifices in order to preserve our freedom. Although the war on terrorism is unlike any other war, there will still be thousands of new veterans of this war who will be as equally deserving as those who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the gulf. My home State of Texas has a growing veterans population who will not be fully served until we find additional resources.

Mr. Speaker, the conference committee has produced a good bill under the difficult circumstances. In Particular the FEMA disaster relief funding is important to my constituents and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the issue of housing funding in this VA–HUD conference report.

The good news is that this bill restores a significant portion of the very deep and unwise cuts made to housing and community development programs that were proposed in the administration budget and were adopted in the House-passed bill. The bad news is that this bill is still disappointing from a housing standpoint.

The last few years, we worked together in a bipartisan basis to restore funding for housing programs that were cut in 1995, and to provide new vouchers for almost 200,000 low-income families.

The conference report being considered today reverses this progress, by making modest funding cuts in some important programs, and by dramatically reducing the level of incremental section 8 vouchers for low-income families and seniors. Moreover, this is taking place just at the time when we appear to be entering into a recession, which will make it harder for low- and moderate-income families and seniors to keep a roof over their head.

It is true that on a purely technical basis, budget authority for HUD will increase under this bill. However, when you factor out the increase just to renew expiring section 8 contracts, and factor out the offsetting increased receipts from FHA and Ginnie Mae, this bill actually cuts housing and community development programs by over $250 million.

Specifically, the bill makes $215 million in net cuts in public housing programs, including termination of the Drug Elimination Program. It cuts funding for CDBG and Empowerment Zones, just as virtually everyone agrees we need to do more to stimulate economic development in the face of a recession. And, it cuts the number of new Fair Share Section 8 vouchers from 79,000 last year to only 18,000 this year—a 77 percent cut.

The simple truth is that the housing cuts in this bill are unnecessary. Earlier this year, Congress diverted $114 million in unused section 8 funds to nonhousing purposes. A portion of the $300 million in savings we will generate from the mark-to-market extension will be diverted to nonhousing purposes. And FHA and Ginnie Mae continue to produce billions of dollars in profits to the taxpayer—profits which could be reinvested in housing, but are instead used to increase the Federal budget surplus.

On various policy issues, the bill is also disappointing. I am pleased that the conference report in effect adopts the amendment offered by myself and Congresswoman LEE during House consideration which restores the $100 million cut in homeless funding for Shelter Plus Care renewals, funding this through a reduction in the as-yet unauthorized administration down payment initiative. However, we failed to do what we should have done, which is to renew expiring Shelter Plus Care grants through the section 8 certificate fund, as we do all other expiring rental assistance.

On the $640 million reduction in funded section 8 reserves, I am pleased that the conferees included report language dealing with the issue of providing additional funds beyond the remaining 1 month of funded reserves. I urge HUD to implement this provision in a way that maximally increases section 8 utilization, that is, by promptly providing additional funds to section 8 administrators who exhaust their reserve funds and need additional funds to serve their authorized number of families.

So, in conclusion, we have averted the devastating impact of earlier versions of the HUD budget, but in so many ways we can and should do better.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the conference report directs the EPA administrator to put into effect without delay the 10 parts per billion standard for arsenic that was promulgated in the Clinton administration. The Bush administration has, without justification, delayed the effective date of the January 22d rule and has been in clear violation of Federal law. Congress had set a deadline to have a new final standard for arsenic in effect no later than June 22 of this year. The House of Representatives, in July, sent the administration a clear message when it voted to have an arsenic standard no higher than 10ppb so the United States could be inline with the World Health Organization and the European Union.

Despite extensive scientific proof that the current standard for arsenic in tap water of 50 ppb is unsafe, it remained unchanged from 1942 until the Clinton administration reduced it to 10ppb in January 2001. In 1942, the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) established a standard for arsenic in tap water of 50 ppb, which remained in effect for over half a century even though it did not consider evidence accumulated over the past 50 years that arsenic causes cancer.

In 1962, the USPHS recommended that potable water supplies not exceed 10ppb arsenic. Nearly 39 years later, EPA finally adopted that recommendation in January 2001.

The National Academy of Sciences issued a report in 1999 finding that ''it is the subcommittee's consensus that the current EPA standard for arsenic in drinking water of 50ppb does not achieve EPA's goal for public health protection and, therefore, requires downward revision as promptly as possible.''

