

December 20, 2007

Congress Passes Omnibus Appropriations Bill for FY 2008: Package combines the 11 remaining FY 2008 appropriations bills.

With just one Fiscal Year ("FY") appropriations bill signed into law (Department of Defense), the end of the 1st Session quickly approaching, and a desire to avoid a year-long Continuing Resolution ("CR"), Congress finally agreed to combine the 11 remaining FY 2008 appropriations bill into one omnibus appropriations package after weeks of negotiations. As part of the agreement, Congressional leadership vowed to meet the President's spending level target of \$933 billion, which required reductions to programs and earmarks in each of the bills. On December 17, the House passed the omnibus package, which included emergency funding solely for the war in Afghanistan. However, the President quickly indicated that he would only sign the package if an additional \$40 billion was provided for the Iraq war without conditions. As a result, the Senate added funding when it passed the amended omnibus package on December 18. The House then passed the Senate version of the bill on December 19. The House also passed a fourth CR to fund the federal government until December 31, giving the President adequate time to sign the omnibus into law, which he is expected to do.

OVERVIEW

HUD's Native American Housing Block Grants under the Native American Housing Self-Determination Assistance program, received \$630 million, the same amount set by the Senate and slightly more than both the House amount of \$626.9 million and the President's request of \$627 million.

Under the FY 2008 Interior portion of the omnibus, all Interior programs, activities, and earmarks (including Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service) received an across-the-board 1.56 percent reduction from the final amounts set by the House and Senate. The following provides an overview of these programs before the 1.56 percent reduction.

FY 2008 Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA")

The Omnibus FY 2008 appropriations bill provides more funding for the BIA than the House and Senate provided with a total of \$2.1 billion, an increase of \$100 million over the President's request, \$10 million more than the House amount, and \$40 million more than the Senate amount. The Omnibus partially restores funding for two programs eliminated under the President's FY 2008 budget request: Johnson O'Malley Grants Program ("JOM") and the Housing Improvement Program ("HIP"). JOM received a total of \$14 million, less than the \$16.5 million in the House bill, and more than the \$8 million in the Senate bill. HIP received a total of \$13.8 million, \$5 million less than the House amount and \$4.4 million more than the Senate amount.

The Omnibus also includes other Indian program funding of note, such as \$149.6 million for the BIA Contract Support Program as proposed by the President and provided by both the House and Senate. The Omnibus also maintained the Senate amount of \$20.2 million for the Rights Protection Implementation Program, a slight decrease from the House amount of

\$20.6 million but an increase from the President's \$16.6 million request. The BIA Law Enforcement Program received the full House amount of \$231.8 million, an increase over both the Senate amount and the President's request of \$225.8 million and \$221.8 million, respectively. The Consolidated Tribal Government Program received the Senate and House amounts of \$69.2 million, a \$ 1 million increase above the President's request.

FY 2008 Indian Health Service ("IHS")

The Omnibus provides the IHS with a total of \$3.39 billion, slightly more than the \$3.38 billion provided by the House and \$3.37 billion provided by the Senate. The Urban Indian Health Program, which the President's request proposed to eliminate, received the Senate amount of \$35.1 million, \$1 million more than the House amount. The IHS Clinical Services Program received the House amount of \$2.47 billion, an increase from the Senate mark of \$2.45 billion and the President's request of \$2.42 billion. Meanwhile, Preventative Health and Direct Operations held steady at \$129.6 million and \$64.6 million, respectively. In addition, IHS Contract Support Costs received \$271.6 million, the same amount provided by the Senate and the President's request, but slightly less than the House amount of \$274.6 million. The Omnibus also provided the full House amount of \$172.3 million for the Facilities and Environmental Health Support Program, which was higher than the Senate's \$170.6 million and the President's \$164.8 million request. In addition, the Omnibus included the Senate amount for Maintenance and Support by providing \$53.7 million, an increase from the \$52.6 million provided by House and the \$51.9 million in the President's request.