

## Labor & HHS Appropriations Bill Continues to Ignore Nations Priorities Despite Republican Leaders

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Despite Republican Leadership's opportunity to reevaluate after first attempt was rejected

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Washington, DC & Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) gave the following floor statement opposing the revised conference report on the Labor&HHS&Education Appropriations bill. The new conference report includes only minimal changes from the version defeated on November 17. Included in the legislation is \$142.9 billion for discretionary program appropriations & \$1.6 billion less than the previous year. Additionally, Republican leadership has indicated it intends to enact an across-the-board cut of approximately one percent for discretionary appropriations, will further cut funding for the Labor & HHS & Education programs by \$1.4 billion.

Click here to view Congresswoman Matsui's speech on the Labor-HHS- Education Appropriations bill & Mr. Speaker, today we consider H. Res. 596, the rule allowing consideration of the conference report accompanying the fiscal year 2006 Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill. & If the debate looks familiar to our constituents watching from home, it should. Just before Thanksgiving, the House considered a conference agreement almost exactly like the one before the House this morning. & The House voted to reject that short-sighted agreement. It was striking rebuke of a Majority out of touch with the concerns of average Americans. & And yet here we are again with an agreement that is almost word-for-word the exact agreement from 3 weeks ago. This new version simply moves around a small amount of money & robbing Peter to pay Paul. & What seems to have been skipped was a discussion of the fundamentally flawed priorities and there was no discussion of what the American people need. Merely what it would take for a few more votes.

& This means that No Child Left Behind funding is still cut by \$779 million. The maximum Pell Grant award is still frozen for the fourth straight year, and there is still no new funding for other student financial aid and support programs. The bill still provides \$4 billion less than Republicans promised for special education through I-D-E-A.

& Further, this agreement provides only thin and shortsighted support for the innovative research going on today at universities and colleges across the nation. Hardworking families rely on these advances to ease the suffering & or even cure & a loved-ones's illness. But this agreement threatens this hope. & Earlier this month, the UC Davis Cancer Center & the only federally-designated cancer center in the Central Valley & discovered a way to improve early-detection of breast cancer. And just before Thanksgiving, UC Davis research shed light on how some cancer patients contract chemotherapy-induced leukemia. & These are two examples of life-savings advances among dozens in the University of California system. And they are a reality because of the federal investment & two of out of every three research dollars to the UC System are from the federal government. Sadly, misguided priorities like the ones contained in this conference agreement threaten to limit these types of advances.

& Mr. Speaker, my local paper, the Sacramento Bee, noted earlier this month that today's challenges

demand shared sacrifice and better priorities. The paper argued &ndash; rightly so &ndash; that, quote, &lsquo;The majority in Congress clearly is more intent on locking in President Bush's tax cuts than paying for war, natural disaster and essential public services for the nation's most vulnerable people,&rsquo; end quote.

&ldquo;I could not agree more.&rdquo; ###