

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this conference report. I support several important provisions of the bill, including a Department of Energy (DOE) defense worker compensation program and a pay raise and expanded health care choices for our men and women in uniform. However, the legislation is so laden with special interest pork projects that I fear it will undermine our ability to be fiscally responsible and pay down our national debt while, at the same time, adequately funding the Nation's highest priorities.

Where are our priorities in this Congress? The 106th Congress is drawing rapidly to a close, yet our Nation's schools are crumbling and overcrowded, there are 11 million uninsured children in America, and our seniors lack comprehensive prescription drug benefits. We are not addressing these today, nor are we authorizing \$310 billion—or anywhere close to that amount—to address these critical issues facing every American family. Instead, Congress will pass a Defense Authorization Conference Report that includes \$4.5 billion more funding than the administration requested and \$21.1 billion more than last year's funding level. Over half of the additional \$4.5 billion tacked on in this conference report—\$2.6 billion—goes toward procurement. I would venture to guess that many of the Members who supported this bill today will be surprised as the special interest projects are revealed in coming days. Unfortunately, I fear this conference report is a reflection of the skewed priorities of the leadership in this House. We have failed to address the real issues facing the American people.

There are good provisions in this conference report. I strongly support the establishment of a program that finally recognizes the vital contributions of Department of Energy contract workers who risked their personal health to help protect our Nation. For too many years, the government has denied that these workers were suffering from catastrophic and chronic illnesses that resulted from their work at defense facilities such as Rocky Flats. Earlier this year, Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson announced the Department's intention to belatedly remedy this problem and seek to implement a compensation program to aid sick workers. Also, a number of my colleagues and I have supported legislation required to authorize a compensation program. I am a proud cosponsor of Representative ED WHITFIELD's (R-KY) bipartisan legislation H.R. 4398. I regret that Congress failed to fully consider and pass H.R. 4398, which I believe would have been the proper approach to address this important issue. I regret that Congress has failed to act and to bring this important legislation before us for proper consideration and action.

I am pleased that this conference report includes a 3.7 percent pay raise for military personnel. I believe our military forces deserve fair compensation for the job they do and for the risks they take on behalf of our country. This is why I am a cosponsor of legislation that would provide for a 4.8 percent pay increase to members of the Armed Forces and open the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to active-duty personnel. It is vital that when our armed forces are called to duty they can be assured that their families are secure and able to pay the bills back home.

As a cosponsor of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999, I was very pleased that this legislation was included in the Senate version

of this H.R. 4205. I would like to note that the House also passed a motion to instruct the conferees to include this provision as part of the final conference agreement. However, the leadership blatantly ignored the will of the House and stripped the Hate Crimes language out of the bill. It is well past time for legislation that makes hate crimes against gays and lesbians, women, and people with disabilities a Federal crime. Every hate crime that occurs in this country is an attack on American values, and it is a disgrace that this language was stripped out of the bill.

I hope that, in the final days of the 106th Congress, we can address some of the critical issues facing our Nation today, rather than continuing on the current path which has resulted in a rudderless, haphazard attempt to legislate for a few special interests.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4205, the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 Conference Report. While Federal constitutional authority clearly exists to provide for the national defense, global militarism was never contemplated by the founders. Misnamed like most everything else in Washington, the "Defense" Authorization Act thus funds U.N.-directed peacekeeping in Kosovo and Bosnia to the tune of \$3.1 billion dollars, \$443 million in aid to the former Soviet Union, \$172 million for NATO infrastructure (the formerly defensive alliance which recently initiated force against Kosovo), and \$869 million for drug interdiction efforts by the U.S. military in an attempt to take our failed 1920's prohibition experiment worldwide.

Certainly a bill authorizing use of resources for the national defense which also properly compensates those military personnel necessary to maintain it would be not only constitutional but most appropriate. Contrarily, a bill which continues our elitist and failed policy of policing the world all the while creating additional enemies of the United States is neither constitutional, justifiable, supportable, nor prudent. By avoiding such a police-the-world approach, which destroys troop morale by isolating them from their families and spreading them dangerously thin, considerably less money could be authorized with seriously improved security results.

Meanwhile, H.R. 3769, my bill to prohibit the destruction during fiscal year 2001 of missile silos in the United States, fails to even receive so much as a hearing. While I understand that to comply with questionable, but ratified, disarmament treaties, certain missiles may need to be deactivated, it seems ill-advised to spend money to also destroy the missile silos which may be strategically vital to our national defense at some date in the not-so-distant future.

I encourage my colleagues to rethink the United States' 20th century role of global policeman and restore instead, a policy of true national defense which will better protect their constituents, keep their constituent's children safer and out of endless global conflicts, and reassure for taxpayers some semblance of fiscal sanity.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the priorities represented in this bill are misplaced. It spends \$310 billion, over half of our discretionary budget. This is \$4.5 billion more than the President requested and \$21 billion above the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2000.

We are spending too much in this bill on too many unproven technologies, duplicative sys-

tems, and, in some cases, congressional additions that our military leaders don't want. We are spending enough on things like environmental remediation of past actions. For example, the estimated pricetag for clean-up of the unexploded ordnance that contaminates millions of acres of land and internal waterways is over \$100 billion. The funding in this bill for environmental restoration is a mere \$1.3 billion, less than half a percent of the total.

We don't need three brand-new advanced fighter jets. We will have military air superiority over all potential adversaries for years to come with our current planes. We will spend over \$300 billion over the next 10 to 20 years on the Air Force's F-22, the Navy's F-18 E/F, and the Joint Strike Fighter. We are doing this rather than made the hard decisions we need to in order to make proving for our national defense more cost-effective.

It is also troubling that the hate crimes provision was not included in this bill. The Senate added it to its defense authorization and we in the House voted in a bipartisan fashion in favor of a motion to instruct conferees to include it in the conference report. This does not reflect the will of the Congress.

For years we made commitments to military retirees that they and their families were entitled to lifetime health care. I am pleased that we have made good on that promise in this bill by providing lifetime health care for military retirees and their eligible family members, as well as pharmacy access to all Medicare-eligible military retirees. But this could have been accomplished within the context of a better bill.

Because of the many failures of the bill, I was forced to vote against it. America has the best-trained, best equipped and best-prepared military forces in the world. Our forces are ready to defend America's interests wherever they are threatened. That will continue only if we're careful about the investments we make.

We need to seek peace from all the threats of the new century. This bill spends too much on the wrong things and not enough on cleaning up from our past activities and preparing to transition to fight tomorrow's wars. This is the key not only to security abroad, but to livability at home—to make our men and women in uniform and all our families safe, healthy and economically secure.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4205, the FY 01 Defense Authorization bill. Of particular interest to my constituents in southwest Ohio—particularly those in western Hamilton County—is the provision based on legislation that I have cosponsored that establishes a new Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

This program will assist workers exposed to radiation, beryllium and other toxic substances in the course of carrying out their work in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. Many of these workers have become sick from illnesses that can be traced to that exposure. The former Fernald Feed Materials Production Center, which is located in my district, was part of our nuclear weapons production complex for nearly 40 years from 1951 to 1988. Too often, these workers were not even aware of the hazards they faced in their jobs—hazards that have frequently had serious health effects.

What we are considering today will provide covered workers and their survivors at Fernald and around the Nation with the compensation they deserve that guarantees a specific minimum benefit and medical expenses. I urge