

operational management remaining with the services. The Department shall provide a report to the Appropriations Committees by May 1, 1999 on the revised enterprise DIMHRS, and how the revised program, budget changes and business process improvement changes comply with Appropriations Committee direction and with Public Laws 104-106 and 103-62.

The conferees included a new general provision (Section 8148) regarding a review of military compensation. The conferees are deeply concerned with the increasing demands placed on our military personnel, which affect the ability to recruit and retain the highly skilled personnel needed to maintain the all-volunteer force. Operating tempos, particularly for those forces deployed in support of contingency operations, are at historic high rates at the same time force structure has been reduced. People are working harder and under more challenging circumstances. At the same time, outside employment opportunities for highly skilled military personnel, especially in certain career fields, are readily available due to the nation's prolonged period of economic prosperity. In this environment, while none of our military personnel serve for financial advancement, we should not expect them to serve and suffer financial hardship.

These competing demands are being compounded by a widespread perception within the force that there has been, and will continue to be, a steady erosion in those programs associated with military compensation and benefits. For example, the conferees note that while the Administration has in recent years proposed increases in pay rates consistent with existing legal limits, those increases have not reversed the gap between military and private compensation. Of even more concern, it is becoming steadily more apparent that the changes in the military retirement system enacted in 1986 are having a direct impact on the services' reenlistment rates, and have raised fundamental questions of equity between those service members who are under the previously established retirement structure and those who have joined the force since 1986. Finally, the conferees continue to observe persistent problems in other programs intended to provide for an adequate quality of life for service members and their families, including medical care, housing programs, and family support programs. The conferees are convinced that these problems, coupled with the high level of demands being placed on the force and the effects of a healthy economy, are directly responsible for the emergence of downward trends in recruiting and retention of personnel. If these interweaving issues are not dealt with soon, and in a meaningful manner, the conferees fear it could inevitably result in a dramatic decline in the capability of the nation's armed forces.

The conferees believe that a long-term solution to these issues cannot be found by simply focusing on one aspect of these problems, such as pay or retirement, in isolation from the others. The complexity of these issues requires a more broad approach if the Department of Defense is to truly address the new and different demands confronting the military force of the future. Therefore, in Section 8148, the conferees direct the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the nation's senior military leadership, to undertake a comprehensive reassessment of the array of existing compensation and benefit programs, and the need, if any, for changes in these programs in order to meet both future manpower and quality of life requirements. The conferees intend that this effort provide the underpinning for a total review of these programs and issues by both the executive and legislative branches as soon as

possible, and therefore direct that the Secretary provide an interim report on these issues to the congressional defense committees within 60 days of the enactment of the fiscal year 1999 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. In order to provide for full consideration of these matters in the next Congress, the Secretary is also directed to provide his recommendations on these issues to the Congress in conjunction with submission of the fiscal year 2000 budget request.

CONFERENCE TOTAL—WITH COMPARISONS

The total new budget (obligational) authority for the fiscal year 1999 recommended by the Committee of Conference, with comparisons to the fiscal year 1998 amount, the 1999 budget estimates, and the House and Senate bills for 1999 follow:

New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1998	\$247,708,522,000
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1999	250,998,803,000
House bill, fiscal year 1999	250,727,097,000
Senate bill, fiscal year 1999	250,518,092,000
Conference agreement, fiscal year 1999	250,510,548,312
Conference agreement compared with:	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1998	+2,802,026,312
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1999	-488,254,688
House bill, fiscal year 1999	-216,548,688
Senate bill, fiscal year 1999	-7,543,688

BILL YOUNG,
JOE MCDADE,
JERRY LEWIS,
JOE SKEEN,
DAVID L. HOBSON,
HENRY BONILLA,
GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT,
JR.,
ERNEST J. ISTOOK, JR.,
RANDY "DUKE"

CUNNINGHAM,
BOB LIVINGSTON,
JOHN P. MURTHA,
NORMAN D. DICKS,
W.G. (BILL) HEFNER,
MARTIN OLAV SABO,
JULIAN C. DIXON,
PETER J. VISCLOSKEY,

Managers on the Part of the House.

TED STEVENS,
THAD COCHRAN,
PETE V. DOMENICI,
CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
MITCH MCCONNELL,
RICHARD C. SHELBY,
JUDD GREGG,
KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
DANIEL K. INOUE,
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS,
ROBERT BYRD,
PATRICK J. LEAHY,
DALE BUMPERS,
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG,
TOM HARKIN,
BYRON DORGAN,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

THE STORY OF THE RIP VAN DEMOCRATS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, remember the story of Rip Van Winkle, who slept for 20 years, then woke up and was surprised by all the changes that had taken place during his slumber? A lot of people do not know this, but Rip Van Winkle had some relatives, the Rip Van Democrats, who have also slept for a long, long time.

The Rip Van Democrats slept for 40 years, until waking up in 1995 to discover that the Republicans had taken over. But during those 40 years of slumber, their liberal friends were out plundering the Social Security trust fund and spending it on big government programs. When they woke up they were shocked, shocked to find out that the liberals had left not only Medicare teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, but Social Security as well. So their only recourse was to blame the Republicans for the mess that their liberal friends themselves had created.

That is the story of the Rip Van Democrats.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

(Mr. SCHUMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, the Violence Against Women Act significantly changed the way law enforcement and social service agencies respond to women victimized by domestic violence.

Yet, between 50 and 70 percent of men who abuse their female partners also abuse their children. Children who witness domestic violence experience anxiety and depression and other mental disorders.

Thanks to VAWA, more mothers and children have left these horrendous conditions and begun life anew. But unfortunately for many mothers and children, a new battle begins over custody and visitation.

VAWA II, my new bill, will provide many more desperately needed supervised visitation programs in safe and secure locations. Child welfare workers will be trained to better serve victims, and laws that protect these mothers and children will be strengthened.

Mr. Speaker, that is just one more reason to support and bring to the floor the Violence Against Women Act II.

One need only pick up a newspaper to read stories about mothers and their children being injured or killed by the batterer during visitation exchange. The need for supervised visitation areas is great, but the need surpasses the number of available programs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes from each side.