



June 28, 2004

Major Accomplishments of the U.S. Senate During the 108th Congress, Second Session

Obstruction by Democrats has plagued much of the 108th Congress, to date. The minority party has continually blocked important legislation, including: the Class Action Fairness Act of 2003 (S. 1751); Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act of 2004 (S. 2290); Patients First Act of 2003 (S. 11); Energy Policy Act of 2003 (S. 2095); Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment Act of 2003 (S. 272); the Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2003 (H.R. 4); and the Workforce Investment Act (S.1627). In addition, Democrats have persisted in filibustering five of the President's judicial nominees on the floor of the Senate, denying them the up-or-down votes they deserve.

Despite these obstructions, however, the Republican-led Senate has succeeded in passing significant legislation in 2004. Here is a sampling of the accomplishments to date from this Second Session of the 108th Congress. Those bills already signed into law are listed in numerical order within each category. Attached to this paper is the RPC list of the accomplishments from the First Session.

CREATING JOBS AND GROWING THE ECONOMY

Omnibus Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2004 - P.L. 108-199

This bill enacts into law the appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2004 that Democrats had obstructed during the first session. These appropriations bills include funding for Agriculture, Commerce/Justice/State, District of Columbia, Foreign Operations, Labor/HHS/Education, Transportation, and VA/HUD. Highlights of these bills include increased funding for education, veterans' health care, and the President's Global AIDS Initiative.

Pension Stability Act (H.R. 3108) - P.L. 108-457

This bill reforms the current pension funding formula by changing the rates used to calculate pension-plan contributions from 30-year Treasury bond rates to conservatively invested, long-term corporate-bond rates. The bill also provides relief to struggling

industries and gives those industries time to recover, which in the long run will greatly contribute to the health of the insurance system overseen by the Pension Benefits Guarantee Corporation.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2004 (S.1072) - Passed Senate

This bill renews authorization for highway, bridge, and transportation safety projects. By investing in the nation's transportation infrastructure, this bill creates jobs and spurs economic growth.

Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act (S. 150) - Passed Senate

This bill extends the moratorium on State and local taxation of internet access, as well as on any multiple or discriminatory state and local taxes on Internet-based transactions until October 1, 2007. The bill also modifies the definition of "Internet access" by carving out voice and other services provided over the Internet, and it provides limited grandfather protection for State and local governments already taxing Internet access.

Jumpstart Our Business Strength (JOBS) Act (S. 1637) - Passed Senate

Enactment of this bill – delayed for more than two months by Democrat obstructionism – eliminates the tax regime for U.S. exporting companies that the World Trade Organization ruled in 2002 was inconsistent with the United States' obligations under various international trade agreements. The delay in passing this legislation has resulted in U.S. companies being subject to European Union sanctions, which began in March at 5 percent and increase 1 percent each month that the current international tax rules remain in effect. If fully implemented, these sanctions will amount to \$4 billion in European taxes on U.S. exports. The bill is designed to replace the non-compliant U.S. international tax rules with broad-based tax relief for American manufacturers and other U.S. exporters to ensure that they remain competitive in the international marketplace and can continue providing millions of critical jobs in the United States.

AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004 (H.R. 4103) - Passed Senate

This bill extends the benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to 2015. By encouraging trade between the United States and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, AGOA plays an important role in creating jobs and stimulating economic growth in the world's poorest region. At the same time, AGOA promotes democracy and human rights by requiring that countries enact certain reforms before they are eligible for its benefits.

REDUCING RED TAPE & OTHER PRO-CONSUMER INITIATIVES

Taxpayer Protection and I.R.S. Accountability Act (H.R. 1528) - Passed Senate

This bill strengthens taxpayer protection and accountability by the Internal Revenue Service through improvements in tax administration and taxpayer safeguards, reform of the penalty and interest provisions of the tax code, modernization of the U.S. Tax Court, and additional protection of taxpayer confidentiality and non-disclosure of taxpayer

information. The bill also provides significant tax simplification measures, including the establishment of a uniform definition of "qualifying child" and elimination of more than 60 obsolete tax-code rules.

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

Project BioShield Act of 2004 (S. 15) - Passed Senate

This bill would authorize Department of Health and Human Services to develop and stockpile countermeasures against biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear agents that may be used in a terrorist attack against the United States. Such countermeasures, which include drugs, biological products, and devices, would measurably improve our nation's ability to respond to a weapons-of-mass-destruction attack.

KEEPING AMERICANS SAFE AT HOME AND ABROAD

At Home

Unborn Victims of Violence Act - P.L. 108-212

This bill amends federal law to allow an assailant who injures or kills an unborn child during the commission of an already-defined federal crime of violence to be charged with a separate offense on behalf of the unborn child. It allows the recognition of an unborn child as a victim of crime distinct from the pregnant woman.