The NAS, EPA, International Agency of Research on Cancer, and many other scientific international bodies have declared arsenic in drinking water a known human carcinogen, based on numerous studies from around the world showing that people get bladder, kidney, lung, skin, and other cancers from arsenic in their tap water.

Despite all of that information, tens of million of Americans drink arsenic in their tap water supplied by public water systems, at levels that present unacceptable cancer and noncancer risks. According to EPA, about 12 million Americans drink tap water containing over 10ppb arsenic, about 22.5 million drink tap water containing over 5ppb, and about 35.7 million drink water containing in excess of 3ppb. Thus, according to EPA's occurrence estimates and NAS' most recent cancer risk estimates, about 36 million Americans drink water every day that contains arsenic at a level presenting over 10 times EPA's maximum acceptable cancer risk.

It is for that reason I was pleased that the Bush administration finally—at a bare minimum—accepted the 10ppb rule after months of unnecessary delay. However, in reviewing the language in this conference report, I would say to my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee that it is a mistake to encourage small communities to seek lengthy compliance time extensions so they continue to drink unhealthy water. We should work together to develop additional cost-effective technologies and provide targeted financial assistance where necessary to bring small water systems into compliance with the new protective standard for arsenic. No person no matter where they live in our country should have arsenic in their drinking water which presents an unreasonable risk to health.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member MOLLOHAN for taking a reasonable first step in responding to the escalating concerns parents have voiced over the effects of arsenic-treated wood playground equipment on their children.

Included in the VA–HUD conference report is a provision requested by myself and Senator BEN NELSON of Florida.

The provision directs the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency to report to the committee within 3 months on their most up-to-date understanding of the potential health and safety risks to children playing on and around arsenic-treated wood playground equipment.

The report will also include the steps the EPA and the Consumer Product Safety Commission are taking to keep state and local governments, and the public, informed about the risks associated with arsenic-treated wood.

It responds to a study released today by the Environmental Working Group and the Healthy Building Network, which estimates that one our of every 500 children who regularly play on swing sets and decks made from arsenic-treated wood will develop lung or bladder cancer later in life as a result of these exposures.

It is important in these times of changing priorities that the health and well-being of children remain foremost in our minds.

The parents of Indianapolis and communities all over the Nation are looking forward to the findings of this report.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee under difficult circumstances. As most Members know, the allocation of the subcommittee was insufficient to adequately fund the Department of Veterans Affairs, and particularly veterans medical care. While I am disappointed about the appropriations provided in the conference agreement for veterans, I realize the extraordinary conditions under which we have had to work this session. I hope that we can redress some of the shortcomings in this year's budget in the next fiscal year.

As a nation, we are now engaged in the first war of the 21st century. We must be prepared to provide the benefits and services of our future veterans as well as meet the needs of those men and women who have honorably served our Nation in uniform in years past. This is a moral obligation of our Nation.

Undoubtedly, major additional funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs and particularly veterans medical care and services can be fully justified. As the need for additional funding becomes more obvious in the weeks and months ahead, I look forward to the administration submitting a request for the additional funding which is clearly needed.

Until that time, VA will continue to do its best to meet its missions. But VA can only do more with insufficient resources for so long. A day of reckoning is fast approaching. We must do better by our Nation's veterans. While we have improved upon the President's request, the Department of Veterans Affairs still estimates shortfalls for delivering current services in FY 2002. This year we will continue to pass legislation encouraging VA to do more, including managing its role as a backup provider to the Department of Defense in times of war or national emergency and combating bioterrorism. I want VA to fulfill these roles, but I also want to ensure that they have adequate resources to take on these challenges.

This Sunday, November the 11th, when Members of this body are praising our veterans' past deeds and stressing the importance of a strong national defense, I ask all Members of this House to make a commitment to our deeds and our actions reflect our words. We must provide adequate resources to our past and present servicemembers. We can do less.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report accompanying H.R. 2620 and to thank Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member MOLLOHAN for their hard work on this bill. The chairman and ranking member have worked on a wide range of issues within this bill and I believe my colleagues in this body owe them a debt of gratitude for the dedication and spirit of bipartisanship they demonstrated while reaching compromise on their differences.

