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SPECIAL REPORT: VA-HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations and California Implications - *June 22, 2000*

The California Institute presents here a quick analysis of several of the California details of the House version of the FY 2001 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing & Urban Development and Independent Agencies, which was passed June 7 by the House Appropriations Committee and by the House of Representatives on June 21. The bill is numbered H.R. 4690, and the corresponding committee report is House Report 106-680. We apologize for any errors or omissions in our discussion of these documents, and would appreciate any input/feedback on how to make improving corrections. The ordering of items generally reflects their presence in the bill does not mean to imply any relative importance.

The report is available on our website at <http://www.calinst.org/pubs/vah01.htm> or in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format at <http://www.calinst.org/pubs/vah01.pdf>.

The House version of the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations for fiscal year 2001 appropriates a total of \$46.8 billion.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

National Cemetery Project - Construction

- \$62,140,000 for construction of national cemeteries in Sacramento and four other areas.

American Battle Monuments Commission

- \$28,000,000 for fiscal year 2001 for monuments, cemeteries, and memorials throughout the world, five of which are in the U.S. - one being The Presidio in San Francisco.

Construction Funds for Sepulveda Medical Center

- Directs the Department to expeditiously spend remaining funds to repair the earthquake-damaged gymnasium on the VAMC campus in Sepulveda

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

For NASA, the House bill provides \$13.7 billion in FY 2001 funding, an increase of \$112 million over the FY 2000 level, though \$321.7 million below the Administration's budget request.

The bill directs NASA to terminate all joint aeronautics and space related research programs with the United States Air Force.

Manned Space Flight

The bill includes \$5.5 billion (the same as the President's request and an increase of \$12 million from FY00) for manned space flight activities, which includes Space Shuttle and Space Station activities. It also provides \$256 million for Space Shuttle upgrades pursuant to a report requested previously by Congress in the FY 2000 omnibus appropriations conference report. The Committee also encourages NASA to work closely with the academic and commercial sectors to further reduce the

lead-time necessary for scheduling a research experiment for a shuttle flight opportunity, while maintaining mission safety requirements.

Science, Astronautics and Technology

The bill includes \$5.6 billion (an increase of \$26 million from FY 2000 but a reduction of \$323 million from the Administration request) for science astronautics and technology accounts, which are used for space science, life and microgravity science, earth sciences, aero-space technology, advanced concepts and technology, space operations, and academic programs. This account includes \$2.378 billion for Space Science, \$329 million for Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications, \$1.4 billion for Earth Sciences, \$1.2 billion for Aero-Space technologies, and \$529 million for Space Operations.

Mission Support

The bill includes \$2.6 billion for the NASA Mission Support account, an increase of \$72 million from the FY 2000 level. The bill continues a prohibition on relocating NASA aircraft from the East Coast to the Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base in Southern California.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The bill provides \$4.064 billion for activities at the National Science Foundation (NSF), an increase of \$167 million from the prior year, though \$508 million below the President's request. Specific proposed program levels include : (1) Biological Sciences, \$450 million; (2) Computer and Information Science and Engineering, \$439 million; (3) Engineering, \$411 million; (4) Geosciences, \$524 million; (5) Mathematical and Physical Sciences, \$802 million; (6) Social Behavioral and Economic Sciences, \$158 million; (7) U.S. Polar Research Programs, \$202 million; (8) U.S. Antarctic Logistical Support Activities, \$63 million; and (9) Integrative Activities, \$87 million.

For major research equipment, the House bill provides \$77 million, including \$16.4 million for the Large Hadron Collider and \$28.2 million for the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation. Due to budgetary constraints, the bill does not provide startup funding for the US Array and San Andreas Fault Observatory at Depth.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

The bill contains language strongly questioning the Federal Emergency Management Agency's proposed regulations on public assistance insurance. The Committee last year also called on FEMA to delay the rule, which it did, until the General Accounting Office could examine the issue. This year's report language states:

the Committee remains concerned that requiring insurance as a condition of receiving public assistance exceeds FEMA's statutory authority, discourages attempts to mitigate damage before it occurs, assumes a fundamental misunderstanding of the insurance market, and merely shifts the costs of disasters from the federal government to states, municipalities, and private non-profit hospitals and universities. The Committee reminds FEMA that denying disaster assistance to underinsured or uninsured entities that suffer catastrophic losses as a result of a disaster could result in significant consequential losses of public services, medical care, and education. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that FEMA has not conducted a thorough cost-benefit analysis or conducted extensive outreach with potentially affected entities.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

In report language, the House Committee expressed concern with EPA's chosen preferred alternative for constructing secondary treatment facilities at the USIWTP near San Diego

State and Tribal Assistance Grants

- \$75,000,000 for high priority U.S./Mexico border projects - out of a total \$3.18 billion in grants.