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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2001

## *House of Representatives*

# A BUDGET FOR VETERANS BY VETERANS!

**HON. BOB FILNER  
OF CALIFORNIA**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**MR. FILNER:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and I would like to point out that as this body is preparing to adjourn for Veterans Day, despite some of the comments we have heard, this budget is not a good budget for our veterans and we are not honoring them as we come up to Veterans Day.

I understand that the chairman of the committee and the ranking member have had a certain budget to deal with, and they have done the best they can. But this Congress just passed a bill which gave \$25 billion in retroactive tax increases to the biggest corporations in this country. IBM will get a check for \$2 billion, GE and Ford will get checks for between \$1 billion and a \$1.5 billion. And what did we do for veterans in this budget? Barely keeping up with inflation. Barely keeping up with inflation.

At a time when the backlog of cases to be adjudicated accumulates at 10,000 a week, this budget will do nothing to clear up that backlog. This budget will not help us cure or find a treatment or a cause for Persian Gulf War illness. It does not take any of the 250,000 homeless off the streets.

Mr. Speaker, it does not shorten the waiting time of months and months that our veterans have to wait for doctor's appointments. This does not honor our veterans, at a time not only when we are approaching Veterans' Day but when our men and women are at

war and we will have more veterans and more service-connected problems. We are not sending a signal in the men and women engaged in the war against terrorism when we treat our veterans in this way.

All of the veterans in this country came together to produce The Independent Budget, a budget by veterans for veterans. It outlined the needs that our veterans have. But what does this bill have, \$2 billion less than what this calls for. The final conference report that we are voting on provides less money than either House provided in their resolution. How can a conference report come back with less than each House recommended?

Mr. Speaker, those who are adept at these conference reports will have to explain that to me. We come back with \$2 billion less than our veterans need, less than what each House called for, and yet we are about to go out on November 11 and November 12 and say to our veterans, we support them. We love them.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report does not do the job that our veterans deserve and our new veterans are going to need. This budget again is a dishonor to our veterans as we approach Veterans' Day on November 11.