



January 4, 2005

Major Accomplishments of the U.S. Senate During the 108th Congress

This paper lists some of the Senate's accomplishments during the 108th Congress. Items are listed in numerical order of the public law number under seven categories: Creating Jobs and Growing the Economy (pp. 1-4), Keeping Americans Safe at Home and Abroad (pp. 4-13), Reducing Red Tape & Other Good-Government Initiatives (pp. 13-16), Strengthening and Improving Health Care (pp. 16-17), Education Initiatives (p. 18), Strengthening the Safety Net and Assisting the Disabled (p. 19), and Protecting our Resources (pp. 20-21).

CREATING JOBS AND GROWING THE ECONOMY

Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act – P.L. 108-435

This law assures that the majority of American Internet users will continue to benefit from tax-free Internet access, and that companies will not be required to withhold state sales taxes on consumer purchases over the Internet (though consumers will still be liable for any “use taxes” imposed by the state in which they reside). The law extends the moratorium on state and local taxation of Internet access, as well as on any multiple or discriminatory state and local taxes on Internet-based transactions, until November 1, 2007.

American Job Creation Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-357

By replacing the non-compliant U.S. international tax rules with broad-based tax relief, this legislation ensures that American manufacturers and other U.S. exporters remain competitive in the international marketplace and can continue providing millions of critical jobs in the United States. Specifically, the law eliminates the tax regime for U.S. exporting companies that the World Trade Organization ruled in 2002 was inconsistent with U.S. obligations under various international trade agreements. Unfortunately, the delay in passing this legislation caused by Democrat obstructionism resulted in U.S. companies being subject to European Union sanctions, amounting to billions of dollars in European taxes on U.S. exports.

Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-311

The Working Families Tax Relief Act was passed to protect middle-income families from a substantial tax increase that would have commenced in 2005, and it reflects the Republican commitment to maintain tax relief for working Americans. The law extends several provisions of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act (JGTRRA) of 2003, which would have

expired in 2005. Specifically, the law: extends through 2010 the \$1,000 child tax credit, the expanded 10-percent tax bracket, and the marriage penalty relief; continues the increased exemption from the individual Alternative Minimum Tax through 2005; and provides significant tax simplification by adopting a uniform definition of a “child.” The bill accelerates the refundability of the child tax credit adopted under JGTRRA, and permits members of the military to include combat pay as earned income for purposes of calculating the child tax credit and the earned-income tax credit.

U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement – P.L. 108-302

The U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement is an integral part of President Bush’s strategy to create a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013. Passage of the Agreement is not only good for the American economy, but is a critical step forward in encouraging countries of the region to implement domestic reforms, institute the rule of law, protect private property rights, and create a foundation for openness, economic growth, and prosperity.

U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement – P.L. 108-286

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement (USAFTA) is the first trade agreement between the United States and a developed country since the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement in 1988. It is estimated that USAFTA will generate at least \$2 billion per year for both countries by 2010. By eliminating nearly all tariffs on U.S. manufacturing and agricultural exports, this bill creates a fair and open market in Australia for U.S. producers. USAFTA strengthens America’s relationship with a close ally abroad while expanding opportunities for U.S. workers and businesses at home.

Helping Hands for Homeownership Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-285

This law enhances the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) by allowing homeowners to earn their “sweat equity”— the program’s physical labor requirement for funds — by performing required construction time on other homes in the community.

Pension Stability Act – P.L. 108-218

This law reforms the previous pension funding formula by changing the rates used to calculate pension-plan contributions from 30-year Treasury bond rates to conservatively invested, long-term corporate-bond rates.

American Dream Downpayment Act – P.L. 108-186

This bill would provide \$200 million a year in down-payment assistance for low-income, first-time homebuyers and would increase the value of loans the Federal Housing Administration may guarantee in disadvantaged areas. This would not only make the dream of homeownership more accessible, but would also connect these borrowers to the broader financial markets and provide a boost to liquidity and economic growth.

Nanotechnology Research and Development – P.L. 108-153

This bill would authorize \$4.8 billion over the next five years to be invested in a National Nanotechnology Initiative program as a multi-agency federal research priority. Nanotechnology is a newly emerging field of science in which matter is manipulated at the molecular and atomic

levels. The potential applications of nanotechnology hold untold promise for the future of America's economy, ranging from innovations in medicine to manufacturing.

Surface Transportation Extension Act – P.L. 108-88

This law extended federal highway safety, motor carriers safety, and transit programs for five months and authorized appropriations through February 29, 2004. This extension (and, subsequently, others) assured that vital highway construction and repair projects were financed. The 108th Congress was unsuccessful in passing the six-year reauthorization, but prospects are good for this to be accomplished early in the 109th Congress – an important goal since investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure creates jobs and spurs economic growth.