There is, however, language in this report which concerns me greatly. The language pertains to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the treatment of veterans with mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, there is still enormous concern among veterans' organizations, Members of this body and mental health advocates about the VA's desire to implement treatment guidelines for veterans who suffer from schizophrenia. The language included in the House version of the conference report accompanying the VA–HUD appropriations bill would have held the VA accountable by requiring them to wait until a scientific review of newer atypical antipsychotic medications was completed by the National Institute of Mental Health—the premiere Federal scientific research agency. By contrast, the Senate conference report language for the VA–HUD bill would have left the VA free to implement their new treatment guidelines with little congressional oversight.

The compromise contained in this conference report is not what many of us in this body had hoped for. Specifically, the compromise does not go far enough to ensue the guidelines the VA seeks to promulgate will follow the most up-to-date science regarding the treatment of schizophrenia. In fact, it is precisely because there is a dearth of scientific research on the use of different antipsychotic medications that I fought for inclusion for the House-passed language in the conference report. Without sound scientific research, I am concerned the VA will institute treatment protocols which could jeopardize the health of veterans with schizophrenia.

As many Members know, mental illness is no small thing, and it's certainly not something

we can describe in terms of dollars and cents. Unless you meet some suffering from am illness like schizophrenia, it's hard to imagine how it can impact a person's life as well as those who love them. Without proper treatment, victims are often completely unable to function in society, accounting for 1 out of 5 hospital admissions and 4 of 10 beds in long-term care facilites—not to mention countless encounters with the corrections system. This is why I was disappointed stronger language did not make its way into the conference report.

I am heartened, however, to see we are sending a clear message to the VA that it is not to use the total sum cost of drugs which are prescribed at VA facilities as a measure of a pharmacy manager's or physician's performance. Rest assured I will continue working with veterans' organizations and advocates for veterans with mental illness to ensure the VA and individual VISN's closely follow the guidance the conference report provides for respect to the freedom that doctors in the VA system should have to prescribe clinically appropriate medications for their patients without fear of reprisal.

Let me be clear on this. Diagnosis and treatment of mental illness should be based on medical judgment and need, not price. Restrictive formulary policies jeopardize patient care by taking treatment decisions out of the hands of doctors. Because patients differ in their clinical responses to different drugs, in their sensitivity to specific side effects, and in their tolerance for these side effects when they occur—and because the atypical antipsychotic agents are different from one another in their clinical effects for a particular patient and in their side effects—I have a difficult time believing that any treatment protocol or formulary can embody the best clinical care. Veterans with schizophrenia—60 percent of whom have a service-connected disability—should never be subject to 2nd-rate treatment.

Those who wore the uniform and served to protect our freedom should have access to the newest and most effective treatment available. While this conference report still leaves us with work to do in overseeing the VA's schizophrenia treatment guidelines, I am pleased to see that we have made some progress. Rest assured I will continue to work, along with Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. HOBSON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. TAUSCHER and many others, to ensure veterans with mental health receive the best treatment possible.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, nearly 83 years ago, our Nation signed an armistice agreement that ended the First World War. Though many bright-eyed optimists heralded this as ''the war to end all wars,'' just two decades later the world was plunged into another war more brutal and bloody than the first. In both world wars, as in the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, millions of men and women answered their country's call to defend liberty at home and abroad.

And now America finds itself embroiled in yet another war, a new conflict in which we stand together against the enemies of freedom and order. Just as we have so many times before, we send soldiers sailors, airmen, and Marines forth in the cause of liberty for which so many have given the last full measure of devotion. For their service and sacrifice our Nation's soldiers and veterans deserve our eternal gratitude. But they deserve more than gratitude, for our government has promised veterans that it will provide them health care both during and after their service.

Yet we are constantly confronted with our failure to honor these promises. Our failure to meet our obligations to our veterans can be seen in the decision by the Portland Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) to cut hundreds of staff and reduce services to thousands of veterans because of a multi-million dollar budget shortfall. Anyone who has used the VAMC in recent years knows that the center is already understaffed; hundreds of veterans contact me each year complaining about their inability to get in to see a doctor at the Portland VA. These cutbacks will affect the VAMC's new outpatient clinic in Salem, for which the community, veterans groups, and I have labored so hard to secure funds. Though the clinic was designed to save veterans from having to travel to Portland for care, the clinic will now take only a fraction of the patients it was meant to serve.

