

**AMENDMENT TO MILITARY CONSTRUCTION/VA
APPROPRIATIONS BILL
OFFERED BY MR. CULBERSON OF TEXAS**

In the REPORT:

On page 18 in the report, replace the last paragraph before the header, “MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY” with the following new paragraph:

1 “*Foreign Materiel Exploitation Labs.*—The Com-
2 mittee is concerned that Department of Defense intel-
3 ligence facilities that serve multiple agencies and our allies
4 have been neglected over the years and funding for mili-
5 tary construction has been deferred to the out years of
6 budget submissions. Many of the labs are deteriorating,
7 in temporary facilities, and lack appropriate space. There-
8 fore, the Committee urges the Deputy Under Secretary
9 for Installations and Environment to assess these aging
10 lab facilities, reassess the funding priorities for these fa-
11 cilities and request funding in earlier fiscal years. To ad-
12 dress the alarming threats faced by the United States, the
13 Committee urges the Deputy Under Secretary to prioritize
14 funding for these facilities in a much more timely manner.
15 The Committee believes that these facilities are valuable
16 national security assets that the Department of Defense

1 should maintain in a manner that will ensure their vital
2 role in protecting U.S. national security interests.”.

On page 20 in the report, insert the following new paragraph before the header, “MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD”:

3 “The Committee has been in the forefront of ensur-
4 ing that our military beneficiaries are provided ‘world
5 class’ medical facilities as a result of the fiscal year 2005
6 BRAC consolidation of Walter Reed Army Medical Center
7 (WRAMC) and the National Naval Medical Center
8 (NNMC). The Committee would observe that the new
9 community hospital at Fort Belvoir meets the expectation
10 of a ‘world class’ facility however the Committee is dis-
11 appointed in some of the facilities at Walter Reed National
12 Military Medical Center. A most notable deficiency is the
13 3rd floor of Building 19 where the various cancer clinics
14 are located as well as the chemotherapy treatment area.
15 These facilities are nowhere close to being equal to the
16 facilities at the old Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
17 The Committee notes that the waiting areas and treat-
18 ment areas are impersonal and not ‘patient friendly,’ and
19 thus are not conducive to a positive healing environment.
20 In addition, there are insufficient facilities for patients un-
21 dergoing chemotherapy treatment. The Committee is

1 aware that there are unobligated balances available in the
2 BRAC 2005 account, and strongly encourages the Depart-
3 ment of Defense to reprogram sufficient funds to correct
4 these deficiencies.”.

At the appropriate place in the report, insert the fol-
lowing new paragraph:

5 “*Center of Excellence for Research and Graduate-level*
6 *Studies.*—The Committee is concerned that Air Force fa-
7 cilities for graduate-level research have been neglected
8 over the years and funding for military construction has
9 been deferred to the out years of budget submissions.
10 Many of the research facilities have unsafe and limited lab
11 space, inoperable HVAC systems, outdated plumbing,
12 water damage and leaks in the roof. These deplorable
13 working conditions are hindering the personnel conducting
14 research in these facilities. Therefore, the Committee
15 urges the Deputy Under Secretary for Installations and
16 Environment to assess these aging facilities, how they are
17 prioritized for funding and request funding in earlier fiscal
18 years.”.

At the appropriate place in the report, insert the fol-
lowing new paragraph:

1 “*Increased Fuel and Training Efficiency.*—The Com-
2 mittee is aware of proposals by the Department of Defense
3 to use military construction funding to construct special-
4 ized training runways near existing aircraft locations. By
5 constructing these specialized runways, the Department of
6 Defense will save taxpayer dollars by decreasing the
7 amount of transient flight hours required for aircraft to
8 reach their training locations. Therefore, the Committee
9 urges the Deputy Under Secretary for Installations and
10 Environment to conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding
11 the construction of specialized training runways near ex-
12 isting aircraft locations and report back to the Committee
13 within 180 days of enactment of this Act.”.

At the appropriate place in the report, insert the fol-
lowing new paragraph:

14 “*Maintenance of Aircraft Hangars.*—The Committee
15 recognizes the strategic importance of the Air National
16 Guard components of the Aerospace Control Alert (ACA)
17 mission and their role in our country’s homeland defense.
18 The Committee urges the Secretary of the Air Force to
19 reprioritize its investments and place the maintenance fa-
20 cilities for legacy F-16 fighter aircraft with ACA missions
21 that are responsible for high-value metropolitan areas at
22 the top of the military construction list.”.

On page 40 in the report, insert the following new paragraph before the header, “MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE”:

1 “*Medical equipment purchases.*—The Committee un-
2 derstands that the number of veterans who require
3 healthcare services is increasing due to both advances in
4 medical care that are increasing longevity and the contin-
5 ued length of active war engagement. As the cost for pro-
6 viding medical services for veterans continues to rise, the
7 VA should explore new options for cost savings without
8 reducing the quality of medical care for veterans. The
9 Committee encourages the VA to develop a pilot program
10 using competitive bidding for parts replacement for var-
11 ious types of medical equipment, similar to what is used
12 by private sector hospitals and health systems. Currently,
13 replacement parts are purchased by the VA via long term
14 contracts which may not reflect prices on the open market.
15 This pilot would help the VA analyze if savings can be
16 realized by purchasing replacement equipment parts from
17 alternative sources through competitive bidding. The pilot
18 should be evaluated two years after the start date by com-
19 paring the costs of equipment parts purchased in geo-
20 graphic areas selected for the pilot versus costs in an
21 equivalent number of geographic areas using standard ac-
22 quisition methods. The VA should include estimates of po-

1 tential savings nationwide if competitive bidding were used
2 to acquire replacement parts.”.