United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act – P.L. 108-78

This bill implements the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. This is the first Free Trade Agreement with an Asian-Pacific nation. Under the terms of the agreement, Singapore guarantees zero tariffs immediately on all U.S. goods and cannot increase its duties on any U.S. product.

United States-Chile Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act – P.L. 108-77

This bill implements the United States-Chile Free Trade Agreement. This is the first Free Trade Agreement with a South American nation and, along with the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, this is the first agreement passed under the Congressionally-approved Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). Under the terms of the free trade agreement, more than 85 percent of two-way trade in consumer and industrial products becomes tariff-free immediately, with most remaining tariffs eliminated in four years. More than three-quarters of U.S. farm goods will enter Chile tariff-free within four years.

Accountant, Compliance, and Enforcement Staffing Act – P.L. 108-44

This law will help assure the Securities and Exchange Commission can provide appropriate oversight of U.S. corporations in the post-Enron era by streamlining the agency's hiring process for some of the critical oversight positions. This will better provide for the protection of investors and increase confidence in the capital markets.

Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Act – P.L. 108-27

This tax relief bill provides \$350 billion in net tax relief over 10 years to create jobs, spur economic growth, and reduce the tax burden on families. It includes marginal rate reductions, small business tax relief, dividend tax relief, marriage penalty relief, child tax credits, and AMT relief.

Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act (S. 196) - Passed Senate

This bill establishes within the National Science Foundation (NSF) an office dedicated solely to aiding eligible minority institutions in providing educational instruction in digital and wireless network technologies.

Workforce Investment Act (H.R. 1261) – Passed Senate

The bill makes current workforce training programs more effective in their mission of training almost 1.5 million workers annually for new or better jobs. Under the bill, job training programs will be more responsive to the needs of local employers, streamlined to provide workers with the services most useful to them, and more accessible to workers in rural areas through the use of technology.

Nomination of Alan Greenspan to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System – Confirmed by unanimous consent

During his first 17 years as chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan has implemented monetary policies that have helped the United States achieve unprecedented levels of economic growth while avoiding high rates of inflation. He was confirmed unanimously to serve a fifth term.

KEEPING AMERICANS SAFE AT HOME AND ABROAD

At Home

Video Voyeurism Prevention Act (S. 1301) – P.L. 108-495

The issue of ‘video voyeurism’ has become a greater problem with the development of small, concealed cameras and cell phone cameras that threaten the privacy of unsuspecting adults and children. This problem is worsened when unauthorized pictures or photographs are published on the Internet. While more states have enacted laws in recent years, there are still great gaps in privacy protection. This bill addresses those gaps, making video voyeurism a crime punishable by a fine of not more than \$100,000 or imprisonment for up to 1 year.

Intelligence Authorization Act – P.L. 108-487

This bill authorizes appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System.

National Intelligence Reform Act – P.L. 108-458

This legislation reforms the federal Intelligence Community by creating a Director for National Intelligence (DNI), a National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and a National Counterproliferation Center (NCPC). The DNI will serve as the head of the country’s intelligence community and the principal adviser to the President on intelligence matters. The NCTC will coordinate the sharing and analyzing of critical information relating to counterterrorism. The NCPC will oversee interdiction activities for weapons of mass destruction.

Justice for All Act – P.L. 108-405

This law increases protection of crime victims’ rights by eliminating the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders. It improves and expands the DNA testing capacity of federal, state, and local crime laboratories and increases research and development of new DNA testing technologies. This legislation ensures that crime victims’

concerns are adequately addressed in the judicial process by codifying the rights of victims and providing the means to enforce those rights.

Crime Victims' Rights Act – Title I of P.L. 108-405

This legislation establishes statutory rights for victims of federal crimes and authorizes funding through FY09 for federal and state programs to protect the rights of crime victims. Its enactment is a critical step forward in balancing the scales of justice. Victims of federal crimes will have the following rights: to be reasonably protected from the accused; to have reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public proceeding involving the crime, or of any release or escape of the accused; to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding involving release, plea, or sentencing; to have full and timely restitution as provided in law; to proceedings free from unreasonable delay; and to be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy.

Homeland Security Appropriations – P.L. 108-334

In an effort to make this country safer, this law provides important funding for the Department of Homeland Security, including \$1.6 billion in spending above FY04 levels on Security, Enforcement, and Investigations. Other spending includes: fund management and operations; preparedness and recovery; research and development, training, assessments and services; and other general provisions.

Department of Homeland Security Financial Accountability Act – P.L. 108-330

This legislation will improve the financial accountability of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and establish requirements for the Future Years Homeland Security Program. It ensures that DHS will abide by important financial management systems requirements, and that its Chief Financial Officer is a presidential appointee, subject to Senate confirmation.

Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act – P.L. 108-277

This law enhances the ability of trained officers — including those who are retired or off-duty — to keep themselves and their communities safe by exempting qualified current and former law enforcement officers from state laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns.

Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act – P.L. 108-275

By increasing penalties for those who steal identities to commit immigration violations, Medicare fraud, and other serious crimes, this new law addresses the growing identity theft problem, which victimizes 10 million Americans each year. The law imposes a higher maximum penalty for identity theft used to facilitate acts of terrorism.

Flood Insurance Reform Act – P.L. 108-264

Flood damage mitigation efforts are bolstered by this law, which amends the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. Passage of this law encourages efforts to reduce future losses on properties for which repetitive flood insurance claim payments have been made.

Unborn Victims of Violence Act – P.L. 108-212

This law protects pregnant women and their unborn children by creating a new federal crime whenever an assailant injures or kills an unborn child during the commission of a federal crime of violence. It guarantees that the unborn child is recognized as a victim of crime distinct from the pregnant woman.

Poison Control Center Enhancement – P.L. 108-194

This law authorizes continued funding for the maintenance of a national toll-free number to access regional poison control centers.

Vision 100 -Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act – P.L. 108-176

This law authorizes funding for the entire suite of federal aviation programs until 2007. Specifically, the bill provides \$10.5 billion to improve safety and increase airport capacity, and creates an Aviation Security Capital Fund to help airports pay for new detection and counterterrorism technology to keep the American flying public safe.

Undetectable Firearms Act Extension – P.L. 108-174

This law reauthorizes the ban on undetectable firearms (sometimes referred to as “plastic guns”) for another 10 years under the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988 (which makes it illegal to manufacture, import, possess, or transfer a firearm that is not detectable by walk-through metal detectors or airport x-ray machines).

National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization – P.L. 108-168

This law authorizes funding for the NTSB, which is responsible for investigating and determining the cause of every civil aviation accident and significant accidents in other modes of transportation. Corrective responses recommended by the NTSB save lives.

Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-105

This law bans partial-birth abortions — a procedure in which a living fetus of 20 weeks gestation or more is partially delivered before being deliberately killed. The law bans this atrocious practice and is consistent with the Supreme Court’s past rulings on abortion issues.

Nomination of Thomas J. Ridge to be Secretary of Homeland Security – Confirmed 94-0 and Homeland Security Appropriations bill for FY 2004 – P.L. 108-90

Before Secretary Ridge was nominated to be the first head of the new Department of Homeland Security, which was created in response to the events of September 11th, President Bush chose him as the Director of the White House Office of Homeland Security where he proved himself equal to this most critical task. Prior to answering the call of President Bush, Secretary Ridge was twice elected Governor and five times elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. Congress this year passed its first appropriations bill for the newly created Department, which now houses customs and border protection, immigration and customs enforcement, the Transportation Security Administration, the Coast Guard, the Office for Domestic Preparedness, and Emergency Preparedness and Response.

Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-79

This law directs the Bureau of Justice Statistics within the Department of Justice to conduct an annual statistical study and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape.

Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-36

This law enhances the nation’s child abuse prevention programs by authorizing grants to States for programs to prevent child abuse and provide care for victims.

PROTECT Act – P.L. 108-21

This law strengthens existing laws against child pornography, reversing much of the damage done by a recent Supreme Court ruling that made it very difficult to prosecute child pornographers who use the Internet. This law also codifies and expands the President's initiative to provide national coordination for AMBER Alert programs, the immediate alert programs designed to find kidnapped children soon after they are abducted.

Smallpox Emergency Personnel Protection – P.L. 108-20

Under the law, the federal government will provide – to eligible individuals (or their survivors), for covered injuries – payment for related medical care, lost employment income, and death benefits, due to the administration of a smallpox vaccine or arising in specified circumstances from an accidental smallpox inoculation.

National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-3

This amends the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to extend the Director of FEMA's ability to carry out the national flood insurance program through 2003.

Public Transportation Terrorism Prevention Act (S. 2884) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to award grants to public transportation agencies to improve security, and provides \$3.37 billion for capital and operational security improvements.

Homeland Security Grant Program (S. 2635) – Passed Senate

This bill establishes an intergovernmental grant program to identify and develop homeland security information, equipment, capabilities, technologies, and services to further the homeland security needs of the United States and to address the homeland security needs of Federal, State, and local governments.

Maritime Transportation Security (S. 2279) – Passed Senate

Although the Maritime Transportation Security Act was signed into law in 2002, many of the security requirements have yet to be developed or implemented, and lack of coordination and established standards and goals has led to confusion for the maritime industry. This bill would require the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security to report on the implementation progress of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA), and would clarify planning and reporting requirements. Federal agencies will complete detailed studies of maritime security issues, review security plans, and correct deficiencies.

Rail Security Act of 2004 (S. 2273) – Passed Senate

This bill will improve rail security by requiring the completion of a vulnerability assessment and security plan for the rail system, and by authorizing funds to address immediate security needs.