Mr. Speaker, although many pay lip service to helping veterans, too few put the money where their mouth is. For example, President Bush campaigned extensively on veterans issues, but essentially requested the same amount of funding for the VA (when adjusted for inflation) as appropriated last year under President Clinton. Likewise, in this Conference Agreement, Congress plans to scarcely spend a billion dollars in excess of President Bush's request. I for one am tired of this charade and refuse to stand idly by I know that I am just one member of this body, and that I can't halt the inevitable passage of this spending bill. However, I will not lend my approval to a bill that ensures veterans in Oregon are worse off than they were at this time last year—especially when hundreds of Oregon Guardsmen and Reservists have been called up to fight in and support our first war of the 21st century. As such, I will vote against this spending bill, and I urge every single one of my colleagues to work with me to seek the allocation of more funding.

Moreover, in the coming months, I plan to continue using my position on the House Budget Committee to fight to keep our promise to veterans. When we ask people to put their lives on the line to protect our country, we have a profound obligation to honor our promises to those whose service has kept our Nation free. The men and women who have served our country so honorably know best that freedom is never free, that it is only won and defended with great sacrifices. And we should honor those sacrifices by keeping our promises to our veterans.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the VA/HUD Conference Report.

I am particularly pleased that the conferees have included a significant increase in funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). Today, NSF is at the forefront of innovation, supporting cutting-edge research to answer fundamental questions within and across scientific disciplines. Often the potential for failure is as great as that for success. But by encouraging such risks, NSF has helped fuel new industries and jobs that have propelled economic prosperity and changed the way we live.

Many of the technologies that come from NSF research may also help us in the fight against terrorism. Nanotechnology, for example, promises revolutionary advances. Research will enable the development of sensors for biological and chemical agents that may be used on the battlefield or even, unfortunately, may find there way into domestic civilian systems. NSF-sponsored research in this area has led to the development of a simple, relatively inexperience sensor that can selectively detect the DNA of biological agents. It is now in commercial development with successful tests against anthrax and tuberculosis.

NSF has also demonstrated the dual use of its research by quickly dispatching its earthquake engineering experts to the World Trade Center who will use the knowledge gained to improve building designs. Robots, developed with NSF support were also sent to New York to help in the search for victims and I understand that FEMA is now considering adopting these robots for all of its search and rescue operations.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Research, I will be looking for ways to engage NSF more fully in this effort. It seems clear that basic research enables so many unforeseen advances that will help us face this new terrorism threat and that now more than ever we must renew our commitment to supporting this research.

NSF programs also play a big role in increasing the pool of talented scientists in our universities and workforce. This is critical. It is estimated that by 2020, 60 percent of the jobs will require the skills only 22 percent of the workforce has today.

As this Conference Report shows, there is strong bipartisan support for increased investment in basic science. It includes an 8.2 percent increase in the NSF budget to nearly $4.8 billion for fiscal year 2002. This is the largest budget ever for NSF.

I am particularly pleased that the conferees have specified $75 million for plant genomics research on commercially important plants, an area in which I have a great interest. Agricultural biotechnology is beginning to fulfill its potential, but we have only just scratched the surface. This funding will help scientists develop new knowledge that will propel this field forward. The enhanced crop plants coming from this research will help feed the world, reduce our use of chemicals, and create new markets for farmers.

Mr. Speaker, the science funding in this bill will help keep the pipeline of new ideas and innovation flowing. I urge my colleagues to support this Conference Report.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I had not planned to speak during the Floor consideration of the VA–HUD–IA appropriations conference report. However, I have changed my mind because I believe that it is important that we give some consideration to the future of the International Space Station program as we debate the level of funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Given all of the uncertainty that has been surrounding the Space Station program of late, I am pleased that the appropriations conference has been able to provide almost all of the requested funding for the Station. I also am heartened that the conference retained funding needed for the eventual restoration of capabilities that were cut from the Space Station program by the Administration earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Science Committee, on which I am privileged to serve as

the Ranking Member, held a hearing on the report of the independent task force that was charged with examining the current state of the International Space Station program. I expect that the task force's report will be an important input into the decisions that Congress and the Administration will have to make concerning the future of the Space Station program. All of us owe Tom Young and his team a debt of gratitude for their dedicated efforts over the last several months.

