

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008 -- (Senate - June 26, 2008)
Excerpts Pertaining to Employment and Training Administration

Explanatory Statement Submitted by Senator Robert C. Byrd, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Regarding the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to House Amendment Number 2 to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2642

Following is an explanation of the fiscal year 2008 supplemental appropriations and fiscal year 2009 appropriations in the further amendment of the House to Senate amendment numbered 2 to House amendment numbered 2 to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 2642, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, including disclosure of congressionally directed spending items as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

The further House amendment provides that, in lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate, language be inserted providing supplemental appropriations for military construction, international affairs, disaster assistance, and other security-related and domestic needs, as well as language providing for accountability in contracting, improved veterans education benefits, temporary extended unemployment compensation, and a moratorium on certain Medicaid regulations. The amendment also strikes lines 1 through 3 on page 60 of the Senate engrossed amendment of September 6, 2007.

Unless otherwise noted, all appropriations in the amendment are designated as emergency requirements and necessary to meet emergency needs pursuant to section 204(a) of S. Con. Res. 21 and section 301(b)(2) of S. Con. Res. 70, the congressional budget resolutions for fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY LEGISLATION

The congressional budget resolution (S. Con. Res. 21) agreed to by Congress for fiscal

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year 2008 includes a provision relating to the notification of emergency spending. This provision requires a statement of how the emergency provisions contained in the bill meet the criteria for emergency spending as identified in the budget resolution. The amendment contains emergency funding for fiscal year 2008 for overseas deployments and other activities, for hurricane recovery in the gulf coast region, for the 2008 Midwest floods, and other natural disasters, and for other needs. The funding is related to unanticipated needs and is for situations that are sudden, urgent, and unforeseen, specifically the global war on terror, the hurricanes of 2005, the ongoing floods in the Midwest and other natural disasters, and rising unemployment. The amendment also funds the costs of ongoing military deployments and other requirements through the beginning months of the next fiscal year. These needs meet the criteria for emergency funding.

TITLE II--DOMESTIC MATTERS

CHAPTER 4--LABOR AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OPERATIONS

The amended bill provides \$110,000,000 for Unemployment Compensation State Operations to compensate the States for the administrative costs of processing the Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims workload for the balance of fiscal year 2008. New UI claims are increasing, reaching a level in April 2008 nearly 18 percent greater than the previous year. States are beginning to experience service degradation in the form of call center delays for claimants, waiting times for adjudication of disputed claims, and reductions in program integrity activities, tax collection, and tax audits. While funding in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 is sufficient to cover the costs of processing 2.4 million Average Weekly Insured Unemployment (AWIU), claims have already climbed above 2.9 million AWIU. The amount provided will compensate States for the claims workload estimated by the Department of Labor up to the point where additional funds are released under a legislated trigger.

TITLE IV--EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The amended bill includes language providing a temporary extension of unemployment benefits to workers who have lost their jobs. Specifically, the amended bill provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every State to workers exhausting regular unemployment compensation. The extended benefits program will terminate on March 31, 2009. The percentage of workers exhausting unemployment benefits is currently 37 percent, which is higher than at the beginning of any of the past five recessions. Not only will workers and their families benefit from extended benefits, providing this financial assistance also can reduce the severity and duration of an economic downturn. Experts agree that extending unemployment benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast acting forms of economic stimulus because workers who have lost their paychecks have little choice but to spend these benefits quickly.

TITLE VIII--GENERAL PROVISIONS, THIS ACT

The amended bill includes the following general provisions:

Section 8001 establishes the period of availability for obligation for appropriations provided in this Act.

Section 8002 provides that, unless otherwise noted, all appropriations in this Act are designated as emergency requirements and necessary to meet emergency needs pursuant to section 204(a) of S. Con. Res. 21 and section 301(b)(2) of S. Con. Res. 70, the congressional budget resolutions for fiscal years 2008 and 2009.