Arming of Cargo Pilots Against Terrorism (S. 1657) – Passed Senate

This bill amends current law to allow flight deck crew members of a cargo aircraft to be armed with a firearm and taser to defend the aircraft against an attack by terrorists that could result in the use of the aircraft as a weapon of mass destruction or for other terrorist purposes.

Homeland Security Technology Improvement Act (S. 1612) – Passed Senate

In order to provide state and local law enforcement agencies with the tools necessary to protect Americans, this bill establishes a technology, equipment, and information transfer program within the Department of Homeland Security. Law enforcement agencies protecting borders, ports, and high-threat areas would be able to more easily secure cutting-edge detection and monitoring equipment.

Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act (S. 1601) – Passed Senate

This bill addresses the continuing problems of child abuse and family violence on Indian lands. Its purpose is to build and improve comprehensive tribal programs for child abuse prevention, prosecution, and treatment, to establish more rigorous criteria for background checks, and to identify impediments to reducing child abuse.

Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act (S. 1402) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes nearly \$1 billion over five years to improve safety on the nation's railways through the Federal Railroad Administration's safety and research programs. The bill also would study the conditions of the nation's railways and recommend ways to improve the ability of emergency responders to perform their duties.

Disaster Area Health and Environmental Monitoring (S. 1279) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes the President to carry out a program for the protection of the health and safety of residents, workers, volunteers, and others in a disaster area.

Homeland Security Federal Workforce Act (S. 589) – Passed Senate

This bill would help the government recruit and retain excellent candidates to work in critical areas of national security; it would provide an education loan repayment program and a fellowship program for qualified, superior candidates. This bill would also assist government agencies in addressing personnel deficiencies in specialized skill areas important to national security.

Iraqi Scientists Immigration Act of 2003 (S. 205) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes the issuance of immigrant visas to, and the admission to the United States for permanent residence of, certain scientists, engineers, and technicians who have worked in Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs.

Air Cargo Security Act (S. 165) – Passed Senate

This bill would improve America's air transportation security by requiring the screening of cargo transported on commercial passenger aircraft.

Senate Intelligence and Homeland Security Oversight (S. Res. 445) – Passed Senate

This package of reforms will improve the effectiveness of the Select Committee on Intelligence in its oversight mission; it also creates a Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in the Senate.

Nomination of Porter J. Goss to be Director of Central Intelligence – Confirmed 77-17

The confirmation of Porter J. Goss was a critical step in the effort to restructure the intelligence community in a way that would best guarantee a safer America. Director Goss is uniquely qualified to lead the CIA at this turbulent time. His broad range of experience, which includes service as a CIA case officer and as Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, has prepared him for the challenge of reforming the intelligence community and restoring confidence in this important work.

Defending and Promoting Freedom

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 – P.L. 108-375

This law authorizes \$447.2 billion for FY05 for military activities of the Department of Defense and Department of Energy, including programs to combat terrorism and for the continued development of a national missile defense system to be put on alert this year. It also provides for an across-the-board pay raise of 3.5 percent for military personnel. Additionally, this bill adds \$925 million for several force protection measures and authorizes \$25 billion in a contingency reserve fund for continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Oil-for-Food Program Investigation – Title XII of P.L. 108-375

So that those who are guilty of wrongdoing are held accountable, this legislation calls on the U.N. to make its Oil-for-Food documents available to congressional investigators. This legislation allows Congress to conduct a thorough investigation of the United Nations' Oil-for-Food Program, whose real beneficiaries appear to have been Saddam Hussein and corrupt U.N. and foreign officials rather than the Iraqi people.

North Korean Human Rights Act – P.L. 108-333

This legislation promotes human rights and freedom in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). This law authorizes the President to award grants to private, nonprofit organizations to promote human rights, democracy, rule of law, and the development of a market economy in North Korea, and includes provisions to protect North Korean refugees and assist those in need.

Department of Defense Appropriation Bill for FY 2005 – P.L. 108-287

This law provides \$416.2 billion in new spending authority for the Department of Defense, including \$25 billion in an Emergency Wartime Appropriation request from the President for costs associated with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Other highlights of this legislation include funding for a 3.5-percent, across-the-board pay raise for military personnel, and an overall Department of Defense end strength of 2,263,900.

African Growth and Opportunity Acceleration Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-274

This legislation extends the benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to 2015. By encouraging trade between the United States and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, AGOA plays an important role in creating jobs and stimulating economic growth in the world's poorest region. In addition, AGOA promotes democracy and human rights by requiring that countries enact certain reforms before they are eligible for its benefits.

Renewal of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act – P.L. 108-272

As a means of promoting democratic rule and freedom of expression in Burma, this law sanctions the ruling Burmese military junta and supports and recognizes the National League of Democracy as the legitimate representative of the Burmese people.

Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty – P.L. 108-175

In this law, the U.S. government calls on Syria to halt its support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, and stop its development of weapons of mass destruction. It holds Syria accountable for the serious international security problems it has caused in the Middle East, and imposes sanctions on Syria.