As many of you know, I have long been a supporter of the Space Station. And I believe that NASA and the International Partners should be proud of what they have accomplished to date. It has been a stunning technical achievement, and the assembly and operation of the Space Station have gone much more smoothly than any of us had the right to expect. Nevertheless, there has been significant cost growth in the program since the 1993 redesign, and there is not now adequate confidence in Congress and the Administration that we know what the total cost of the Station program is likely to be. It is important that we take whatever steps are prudent and sensible to ensure that the Space Station program is well managed and that taxpayer dollars are not wasted. The task force has made a number of recommendations to improve the situation, and we will need to examine them carefully.

At the same time, I hope that we don't let a preoccupation with cost issues cause us to lose sight of the fundamental decision we need to make about the future of the International Space Station program. That decision is quite simple: Are we committed to a Space Station that achieves its unique research potential, and if so, are we willing to budget honestly for it? We have clear guidance from the Space Station task force about what kind of Station won't meet that goal. One of the principal findings included in the task force's report reads as follows: ''The U.S. Core Complete configuration (three-person crew) as an end state will not achieve the unique research potential of the International Space Station.'' The reason is quite simple: with a 3-person crew, there won't be time to do any significant research—all the astronauts' time will be taken up with maintenance and operations activities.

Our International Partners have also made it quite clear that a 3-person Space Station as an end-state instead of the originally agreed-upon 7-person Station and a unilateral U.S. decision to walk away from its long-standing commitment to provide crew rescue and habitation facilities are not consistent with the international agreements governing the Space Station program. We are asking our international friends to stand with us in the global fight against terrorism; while the two situations are not comparable, I think that is only right that we continue to meet our commitments to them in the Space Station program. They are looking to us for leadership in this partnership, and I think that it is important for both Congress and the Administration to send a strong, clear signal that we are not going to walk away from that responsibility.

In its report, the task force concluded that: ''Lack of a defined program baseline has created confusion and inefficiencies.'' However, the approach the task force seems to recommend—that is, keeping the question of the ultimate Space Station ''end-state'' open for two or more years—seems to me to be a prescription for keeping the program in just the sort of limbo that the task force properly decries. As I said at yesterday's hearing, I think we need a different approach. If we believe that it is important to build a Space Station with the unique potential that the scientific community and successive Administrations and Congresses have sought, we need to say so now and plan accordingly. We should be explicit that we are committed to completing the Space Station with its long-planned 7-person crew capability. We should not keep the dedicated researchers, the International Partners, and our U.S. Space Station team in continuing uncertainty about the end-goal of this program—doing so will just lead to waste and inefficiency down the road that could otherwise be avoided.

At the same time, we should be unwavering in our determination to make whatever changes are required to the Station's management structure and cost control system to minimize the future cost and risk of this program. The task force is very clearly telling us that ''business as usual'' will not suffice for a program that is as important as the International Space Station.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Administration needs to make clear its commitment to the ultimate restoration of the full capabilities of the Space Station even as it takes steps to improve the program's cost management processes and operations strategy over the near term. If it does so, I believe that Congress will work constructively with the Administration over the coming weeks and months to put the Space Station program on a sound footing.

For more than a decade, successive Administrations and Congresses have reaffirmed the importance of the Space Station. 15 nations have joined with the United States to build an orbiting research facility that I am confident will deliver unprecedented benefits to all of our citizens as well as position our nation for eventual exploration of the rest of the solar system. We should not falter in meeting our national commitment just as we are beginning to reap the rewards of our past investments in the Space Station program.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of increasing the FHA multifamily loan limits. Tens of thousands of working families in our country pay more than 50 percent of their income toward housing, or live in severely inadequate housing. Yet, the FHA multifamily loan program has not kept pace with construction costs. For example, in the last four years only one project with 192 units was produced in Cincinnati, despite the nearly twenty thousand working families facing critical housing needs there. Without affordable financing, developers cannot produce affordable housing stock.

