



# STATEMENT OF REPUBLICAN POLICY

July 8, 2009

**H.R. 2997, the Fiscal Year 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act  
Rep. DeLauro (D-CT)**

House Republicans support reasonable funding levels for the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC). However, H.R. 2997, the FY 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, contains a total of \$123.8 billion in both mandatory and discretionary spending.

Discretionary spending in the bill totals \$22.9 billion, which is 12 percent or \$2.44 billion over last year. Over the past two years, the Agriculture appropriations bill has received an overall increase of 125 percent.

Even more alarming, the spending increases in the bill mirror the Democratic majority's overall budget blueprint which increases non-defense, discretionary spending by 12 percent over last year. When all appropriations spending is combined, the Democratic majority has increased non-defense, non-veterans discretionary spending by 85 percent over the last two fiscal years. This level of spending is unsustainable in light of our growing deficits and debt. Therefore, House Republicans oppose passage of the bill.

Many of the programs funded in the bill have received enormous increases over their normal appropriation levels in the FY 2008 and FY 2009 supplemental appropriations bills, as well as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). In large part, these funds have not been spent or have not been spent on the purposes for which they were appropriated.

For example, FDA received \$150 million in additional funds in the 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act to begin hiring staff to meet the increased challenges posed by food-borne illnesses. As of the beginning of this month, FDA has only hired 14 staff at a total cost of \$2 million out of the \$150 million provided over a year ago and will instead spend \$135 million of the \$150 million for equipment much of that in the last month of the year before funds expire. Based on this slow payout of prior year funds, the FDA could have been held to last year's appropriations level instead of receiving an increase of \$300 million.

In the ARRA, the Department of Commerce and USDA were provided approximately \$7 billion in new funds to implement broadband grants and loans in rural counties. USDA was provided \$2.5 billion, a one-time addition of six times the \$400 million in loan authority it received in 2009 regular

appropriations. To date, few if any of those funds have been allocated to any firm or entity to actually implement broadband equipment or services. In fact, USDA and the Department of Commerce are still working out the details of the program's content. House Republicans support responsible efforts to expand broadband in rural areas. But the additional \$400 million provided in the underlying bill appears unnecessary because it is very unlikely that it would even be spent during FY 2010.

Similarly, ARRA included an additional \$1.3 billion in grants and loans for rural water and waste water construction, nearly three times the normal levels provided to the program in annual appropriations. In spite of that large one time increase, the bill provides another \$550 million which is also unlikely to be spent during FY 2010.

In addition to overspending on programs that have already been fully funded, House Republicans are concerned about improper payments which are significantly undermining the credibility and effectiveness of several important safety-net programs. These programs range from Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), to the school lunch program, to farm benefit programs, to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance programs (SNAP). For example in 2005 and 2006, the Food and Nutrition Service identified about \$850 million in misspent funds to providers of the school lunch program. That error rate is over 8 percent of the total program costs. Yet no attempt has been made to offset future payments to those entities or otherwise recover those funds. Similarly, USDA has identified \$50 million in inappropriate farm benefit programs to ineligible individuals and current estimates suggest overpayments by States to individuals of more than \$1.2 billion have occurred in the SNAP program.

During a recession when many American families are struggling to make ends meet and unemployment is nearing 10 percent, House Republicans reject the need for a 12 percent increase in funding, and therefore, oppose passage of H.R. 2997, the FY 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

*Provided by the Republican Leadership and the Committee on Appropriations Republicans.*

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