

House Republicans that will open up a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling. This controversial environmental matter should never be attached to a defense bill. Surely the Senate is acting in the mistrusted tradition the American people call Christmas tree bills. This ANWR ramrod fits the description perfectly. Seemingly not content to leave town before selling out to Big Oil one last time, Republican leaders in both chambers have decided to play politics with this must-pass bill and attach to it a provision that is soundly opposed by majorities in both the House and Senate, and, not insignificantly, by the American people. This ANWR ramrod is a mistake. It is a mistake procedurally. It is a mistake morally. And it is a mistake environmentally. Opening the refuge to oil exploration will disturb a delicate environmental balance and threaten a way of life for the native peoples whose livelihoods depend on that balance. That is why I have consistently supported legislative efforts to ban oil and gas exploration along the northern coastal plain of the refuge. Moreover, this sets a terrible precedent for the future. America's last remaining major oil and gas reserves should not be opened up in this way, nor used at this time. They should be preserved for a true national emergency. And that emergency does not exist today.

In my twenty-three years of Congress I have never seen the crucial Defense spending bill used as a catch-all for pushing forward legislation that would not otherwise pass on its own merits. By allowing these unrelated drilling provisions, Republican leaders are subverting the will of this House. No Member, including this one, should be forced to choose between providing for our troops and protecting the environment. No, we should not play politics when it comes to supporting our troops. We owe it to the men and women who serve our country to provide the best training, equipment services and support in a timely fashion.

Proponents of the plan say that opening ANWR to oil and gas interests will help ease our reliance on imported oil and gas. I could not disagree more. Opening ANWR is merely a temporary stop-gap—not a solution. Congress must pass meaningful legislation to address the serious energy crises that face our nation especially our dangerous reliance on imported oil and our unwillingness to put ourselves on a 10-year program to become energy independent again. That would take real Presidential and Congressional leadership, and we sure aren't

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong opposition to this \$453 billion defense appropriations conference report.

As the proud daughter of a veteran of two wars, I believe that our nation is best defended by funding priorities that truly make our nation and world safer.

But what does it say about our priorities when Congress puts another \$50 billion downpayment for the Bush administration's unnecessary war in Iraq?

This is outrageous particularly when the administration has failed to articulate a clear strategy for bringing our troops home or conduct any oversight on the war or demand accountability for funds spent to date.

And the Bush administration is set to come back for another \$100 billion war supplemental in January. Where does it end?

The main purpose of this funding bill is to provide for our national defense.

Yet in the same way that the war in Iraq has made us less safe, the funding priorities in this bill are for weapons systems and military contractors, and billions of additional funds are unaccounted for in waste, fraud, and abuse.

This only undermines our national interest.

But what's even worse, Mr. Speaker, is not only does this bill fail to address our security priorities, with the inclusion of provisions to open the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to commercial drilling, it's also a prime example of how the Republican majority pays off its generous campaign contributors in the energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, we must get our funding priorities right. It's incredible to me that we are provoking unnecessary wars and pursuing outdated defense paradigms while at the same time we are sacrificing the funding needs for our critical efforts here in America like housing, healthcare, and education and our environment.

That's why, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote against this conference report.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule for this conference report and for the underlying conference report.

This bill will make our nation's military stronger, by providing funding for the equipment, salaries, and materials we need to prosecute the War on Terror around the world and the War in Iraq.

On behalf of my constituents, particularly those in our armed services, I have committed to never cutting off support while they are serving in a war zone.

Congress authorized the President to act, based on numerous assurances about the nature of the threat from Saddam. Much of that information turned out to be wrong, and as a result, the responsibility for the war now rests with the Administration's civilian leadership.

Congress' role should be to provide the necessary support and conduct vigorous oversight of our activities.

This appropriations bill also provides beneficial hurricane relief and improves our national energy security by providing access to ANWR for oil and gas exploration and production.

I want to thank the appropriators for hearing the concern of Texas, which has been hit indirectly by Hurricane Katrina and directly by Hurricane Rita. We have 150,000 evacuees in Houston, but funding and red-tape are still major burdens.

On the topic of ANWR, our nation's energy crisis this year proved we need a more robust supply of petroleum, because hurricanes can disrupt vital production in the Gulf of Mexico.

I encourage supporters of oil and gas exploration and production in ANWR to support the rule and support this conference report because this is a historic opportunity to finally achieve what many Congresses could not achieve.

This legislation may not be the ideal vehicle, and I would have preferred to do this on the energy bill.

However, a majority of the House and a majority of the Senate support opening ANWR, but procedural moves in the other body have stood in the way of our energy security.

As a result we need this procedural maneuver to get ANWR done, to provide energy and jobs for America.

I have visited the North Slope on several occasions and I can personally attest to the strong environmental protections.

Unfortunately, ANWR has become a symbolic issue for environmentalists, blown far out of proportion to the actual affects of oil and gas production on this coastal plain.

History will likely prove their dire predictions of environmental problems to be incorrect.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support the rule and support the underlying conference report for Fiscal Year 2006 DOD Appropriations.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant opposition to the Conference Report to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. Earlier this evening, I voted in favor of the FY 2006 Defense Authorization bill because it was a good bill, unencumbered by controversial and non-defense related items.

I oppose this bill for several reasons. First, evidence indicates that this bill does not provide what Defense Department officials already know our forces will require in the field. Today, officials in our Army headquarters are working on a new request for money from taxpayers far in excess of what is provided in this Conference Report. Authoritative press accounts indicate that the Department has already identified "urgent" needs exceeding \$100 billion above the amounts included in this legislation. This bill only provides half that amount. No doubt we will consider additional appropriations in the spring. We should have done it here and now.

Common sense would dictate that the Congress should include these funds in a bill not yet passed if the Army already knows its current funding request before Congress will fall far short of what uniformed Americans in the field need. It would appear that instead, we may pass this bill—already known to be inadequate to our needs—and then ask for more money under procedures that waive the budget and will automatically add every dollar in new appropriations to our deficit.

Deliberate and stable management of our defense budget demands better. So do our men and women in uniform. If we know they have urgent needs in the field, it is our duty to meet them.

I oppose this bill for another reason. The calm, stable administration of appropriations follows the rules of the House, precedent, and common sense. Our rules mandate that matters not germane to a bill be excluded. Hence, this should be a defense appropriations bill, nothing else. Our House rules normally exclude matters from final consideration that have not been attached to the bill in either the House or the Senate. That requires elected representatives of at least one chamber to review all matters for consideration in a House-Senate conference. This bill includes extraneous issues not related to the defense of the Nation. It sets a bad precedent that could bog down other defense bills with controversial, non-defense issues not considered by either chamber. This unusual procedure has prevented nearly all members of both the House and Senate from considering these contentious issues.

A key controversial issue included in this bill authorizes the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. It was not considered in either the House or the Senate bills. It is not germane to legislation making appropriations for national defense. Like many "Green Republican" members who support the protection of the Refuge, I oppose this bill