With the increasing need for housing far outpacing the available supply, the need for available FHA financing is critical. By increasing the loan limits by 25 percent, the first increase since 1992, we can provide a vehicle to alleviate the housing crisis facing our nation. I urge strong support for this provision.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, the Conference Report directs the EPA Administrator to put into effect without delay the 10 parts per billion standard for arsenic promulgated in the Clinton administration rule published in the Federal Register on January 22, 2001. The Bush administration has, without justification, delayed the effective date of the January 22nd rule and has been in clear violation of Federal law. Congress had set a deadline to have a new final standard for arsenic in effect no later than June 22 of this year. The House of Representatives, in July, sent the administration a clear message when it voted to have an arsenic standard no higher than 10 parts per billion so the United States would be in line with the World Health Organization, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the European Community. The current standard of 50 parts per billion has not been updated in 60 years.

We informed Administrator Whitman last spring that her action on the arsenic standard was a serious mistake and it has proven to be so. Late last week she publicly acknowledged that the Clinton administration standard of 10 parts per billion was the right standard for arsenic and 2006 was the appropriate compliance date.

According to EPA data, there may be as many as 367,000 individuals in approximately 176 communities in Michigan drinking water that contains arsenic at concentrations that exceed 10 parts per billion. The Congress and the Administration must work together to provide the financial assistance necessary for small communities to rapidly come into compliance with the new standard. No person, whether living in a small community or large, should have arsenic in their drinking water, presenting an unreasonable health risk. Especially when the best peer-reviewed science tells us that exposure to arsenic in drinking water causes lung, bladder, and skin cancer.

Mr. Speaker, the 10 parts per billion standard for arsenic is supported by more peer-reviewed science than perhaps any other drinking water standard ever promulgated by EPA. In just the last two years, two National Academy of Science reports were issued. The June 1999 report called on the EPA to move to a more protective standard ''as promptly as possible.'' The second National Academy of Sciences' study, completed two months ago, found that the risks of bladder and lung cancer from arsenic contaminated water were much greater than previously assessed. This finding was based on the best and most recent scientific research and is based on studies of human populations. The independent Science Advisory Board at EPA also found evidence linking arsenic consumption to heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension.

I would say to my fiends on the Appropriations Committee that it is a mistake to encourage small communities to seek lengthy compliance time extensions as they continue to drink water with unhealthy levels of arsenic. Nor should they seek a rollback in our environmental protection laws. We would work together to identify or develop additional cost-effective technologies and provide targeted financial assistance where necessary to bring small water systems into compliance with the new protective standard for arsenic.

The existing drinking water State Revolving Loan Fund contains $850 million for grants and loans to public water systems. This fund is authorized at one billion dollars and the appropriation is $150 million less than the

authorized level. I am, therefore, surprised and concerned that the Conference Report fails to direct any financial assistance to help small systems come into compliance with the new arsenic standard. I would hope this problem is rectified in the future.

In conclusion, I support the Conference Report and I am pleased that it requires the adoption of the safe arsenic standard without delay.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,
Washington, DC, October 31, 2001.

Hon. JOHN DINGELL,
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: As you know, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been conducting a thorough review of the appropriate standard for arsenic in drinking water, based upon the best available science. Throughout this process, I have made in clear that EPA intends to strengthen the standard for arsenic by substantially lowering the maximum acceptable level from 50 parts per billion (ppb), which has been the lawful limit for nearly half a century.

I can now report that the drinking water standard for arsenic will be 10 ppb, and we will maintain the compliance date of 2006. This standard will improve the safety of drinking water for million of Americans, and better protect against the risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

As required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, a standard of 10 ppb protects public health based on the best available science and ensures that the cost of the standard is achievable. Over the past several months, we have had the benefit of insight provided by national experts who conducted three new independent scientific studies—the National Academy of Sciences, the National Drinking Water Advisory Council, and EPA's Science Advisory Board. In addition, we have received more than 55,000 comments from the public.

Nearly 97 percent of the water systems affected by this rule are small systems that serve fewer than 10,000 people each. I recognize the challenges many small systems will face in complying with this standard, given their higher per capita costs. Therefore I am committed to working closely with states and small water systems to identify ways to reduce arsenic levels at a reasonable cost to ratepayers.

EPA plans to provide $20 million over the next years for research and development of more cost-effective technologies to help small systems to meet the new standard. EPA will also provide technical assistance and training to operators of small systems, which will reduce their compliance costs. EPA will work with small communities to maximize grants and loans under the existing State Revolving Fund and Rural Utilities Service programs of the Department of Agriculture. Finally, I have directed my staff to identify other ways that we may help smaller water systems reduce arsenic levels at a reasonable cost. Our goal is to provide clean, safe, and affordable drinking water to all Americans.