Defense Authorization Act – P.L. 108-136

This law authorizes \$401.3 billion for FY04 for military activities of the Department of Defense – including programs to combat terrorism and for initial deployment of a national missile defense system. It also includes a military pay raise of 3.7 percent for all uniformed service personnel, and higher targeted pay raises for mid-grade personnel, for an overall average raise of 4.15 percent. Additionally, the bill phases in concurrent receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation.

Emergency Funds for Defense and Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan – P.L. 108-106

This law provides \$87.44 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations for defense and for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004. The bill provides an additional \$17.8 billion for military personnel in FY04. Just as the Marshall Plan was an investment in the future of a stable and peaceful Europe, this bill provides the necessary funding to support the reconstruction of Iraq, and provides our troops with the resources needed to successfully continue the War on Terrorism.

Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-61

This law sanctions the ruling Burmese military junta to strengthen Burma's democratic forces, and supports and recognizes the National League of Democracy as the legitimate representative of the Burmese people as a means of promoting democratic rule and freedom of expression in Burma.

Taiwan Participation in the World Health Organization – P.L. 108-28

Under this law, the U.S. Secretary of State is required to develop a plan to promote and obtain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization at its annual meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Observer status in the WHO provides Taiwan with access to medical expertise and emergency health assistance from the international community.

Global HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Assistance – P.L. 108-25

This law meets the President's request to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The President will establish a comprehensive, integrated, five-year strategy to combat the global spread of HIV and AIDS.

Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-11

This law provides \$78.49 billion for ongoing military operations in Iraq, postwar occupation, reconstruction and relief in Iraq, international assistance to countries contributing to the war in Iraq or the global war on terrorism, the cost of the continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan, and additional homeland security needs. The bill provides an additional \$13.7 billion for military personnel in FY03.

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Amendment (S. 113) – Passed Senate

This bill amends the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to cover individuals (“agents of a foreign power”), other than United States persons, who engage in international terrorism without affiliation with an international terrorist group, for the purposes of securing warrants for the electronic surveillance of communications between and among foreign powers.

Nomination of John D. Negroponte to be U.S. Ambassador to Iraq – Confirmed 95-3

Ambassador John Negroponte is America’s top diplomat to Iraq, operating out of a newly established American mission in the country. The role of the U.S. Mission in Iraq is to support the Iraqi people and government as they take control of their own affairs.

Nomination of John C. Danforth to be U.S. Ambassador to United Nations – Confirmed by unanimous consent

Ambassador John C. Danforth is America’s permanent representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and is the representative of the United States in the Security Council of the United Nations.

NATO Enlargement (Treaty Doc. 108-04) – Enacted on May 8, 2003

This treaty provides Senate consent to amend the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty to allow seven Central and Eastern European nations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). They are Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Moscow Treaty (Treaty Doc. 107-8) – Enacted on March 6, 2003

This treaty provides Senate consent for an agreement between the United States and Russian Federation that each country will commit to reduce the total number of strategic offensive nuclear warheads in its possession to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads by December 31, 2012.

Support for Our Troops and Veterans

Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-454

This law improves and enhances education, housing, employment, medical, and other benefits for veterans, and improves and extends certain authorities relating to the administration of benefits for veterans.

Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act – P.L. 108-445

To alleviate the cyclical problems the Department of Veterans Affairs has had with recruitment and retention of physicians, dentists, and nurses due to inadequate pay, this law simplifies and improves pay provisions for physicians and dentists and authorizes alternate work schedules and executive pay for nurses.

Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act – P.L. 108-422

This law increases the grants to benefit homeless veterans, creates and improves programs for management and administration of veterans' facilities and health care programs. The bill's goal is to ensure continued improvement of the quality of benefits and health care for veterans.

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-363

Consistent with the pledge to provide critical care for veterans and their families, this law increases the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

Military Construction Appropriations – P.L. 108-324

This law provides \$10 billion for high-priority military constructions projects, including alteration, improvement, operation, and maintenance of military family housing. This bill also serves as the source for the U.S. share of the NATO Security Investment Program.

Combat Pay Tax Relief – Section 104 of P.L. 108-311

This tax-relief package includes combat pay in the calculation to determine refundability related to the Child Tax Credit.

Campaign Medals: Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom – P.L. 108-234

This law provides for the establishment of separate medals to recognize members of the military for their service in defense of the nation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Troop Leave Domestic Transportation Reimbursement – P.L. 108-220

This law directs the Secretary of Defense to reimburse members of the armed forces for round-trip transportation expenses incurred within the United States in connection with the Central Command Rest and Recuperation Leave Program.

Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act – P.L. 108-189

This law provides for financial protection and temporary suspension of certain judicial proceedings for servicemembers on active duty. It increases the rent level under which a servicemember or family members are protected from eviction, limits a state's ability to increase the tax liability of a servicemember's spouse, and increases the value of life insurance coverage that is protected by the government if premiums are not paid.

