



# Hon. Doris O. Matsui

## Member of Congress

*Doris O. Matsui*

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Serving California's 5th District

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### **Matsui Statement on Labor – HHS – Education Appropriations Bill**

*Washington, DC* – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) gave the following floor statement on the Conference Report for the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill before voting against the legislation. This is the most severely underfunded Labor-HHS-Education conference report in years. This conference report actually cuts funding for education, health care and job assistance programs by \$1.5 billion below the FY 2005 enacted level. When voted on by the full House, the Conference Report for the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill failed to pass the House, 209-224.

“Mr. Speaker, today we consider H.Res. 559, the rule allowing consideration of the conference report accompanying the fiscal year 2006 Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill. This legislation is the clearest demonstration of the contempt for the proper functioning of this body and ultimately, disrespect for democracy.

“The Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill is an incredibly important piece of legislation. It determines funding levels for job training programs, community college programs, child labor protections and community health centers.

“This legislation is the primary funding vehicle for the National Institutes of Health. It determines how our government approaches timely and important issues like stem cell research, global aids research, pediatric medicine, cancer research and so many other critical issues.

“It is also the principle funder of some of the most innovative and practical research going on today at universities and colleges across the nation. In my home state of California, two-thirds of all basic research at the University of California system is from federal dollars. Using these dollars, University of California researchers found a way to differentiate Alzheimer’s from other dementia.

“The reason I am pointing out all of this is to underscore just how important this legislation is to the daily lives of our fellow Americans.

“And having established that this bill is a crucial bill for the health, welfare, education and prosperity of the American people, I would ask my counterparts on the Republican side of the aisle: Why on earth is it that no one has seen this conference report?

“Why is it that as of this morning, this very morning we are scheduled to consider and vote upon this legislation, that no one in the House of Representatives, with the exception of a very few in the Republican leadership, has even laid eyes on, much less read or analyzed?

(Continued...)



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“We didn’t even go into Rules committee to consider this legislation until 7:00 am this morning, under emergency rules.

“The original version of this bill passed the House months ago. And I might remind my fellow Americans that it was in that bill that the Republican leadership of this body tried to quietly eliminate funding for the Public Broadcasting System and Sesame Street. Thankfully under incredible pressure, they were forced to reverse themselves.

“And since then, this bill and its Senate companion have been locked away in conference. A handful of Appointees of this Republican leadership have had months to meet in smoky back rooms. This select group decided for all of us here today, and for every American family, what should and shouldn’t be in the final version of the bill.

“So with that understanding, let me say that this is at *best* a short-sighted piece of legislation.

“No Child Left Behind funding is cut by \$784 million. The maximum Pell Grant award is frozen for the fourth straight year, and no new funding for all other student financial aid and support programs is provided. The bill provides \$4 billion less than Republicans promised for special education through I-D-E-A. Training grants for healthcare professionals are cut \$206 million.

“I want everyone in America to understand exactly why these programs are being cut. Because in the face of gross fiscal mismanagement on the part of this majority, they want to pass a 56 billion dollar tax cut for wealthy Americans this coming week. Over half of that money, 23 billion dollars, will go to the very richest of Americans, those earning over 1 million dollars per year.

“Now, I am certainly not suggesting that there aren’t government programs that can’t be cut. But what we are talking about are educational programs, health and safety programs and treatment programs that not only work, but they work well for middle class American families.

“And they are being sacrificed for tax cuts for the rich and the super rich. The rest of America is being left behind.

“Mr. Speaker, in closing, we are facing an increasingly costly war in Iraq, significant – and necessary – hurricane relief needs, and a looming crisis over avian flu. The debate I urge my colleagues to have – a debate not yet addressed by my friends on the other side of the aisle – is about shared sacrifice, and about what the true priorities of the American people are.

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