

(Rollcall Vote No. 44 Leg.)

YEAS—60

Alexander	Dole	Murkowski
Allard	Domemici	Nelson (FL)
Allen	Enzi	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Frist	Pryor
Bond	Graham	Roberts
Brownback	Grassley	Rockefeller
Bunning	Gregg	Santorum
Burns	Hagel	Sessions
Burr	Hatch	Shelby
Byrd	Hutchison	Smith
Chafee	Isakson	Snowe
Chambliss	Johnson	Specter
Clinton	Kyl	Stevens
Cochran	Landrieu	Sununu
Collins	Lieberman	Talent
Cornyn	Lincoln	Thomas
Craig	Lugar	Thune
Crapo	Martinez	Vitter
DeMint	McCain	Voivovich
DeWine	McConnell	Warner

NAYS—38

Akaka	Ensign	Lott
Baucus	Feingold	Menendez
Bayh	Feinstein	Mikulski
Biden	Harkin	Murray
Bingaman	Inhofe	Obama
Boxer	Inouye	Reed
Cantwell	Jeffords	Reid
Carper	Kennedy	Salazar
Coburn	Kerry	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kohl	Schumer
Dodd	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Dorgan	Leahy	Wyden
Durbin	Levin	

NOT VOTING—2

Coleman Dayton

The amendment (No. 3050) was agreed to.

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, in accordance with the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess for the purpose of attending a joint meeting with the House of Representatives to hear the very distinguished President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:50 p.m., took a recess, and the Senate, preceded by its Secretary, Emily J. Reynolds, and its Assistant Sergeant at Arms, Lynne Halbrooks, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear an address delivered by Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia.

(For the address delivered by the President of Liberia, see today's proceedings in the House of Representatives.)

At 2:59 p.m., the Senate, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. MARTINEZ).

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 3056

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The next amendment is the Stabenow amendment No. 3056. There is 2 minutes of debate equally divided on the amendment.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I hope my colleagues will join me in be-

ginning to fix the issue of connecting our radios, radio interoperability. Last December, the 9/11 Commission gave us failing grades in this area, as well as other areas. Back in November of 2003, the White House Office of Management and Budget said there were insufficient funds to do what needs to be done in terms of communications interoperability. They said it would take at least \$16 billion to do this right.

My amendment would provide \$5 billion to jump-start what is happening now. Our esteemed chairman of the Budget Committee has spoken about the fact that there is \$1 billion or \$2 billion available now, but that simply is not enough. That is not enough to do it as quickly as we need to do this.

Right now, homeland security grants also in this budget are being cut. We are seeing fewer police officers on the streets. We have not done what we need to do regarding radios and communications, and this simply is not good enough.

My amendment says we can do better, and it will provide a jump-start to do so.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to express my appreciation to the Senate for accepting the Kohl-Snowe-Stabenow-DeWine-Lieberman amendment fully funding the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, MEP, for fiscal year 2007 at \$106 million. I am a long-time supporter of the MEP program and believe manufacturing is crucial to the U.S. economy. American manufacturers are a cornerstone of the American economy and embody the best in American values. A healthy manufacturing sector is key to better jobs, rising productivity, and higher standards of living in the United States.

Small and medium-sized manufacturers face unprecedented challenges in today's global economy. If it isn't China pirating our technologies and promising a low-wage workforce, it is soaring health care and energy costs that cut into profits. Manufacturers today are seeking ways to level the playing field.

One way to do that is through the MEP program. MEP offers resources such as organized workshops and consulting projects to manufacturers; these allow the manufacturers to streamline operations, integrate new technologies, shorten production times and lower costs. In Wisconsin, three of our largest corporations—John Deere, Harley-Davidson, and Oshkosh Truck—are working with Wisconsin MEP centers to develop domestic supply chains. I am proud to say that, thanks to MEP, these companies found it more profitable to work with small and medium sized Wisconsin firms than to look overseas for cheap labor.

You would be hard pressed to find another program that has produced the results that MEP has. In fiscal year 2004, MEP clients reported 43,624 new or retained workers, sales of \$4.532 billion, cost savings of \$721 million, and plant and equipment investments of \$941 million.

The Senate, in accepting this amendment, clearly recognizes the importance of manufacturing and the role it plays in our everyday lives. Unfortunately, the same can not be said for the current administration. The President's fiscal year 2007 budget request for MEP was \$46.3 million, a 56 percent decrease from the \$106 million appropriated for fiscal year 2006. Once again, it will be up to my colleagues and I in Congress to see to it that MEP is fully funded for fiscal year 2007. In an effort to invest in the future of manufacturing, I worked with Senator SMITH and Senator DEWINE to introduce the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act of 2005 which would fund manufacturing related programs including MEP and the Advanced Technology Program—for 3 years.

Manufacturing is an integral part of a web of inter-industry relationships that create a stronger economy. Manufacturing sells goods to other sectors in the economy and, in turn, buys products and services from them. Manufacturing spurs demand for everything from raw materials to intermediate components to software to financial, legal, health, accounting, transportation, and other services in the course of doing business.

The future of manufacturing in the United States will be largely determined by how well small and medium-sized manufacturers cope with the changes in today's global economy. To be successful, manufacturers need state-of-the-art technologies to craft products more efficiently, a skilled workforce to operate those technologies, and a commitment from the government to provide the resources to allow manufacturers to remain competitive.

At a time when economic recovery, supply chain reliability for consumer and defense goods, and global competitiveness are national priorities, I believe MEP continues to be a wise investment. I want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Budget Committee for accepting this amendment and recognizing the importance of the MEP program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Stabenow amendment would pencil in \$5 billion for interoperable radio equipment into the budget resolution but provides no money for the first responders. But when the junior Senator from Michigan has been given opportunity to vote for real money for police and firefighters, she has repeatedly voted no. Not only has she voted no, she actively worked to kill funding for the first responders.

The Senate budget reconciliation bill last year included \$1 billion in hard dollars for grants to States and local governments for new interoperable radio equipment. Michigan would have received a portion of that money for its police and firefighters, but the Senator