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-147

This law increases the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled adult children, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. The increase is the same percentage as that payable to Social Security recipients.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Act – P.L. 108-126

This law authorizes the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. to design and construct a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-121

This law provides a special rule for members of the uniformed services in determining the exclusion of gain from the sale of a principal residence, and restores the tax-exempt status of death gratuity payments to members of the uniformed services. It also doubles, from \$6,000 to \$12,000, the military death gratuity payment and amends the Internal Revenue Code to provide that the full payment shall be tax exempt.

National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-109

This law directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish five new cemeteries for our nation's veterans.

Veterans' Memorial Preservation and Recognition Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-29

This law establishes criminal penalties for willfully injuring or destroying or attempting to injure or destroy any structure, plaque, statue, or other monument on public property commemorating the service of any person(s) in the U.S. armed forces. It also requires that veterans' cemeteries be treated as sites permitting supplemental guide signs on Federal-aid highways.

Indian Veterans' Charter (S. 2938) – Passed Senate

This bill grants a Federal charter to the National American Indian Veterans, Incorporated.

Troops Phone Home Free (S. 718) – Passed Senate

This bill directs the Secretary of Defense to provide prepaid phone cards, or the equivalent telephone service benefit, to military personnel stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan so that they may call family and friends in the United States at no cost, for calls up to \$40 per month, per person.

Reserve Survivor Benefits (S. 712) – Passed Senate

This bill provides Survivor Benefit Plan annuities for surviving spouses of Reservists not eligible for retirement who die from a cause incurred or aggravated while on inactive-duty training.

Re-enlistment Bonus (S. 711) – Passed Senate

This bill alleviates the delay in the payment of the Selected Reserve reenlistment bonus to members of the Selected Reserve who are mobilized.

Survivor Benefit Increase (S. 704) – Passed Senate

This bill increases the amount of the death gratuity payable with respect to deceased members of the Armed Forces.

REDUCING RED TAPE & OTHER GOOD-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act of 2004 (H.R. 5382) – P.L. 108-492

This law promotes the development of the emerging commercial human space flight industry. This law directs the Department of Transportation to regulate the operations and safety of the emerging industry to foster the goal of safely opening space to the American people and their private commercial, scientific, and cultural enterprises.

Consolidated Appropriations Act, to accompany H.R. 4818 – P.L. 108-447

The final language includes \$388.4 billion in discretionary funding for the following nine appropriations bills: Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-State-Judiciary, Foreign Operations, Interior, Energy and Water, Labor-HHS-Education, Legislative Branch, Transportation-Treasury, and Veterans Affairs-HUD. This spending level stays within the \$821.9 billion cap on discretionary funding that was agreed to by President Bush and congressional appropriators.

Small Business Administration Reauthorization – Division K of P.L. 108-447

This law renews critical small business programs that help play a central role in assuring economic growth, and provides a blueprint for more efficient programs to help meet the needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs across the country – the source of some two-thirds of the net new jobs in the economy.

Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-429

This law reduces or eliminates tariffs on hundreds of products that U.S. companies use to make products in America. It also extends Normal Trade Relations (NTR) status (formerly called Most-Favored-Nation status) to the communist regime in Laos. Although some Senators oppose granting NTR to Laos, trade is expected to promote reforms there. Without NTR, Laos has little chance of making the economic advances that are necessary precludes to political and human rights reforms.

Federal Workforce Flexibility Act – P.L. 108-411

This law is designed to assist the Federal government in recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce. It will allow agencies to offer recruitment or relocation bonuses to place attractive candidates in hard-to-fill positions.

Church Pension Plans – P.L. 108-359

This law amends current securities laws to permit churches to strengthen their pension plans through investment in collective trusts, which allows them to invest in rental real estate and other private investment offerings.

Omnibus Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2004 – P.L. 108-199

Despite Democrat obstructionism during the first session of the 108th, Congress passed the appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2004. These laws include funding for Agriculture, Commerce/Justice/State, District of Columbia, Foreign Operations, Labor/HHS/Education, Transportation, and VA/HUD. This legislation was critical this year in providing increased funding for education, veterans' health care, and the President's Global AIDS Initiative.

CAN-SPAM Act – P.L. 108-187

This law makes the sending of deceptive, unsolicited commercial e-mail a crime, and provides the Federal Trade Commission with the tools to go after "spammers" who deceive consumers about the source or content of such e-mail. Among its provisions, the bill requires e-mail dealing with adult content to be so identified in the subject line. Spam, once a minor nuisance, now represents more than half of all e-mail traffic, which has substantially added to business costs.

Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions – P.L. 108-159

This law would assure a national standard for credit reporting in order to combat the growing problem of identity theft, reduce consumers' borrowing costs and increase their access to their own credit reports when obtaining a mortgage or other loan, reduce the time it takes them to get a loan or earn access to credit, and enable them to stop receiving certain commercial solicitations.