Flood Insurance Reform Act (S. 2238) - Presented to President

This bill amends the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to encourage flood damage mitigation efforts to reduce future losses on properties for which repetitive flood insurance claim payments have been made.

Homeland Security Technology Improvement Act (S. 1612) - Passed Senate

This bill establishes a technology, equipment, and information transfer program within the Department of Homeland Security in order to provide state and local law-enforcement agencies with the tools necessary to protect Americans. For example, law-enforcement agencies protecting borders, ports, and high-threat areas would be able to secure more easily the cutting-edge detection and monitoring equipment.

Crime Victims' Rights Act (S. 2329) - Passed Senate

This bill establishes statutory rights for victims of federal crimes and authorizes funding through FY09 for federal and state programs to protect the rights of crime victims. Victims of federal crimes would have the following rights: to be reasonably protected from the accused; to have reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public proceeding involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused; to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding involving release, plea, or sentencing; to have full and timely restitution as provided in law; to proceedings free from unreasonable delay; and to be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy.

Defending and Promoting Freedom

Nomination of John D. Negroponte to be U.S. Ambassador to Iraq - Confirmed 95-3

Ambassador John Negroponte will be America's top diplomat to Iraq and will operate out of a newly established American mission in the country. The role of the U.S. Mission in Iraq will be to support the Iraqi people and government as they take control of their own affairs.

Nomination of John C. Danforth to be U.S. Ambassador to United Nations – Confirmed by voice vote

Ambassador John C. Danforth will be America's representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the representative of the United States in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (S. 2400) - Passed Senate

This bill authorizes \$447.2 billion for FY05 for military activities of the Department of Defense and Department of Energy—including programs to combat terrorism and for the continued development of a national missile defense system to be put on alert this year. It also includes an across-the-board pay raise of 3.5-percent for military personnel. Additionally, the bill adds \$925 million for several force protection measures, and authorizes \$25 billion in a contingency reserve fund for continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Department of Defense Appropriation Bill for FY 2005 (S. 2559) – Passed Senate

This bill provides \$416.2 billion in new spending authority for the Department of Defense, including \$25 billion in a contingent emergency-reserve fund requested by the President for costs associated with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Other highlights of the bill include funding for a 3.5-percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel, and an overall Department of Defense end strength of 2,263,900.

Oil-for-Food Program Investigation (Amdt. No. 3440) to S. 2400 - Passed Senate

This legislation calls on the Department of Defense to secure and hold all documents relevant to the United Nations Oil-for-Food (OFF) Program that are in the possession or control of the Coalition Provisional Authority; calls on the executive branch to provide access to all information requests made by Congress in connection with an investigation of the OFF Program; directs the Secretary of State to urge the U.N. Secretary-General to provide the United States with copies of all audits and core documents related to the OFF Program; and requires that the U.S. Comptroller General conduct a review of U.S. oversight of the OFF Program.

Support for Our Troops and Veterans

Troop Leave Domestic Transportation Reimbursement - P.L. 108-220

This bill directs the Secretary of Defense to reimburse members of the armed forces for round-trip transportation expenses incurred within the United States in connection with the Central Command Rest and Recuperation Leave Program.

Campaign Medals for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom - P.L. 108-234

This bill provides for the establishment of separate medals to recognize members of the military for their service in defense of the nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other fronts in the War on Terror.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES

NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003 (S. 610) - P.L. 108-201

This bill allows NASA to offer scholarships and other incentives to highly qualified students and recruits, thereby enhancing NASA's ability to attract America's best and brightest to the space program.

IDEA Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1350) - Passed Senate

This bill reauthorizes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through FY09. It also provides numerous improvements to the IDEA law that would reduce paperwork requirements, reduce litigation, increase parental involvement and options, and improve outcomes. Unfortunately, Democrats have refused to permit the appointment of conferees.

Child Nutrition, WIC, and School Lunch Program Reauthorization (S. 2507) - Passed Senate

This bill streamlines applications for school meal program benefits, strengthens the anti-fraud and abuse provisions in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, and is designed to maximize the enrollment of eligible children in the underlying programs while protecting program integrity. The bill expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program, expands the Summer Food Service Program, provides training and technical assistance to schools, targets benefits to low-income children, and over the five-year reauthorization period, maintains federal spending at the levels predicted if existing law were continued.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S RESOURCES AND PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

Energy Efficient Housing Technical Correction Act - P.L. 108-213

This bill amends the National Housing Act to make more homes eligible for increased mortgage limits to cover the costs of installing solar energy systems or other energy conservation measures.

STRENGTHENING THE SAFETY NET

Service Block Grants Improvement Act (S. 1786) - Passed Senate

This bill would amend the Community Service Block Grant Act so that more emphasis is placed on reducing poverty and expanding opportunities for individuals and families to become economically self-sufficient.