On page 42 in the report, insert the following new paragraph before the header, “MEDICAL CARE COLLECTIONS FUND”:

3 “*Federal neuroscience working group.*—The Com-
4 mittee is aware that the Office of Science and Technology
5 Policy, within the Executive Office of the President, is es-
6 tablishing an interagency working group under the aus-
7 pices of the National Science and Technology Council
8 (NSTC) to coordinate investments in neuroscience re-
9 search across the Federal government and leverage the po-
10 tential for significant, transformative advances in our fun-
11 damental understanding of learning, brain development,
12 and brain health and recovery. The goal of the working
13 group is to help coordinate, focus and enhance Federal
14 efforts related to neuroscience, including efforts to develop
15 future clinical treatments for traumatic and acquired
16 brain injuries; increase our understanding of cognition and
17 apply that knowledge to the improvement of education and
18 learning; and improve our understanding of, and develop
19 better therapies for neurodegenerative diseases, childhood
20 developmental disorders, and other neurological condi-
21 tions. The Committee supports the activities of the NSTC

1 neuroscience working group and urges the Department of
2 Veterans Affairs to play an active role in it.”.

On page 46 in the report, insert the following new paragraph before the header, “GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION”:

3 “*VA contracting issues.*—The Committee continues to
4 be concerned about the contracting practices of the De-
5 partment of Veteran Affairs. The Committee believes that
6 the VA should work to ensure it is contracting with rep-
7 utable contractors that fulfill their contracts on time, with-
8 in scope and with full payment to subcontractors. The
9 Committee requests a report not later than 30 days after
10 enactment of this Act that describes the number of active,
11 ongoing contracts with contractors who are currently in-
12 volved in litigation or legal disputes regarding non-pay-
13 ment of their obligations related to VA contracts.”.

On page 46 in the report, insert the following three new paragraphs before the paragraph beginning, “*Edu- cation transition programs*”:

14 “*Backlog at the Oakland, CA and other VA regional*
15 *offices.*—The Committee remains very concerned about the
16 backlog of claims and accuracy of processing at Veterans
17 Affairs Regional Offices (VAROs). For example, in May,

1 2012, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) submitted a
2 report on the Oakland, CA VARO and found that it lacked
3 effective controls and accuracy in processing some dis-
4 ability claims. In addition, the OIG report found that the
5 Oakland VARO management did not certify that the staff
6 completed all elements of the Systematic Technical Accu-
7 racy Review (STAR), which is the VBA's multi-faceted
8 quality assurance program to ensure that veterans and
9 other beneficiaries receive accurate and consistent com-
10 pensation and pension benefits. The Committee encour-
11 ages the VA to follow the recommendations outlined in the
12 May, 2012, OIG report for the Oakland VARO. The Com-
13 mittee also encourages the VA to direct necessary re-
14 sources to address the backlog and provide a report to the
15 Committee, within 30 days following enactment of this
16 Act, detailing the efforts to eliminate the backlog and im-
17 prove the accuracy of claims processing within six months.

18 “Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that these
19 problems are not limited to the Oakland VARO. The Com-
20 mittee is also aware of long delays in claims processing
21 at the Houston and Waco, TX and Seattle, WA VAROs.
22 Recognizing that the paperless claims system is designed
23 to address the severe backlogs in regional offices like
24 these, the Committee directs the VA OIG to conduct an
25 analysis of the VA paperless initiative, including whether

1 the paperless system has been tested with enough claims
2 (original and supplemental) for the VA to be confident it
3 is accurate and whether the VA’s goals of eliminating the
4 disability claims backlog and increasing the accuracy rate
5 of processing claims to 98 percent by 2015 are still attain-
6 able. This report shall be submitted no later than 90 days
7 after enactment of this Act.

8 “*Claims transformation initiatives.*—The Committee
9 is also concerned that several regional offices with the
10 highest levels of backlogs failed to be included in the initial
11 rollout of the ‘Claims Transformation Initiatives’ and di-
12 rects the VA to ensure that consideration of the size of
13 each regional office’s backlog is a primary factor in decid-
14 ing which regional offices are slated for a ‘Claims Trans-
15 formation Initiative’.”.

On page 58 in the report, insert the following new
paragraph before the header, “FOREIGN CURRENCY
FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT”:

16 “*Manila American Cemetery.*—The Committee
17 strongly supports the American Battle Monuments Com-
18 mission’s (ABMC) commitment to the promise made by
19 the first ABMC Chairman, General Pershing—that ‘time
20 will not dim the glory of their deeds’. The Committee be-
21 lieves that the ABMC is doing an outstanding job of tell-

1 ing the stories of service and sacrifice in the European
2 theater through interpretive center projects at the Cam-
3 bridge American Cemetery in England, Sicily-Rome Amer-
4 ican Cemetery in Italy, and at the Pointe du Hoc Ranger
5 Monument in Normandy, France. The Committee believes
6 that the story of the Pacific Theater is just as significant
7 and is pleased to see that the ABMC recognizes this as
8 well. The Committee has included funding, as proposed
9 in the budget request, for a perimeter wall and building
10 improvements at the Manila American Cemetery. The
11 Committee also understands that the ABMC is in the
12 process of developing a master plan for the Manila Amer-
13 ican Cemetery that will improve the infrastructure of the
14 cemetery and establish an enhanced interpretation pro-
15 gram. The Committee is committed to telling the story of
16 the Pacific theater and looks forward to the completion
17 of the Manila master plan.”.