Check Clearing Act – P.L. 108-100

This law improves the efficiency of the nation's check-collection system by giving electronic checks the same validity as their paper counterparts. This should help banks prevent fraud and help consumers gain more control over their checking accounts.

Do-Not-Call Implementation and Ratification – P.L. 108-10 and P.L. 108-82

The implementation act authorizes the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to establish a system of fees sufficient to implement and enforce a "do-not-call" registry to defend consumers from unwanted commercial phone solicitations. The "Do-Not-Call" registry ratification law explicitly authorizes the FTC to implement its "Do-Not-Call" registry, which was necessary after the regulations were challenged in court.

Fiscal Year 2003 and 2004 Appropriations – P.L. 108-7

Once returned to the majority, Republicans spent the first few days of the 108th Congress quickly passing the remaining 11 appropriations bills necessary to fund the government for Fiscal Year 2003 that the Democratic-led Senate had failed to pass in the previous year. The FY03 omnibus bill included appropriations for Agriculture, Commerce/State/Justice/Judiciary, District of Columbia, Energy & Water, Foreign Operations, Interior, Labor/HHS/Education, Legislative Branch, Transportation, Treasury, and VA/HUD. Perhaps most important is the fact that non-defense discretionary spending – including supplemental spending – amounted to only a 2.9-percent increase, which continues a trend of decreasing the percentage growth of non-defense discretionary spending for the third consecutive year.

Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2004 – Conference Report Agreed to on 4/11/2003

Despite significant fiscal and political obstacles, Congress passed the FY04 Budget Resolution in near-record time and reinstated expired budget-enforcement rules for the Senate. The Budget Resolution was critical to providing a framework and management tools that led to passage of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Act (see below), and the reconciliation instructions to allow for the Medicare (see Health section) and energy reform bills. It also provided instructions to accelerate the repeal of the Death Tax from January 1, 2010 to January 1, 2009.

Taxpayer Protection and IRS Accountability Act (H.R. 1528) – Passed Senate and House

This bill strengthens taxpayer protection and accountability by the Internal Revenue Service through improvements in tax administration and taxpayer safeguards, reform of the penalty and interest provisions of the tax code, modernization of the U.S. Tax Court, and additional protection of taxpayer confidentiality and non-disclosure of taxpayer information. The bill also provides significant tax simplification measures and elimination of more than 60 obsolete tax-code rules.

Federal Trade Commission Reauthorization Act (S. 1234) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to protect consumers from unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce. The reauthorization allows the FTC to expand its authority to protect consumers from fraudulent and deceptive trade practices perpetrated abroad, and is an important update in this age of global commerce.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2003 (S. 1053) – Passed Senate

This bill prohibits discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment. It prohibits health insurance plans from denying enrollment or charging higher premiums based on the individual's or family member's genetic information. In addition, the bill bans the collection, use, and disclosure of genetic information for insurance underwriting purposes. In the employment context, it prohibits the use of genetic information use for employment decisions, such as hiring, firing, job assignments, and promotions.

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

Pancreatic Islet Cell Transplantation Act – P.L. 108-362

In individuals with juvenile diabetes, the body's immune system attacks the pancreas and destroys the islet cells that produce insulin. Doctors have discovered a way to harvest pancreatic islet cells and transplant them into patients, allowing a majority of these patients to become insulin independent. Some 1 million Americans suffer from this type of diabetes in the United States. This law will increase the supply of pancreatic islet cells for research and provide for better coordination of Federal efforts.

Tobacco Buyout – Title VI of P.L. 108-357

This law eliminates the federal quota and price support program for tobacco, and compensates tobacco farmers for its elimination through a buyout of existing quotas.

Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Act – P.L. 108-355

This law responds to the tragic problem of youth suicide by ensuring that mental health care providers have the resources to identify and treat those who need help. It provides grants to states for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of statewide youth suicide early intervention and prevention efforts.

Project BioShield Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-276

By authorizing the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and stockpile countermeasures against biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear agents that may be used in a terrorist attack against the United States, this law provides vital homeland security fortification. The drugs, biological products, and devices included as part of these countermeasures will significantly improve our nation's ability to respond to a wide-scale bioterrorism attack.

Mental Health Parity – P.L. 108-197

This provides a one-year extension of the Mental Health Parity Act coverage policy from December 31, 2003 to December 31, 2004, maintaining current mental health benefits.

Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act – P.L. 108-173

The Republican Senate led the way for passage of this historic legislation, providing \$400 billion over 10 years for a new and improved Medicare program. This law, for the first time ever, provides Medicare beneficiaries with a prescription drug benefit and expanded health plan options to help them meet their specific medical needs. In addition, the measure creates Health Savings Accounts to help all Americans with rising medical expenses; it takes important steps to reduce the cost of prescription drugs for all consumers through new trade negotiation channels; it also takes the initial steps toward cost containment to help preserve the program for future generations.

