

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-0508

Dear Mr. President and Madam Speaker:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the continued delay in passing the 2010 wartime supplemental appropriations bill, and ask you to ensure the House of Representatives acts on the Administration's request for emergency wartime operations immediately. As you are well aware, the Senate passed its version of the wartime supplemental measure prior to Memorial Day – consistent with the Administration's request. The House has yet to mark up this legislation in Committee, let alone bring the matter forward for a vote before the full body.

The House has failed to provide the wartime supplemental funding to our military in Afghanistan and Iraq because the Democrat leadership intends to meet the demands of teachers' unions by adding billions of dollars in new, extraneous funding for state and local budgets. Delaying funds to our troops on the front lines to bail out state governments is dangerous and irresponsible. The men and women in uniform operating in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq deserve better; they have answered the call to duty, we have not.

While it appears some in Congress question the urgency of passing the wartime supplemental appropriation, this view conflicts with information Congress has received from the Department of Defense. Failure to provide supplemental appropriations before the end of this spring will undermine the Department's operations, result in hollowing out of military personnel accounts, and disrupt war-related accounts. As Secretary Gates stated today, "[i]f the supplemental is not enacted by the July 4th congressional recess, we will have to begin planning to curtail defense operations."

Further delay of the war funding measure is tantamount to abdicating our constitutional duty to "provide for the common defense." The funds desperately needed by our men and women in uniform should not be delayed by or diverted to other domestic concerns. Hijacking the wartime appropriation in favor of a state bailout simply delays the difficult choices state governments need to make and ultimately advances an ill-advised policy of using federal dollars to prop up unsustainable funding commitments made by the states.

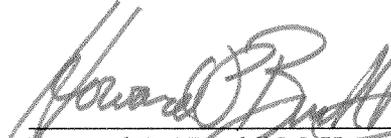
Members on both sides of the aisle have expressed concern about the cost and consequences of the proposal to spend an additional \$23 billion on an unknown number of education-related jobs, and additional billions for other state purposes. As this debate unfolds, it must not be used as a wedge to deprive our military of the resources it needs to succeed – at a time when we can least afford to do so.

With summer upon us and the supplemental appropriation in limbo in the House of Representatives, it's apparent to us the Administration's request for emergency wartime operations funding will not receive the priority it deserves without your personal, immediate, and clear expression of the operational need and consequences of inaction. We strongly recommend you publicly commit to moving this wartime spending measure without delay.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,


Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee


Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee


John Kline
Ranking Member
Education and Labor Committee