I look forward to working with Congress; my colleagues in the Administration; state, local and tribal governments; and other interested parties as we move forward with this protective standard. It's not enough just to set the right standard—we want to work with local communities to help them meet it. Working together, we can ensure the continuing viability of small, rural water systems, and meet our common goal of improving water quality and protecting public health.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in support of the conference report for H.R. 2620, providing appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other Independent agencies for fiscal year 2002. This Member would like to thank the distinguished Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies from New York (Mr. WALSH), the distinguished Ranking Member from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) and all the members of the Subcommittee for their work on this important bill.

This Member is especially pleased that funding was included for several important projects in the 1st Congressional District of Nebraska. First, $490,000 was included in the conference report for Doane College in Crete, Nebraska, which will be used for the continuing effort to rehabilitate the historic Whitcomb Conservatory for joint use by the college and the community as a performing arts center. This Member greatly appreciated the previous inclusion of $430,000 for this project in the FY2001 appropriations legislation. The additional funding provided for FY2002 should provide much of the resources to complete this project.

The Whitcomb Conservatory is a unique, five-sided structure, built on the ''Prairie'' or ''Frank Lloyd Wright'' architectural style, which was completed in 1907 and is a component of the Doane College Historic District National Register listing. The additional funding is needed for major structural repair of its roof, installation of a new mechanical system (including a new heating and cooling plant), new wiring, and a complete cosmetic refurbishing.

The Conservatory has been vacant for more than 30 years. However, the Crete community—as well as the student population of Doane College is growing—and necessitates refurbishing the building. Doane College and the Crete community have a close and longstanding working relationship and have a formal joint-use agreement for the future use of Whitcomb Conservatory. The restoration of the Conservatory will create a community resource and provide a setting for musicals, summer community theater, special concerts and lectures.

Second, this Member is most pleased that $240,000 was allocated for the Walthill Public School in Walthill, Nebraska, to be used to improve the facilities for science education in this school district. The resources are badly needed by this school system which has a very large Native American student body. The students at Walthill are 97 percent Native American and come from primarily low-income families.

Therefore, this Walthill initiative will serve to supplement a state initiative focused on serving a predominately Native American population. Almost certainly, this school is the least adequate public education facility in the 1st Congressional District of Nebraska. Since the school district's land consists primarily of Indian reservation land, which is not subject to the property tax that is the predominant source of funding for public schools in Nebraska, Walthill Public School receives Federal Impact Aid funds. As a result, Walthill has virtually no tax base available for bond issues. This proposal is an attempt to reverse the recent re-segregation of the Native American population at the school, which has resulted from the declining level of education and education services at Walthill.

Third, this Member appreciates the $500,000 in funds provided in the Environmental Protection Agency's portion of this conference report for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Water Sciences Laboratory at the Water Center. These funds are needed by the Water Sciences Laboratory to assist in the purchase of the next generation in field and laboratory equipment so that it can maintain its capability to address ground and surface water quality problems.

The Water Sciences Laboratory does both regional field research and analytical research in ground and surface water quality throughout the north-central United States. The Laboratory is responsible for the development of innovative field methods to remediated hazardous water contamination.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Member urges his colleagues to support the conference report for H.R. 2620.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the conference report will be followed immediately by a 5-minute vote on the motion to instructed conferees on H.R. 3061.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 401, nays 18, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 434]

YEAS—401

Abercrombie	Borski	Coyne
Ackerman	Boswell	Cramer
Aderholt	Boucher	Crane
Akin	Boyd	Crenshaw
Allen	Brady (PA)	Crowley
Andrews	Brady (TX)	Culberson
Armey	Brown (FL)	Cummings
Baca	Brown (OH)	Cunningham
Bachus	Brown (SC)	Davis (CA)
Baird	Bryant	Davis (FL)
Baker	Burr	Davis (IL)
Baldacci	Buyer	Davis, Jo Ann
Baldwin	Callahan	Davis, Tom
Ballenger	Calvert	Deal
Barcia	Camp	DeFazio
Barr	Cannon	DeGette
Barrett	Cantor	DeLauro
Bartlett	Capito	DeMint
Barton	Capps	Deutsch
Bass	Cardin	Diaz-Balart
Becerra	Carson (IN)	Dicks
Bentsen	Carson (OK)	Dingell
Bereuter	Castle	Doggett
Berkley	Chabot	Dooley
Berman	Chambliss	Doolittle
Biggert	Clay	Doyle
Bilirakis	Clayton	Dreier
Bishop	Clement	Duncan
Blagojevich	Clyburn	Dunn
Blumenauer	Coble	Edwards
Blunt	Collins	Ehlers
Boehlert	Combest	Ehrlich
Boehner	Condit	Emerson
Bonilla	Cooksey	Engel
Bonior	Costello	English
Bono	Cox	Eshoo

Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Fletcher
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Frank
Frelinghuysen
Frost
Gallegly
Gekas
Gephardt
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Goss
Graham
Granger
Graves
Green (TX)
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Grucci
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hansen
Harman
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Herger
Hill
Hilleary
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoeffel
Holden
Holt
Honda
Horn
Houghton
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inslee
Isakson
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
John
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kind (WI)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kleczka
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
LaFalce
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lowey
Lucas (KY)
Lucas (OK)
Luther
Lynch
Maloney (CT)
Manzullo
Markey
Mascara
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McInnis
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Mica
Millender-McDonald
Miller, Dan
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Miller, Jeff
Mink
Mollohan
Moore
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Morella
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Phelps
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pombo
Pomeroy
Portman
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Quinn
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reyes
Reynolds
Riley
Rivers
Rodriguez
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roukema
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Sanchez
Sanders
Sandlin
Sawyer
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrock
Scott
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shows
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skeen
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stenholm
Strickland
Stump
Stupak
Sununu
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauscher
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Thune
Thurman
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Velazquez
Visclosky
Vitter
Walden
Walsh
Wamp
Waters
Watkins (OK)
Watson (CA)
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—18

Berry
Capuano
Filner
Flake
Hefley
Hoekstra
Hooley
Hostettler
Kerns
Paul
Roemer
Royce
Schaffer
Sensenbrenner
Shays
Tancredo
Toomey
Weldon (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

Burton
Conyers
Cubin
Delahunt
DeLay
Ganske
Kilpatrick
Largent
Lofgren
Maloney (NY)
Ose
Otter
Traficant

□ 1337

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Mr. KERNS and Mr. HOEKSTRA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. BIGGERT and Messrs. WEINER, WU and THOMPSON of California changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, because my beeper malfunctioned, I did not arrive here in time to vote on the conference report on H.R. 2620, otherwise known as the VA–HUD bill.

Had I been here I would have voted in favor.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 3061, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The pending business is agreeing to the motion to instruct conferees on the bill, H.R. 3061, offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will designate the motion.

The Clerk designated the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 367, nays 48, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 435]

YEAS—367

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Allen
Andrews
Armey
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Ballenger
Barcia
Barr
Barrett
Bass
Becerra
Bentsen
Bereuter
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop
Blagojevich
Blumenauer
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonior
Bono
Borski
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Bryant
Burr
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Carson (IN)
Carson (OK)
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Combest
Condit
Cooksey
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cummings
Cunningham
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutsch
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Dreier
Dunn
Edwards
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
Engel
English
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Fletcher
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Frank
Frelinghuysen
Frost
Gallegly
Gekas
Gephardt
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Gordon
Goss
Graham
Granger
Graves
Green (TX)
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Grucci
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hansen
Harman
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hill
Hilleary
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoeffel
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Horn
Houghton
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hyde
Inslee
Isakson
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
John
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kind (WI)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kleczka
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
LaFalce
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lowey
Lucas (KY)
Lucas (OK)
Luther
Lynch
Maloney (CT)
Manzullo
Markey
Mascara
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McInnis
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Mica
Millender-McDonald
Miller, Dan
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Miller, Jeff
Mink
Mollohan
Moore
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Morella
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Phelps
Pickering
Platts
Pomeroy
Portman
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Quinn
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reyes
Reynolds
Riley
Rivers
Rodriguez
Roemer
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roukema
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Sabo
Sanchez
Sanders
Sandlin
Sawyer
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrock
Scott
Serrano
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shows
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skeen
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Strickland
Stupak
Sununu
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauscher
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Thune
Thurman
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Velazquez
Visclosky
Vitter