Pediatric Research Equity Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-155

This law gives the Food and Drug Administration authority to require makers of drugs and biological products to conduct tests specifically to assess such product's safety and effectiveness for children, including proper dosage.

Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Prevention – P.L. 108-154

This law requires the Secretary of HHS to conduct research on and promote the prevention of birth defects and disabilities, and to support a National Spina Bifida Program to prevent and reduce suffering from the nation's most common permanently disabling birth defect.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Extension – P.L. 108-74

The law allows states with unexpended SCHIP allotments for FY98 and FY99 to retain them through FY04 rather than forfeit them. The law also extends the period of time states may expend 50 percent of their allotments unexpended from FY00 through FY03.

Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act (S. 720/H.R. 663) – In Conference

According to the Institute of Medicine, there are as many as 98,000 preventable deaths per year associated with medical errors, costing the nation \$29 billion. This bill addresses this tragic situation by facilitating the development of a confidential and nonpunitive system for reporting healthcare errors. Medical errors can be identified and analyzed to improve patient safety, which helps prevent future errors.

Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (S. 2974) – Passed Senate

This bill gives the Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco products and address issues of particular concern to public health officials such as the use of tobacco by young people and dependence on tobacco.

Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development (S. 239) – Passed Senate

The bill would double the funding to help states develop more effective trauma care systems, with an emphasis on rural areas. The bill also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide technical assistance regarding trauma care to state and local agencies.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act – P.L. 108-446

This law provides important and long-awaited reforms to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Its key improvements to the IDEA law include reductions in the paperwork burden, disincentives for inappropriate litigation, increases in parental involvement and options, and a renewed focus on student outcomes.

Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act – P.L. 108-409

This law temporarily closes the student loan loophole that has been allowing lenders to receive a subsidy put in place when interest rates were much higher. Now that rates are lower, the subsidy is no longer justified. The savings will be used to triple the number of loans that can be forgiven, and will be directed to teachers of disciplines facing shortages – math, science, and special education.

Child Nutrition, WIC, and School Lunch Program Reform Act – P.L. 108-265

This law streamlines applications for school meal program benefits, strengthens the anti-fraud and abuse provisions in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, and is designed to maximize the enrollment of eligible children in the underlying programs while protecting program integrity. The law expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program, expands the Summer Food Service Program, provides training and technical assistance to schools, targets benefits to low-income children, and, over the five-year reauthorization period, maintains federal spending at previous levels.

NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-201

This law allows NASA to offer scholarships and other incentives to highly qualified students and recruits, thereby enhancing NASA's ability to attract America's best and brightest to the space program.

Child Nutrition and School Lunch Programs Reauthorization – P.L. 108-134

This law reauthorizes programs that ensure America's students are provided nourishing meals at school that will help improve their ability to learn, and also ensures that children in economically disadvantaged families do not go hungry.

Museum and Library Services Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-16

This law reauthorizes programs that increase access to and cooperation among our nation's museums and libraries.

American History and Civics Education Act of 2003 (S. 504) – Passed Senate

This bill creates a pilot program to encourage the teaching of American History and Civics through residential academies for teachers and students, and authorizes \$25 million annually in appropriations for fiscal years 2004-2007.

STRENGTHENING THE SAFETY NET AND ASSISTING THE DISABLED

Homeownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act – P.L. 108-393

This law clarifies the loan guarantee authority under in the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996.

Access to Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities – P.L. 108-364

This law continues assistance to the disabled with new technologies that make it easier to function in the workplace and society. It will support the States' efforts to improve assistive technology through comprehensive assistance programs.

Welfare Reform Extension – P.L. 108-308

Congress has several times extended the reformed welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the most recent of which reauthorizes the program through March 31, 2005. Since its enactment in 1996, welfare reform has resulted in more than half of the families that made up the welfare caseloads moving into lives of self-sufficiency. Republicans in the 109th Congress will wish to address further reforms not addressed in this Congress due to Democrat obstruction (see p. 21).

Adoption Promotion Act – P. L. 108-145

This law provides payments to those states that increase the number of foster-care adoptions in their states, and particularly targets the adoption of older children (aged nine and above) and special needs children.

Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act – P.L. 108-45

This law updated the accounting system used by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to fund the AmeriCorps program to improve the program's financial integrity and allow the program to fund a larger number of volunteers.

Unemployment Benefit Extensions – P.L. 108-1 and P.L. 108-26

Congress has twice extended a program to provide additional unemployment compensation to unemployed individuals who have exhausted their traditional benefits—which are 26 weeks in most cases. The program provides 50-percent more benefits for all workers, and 100-percent more benefits for workers in high- unemployment states.

Service Block Grants Improvement Act (S. 1786) – Passed Senate and House

This bill would amend the Community Service Block Grant Act so that more emphasis is placed on reducing poverty and expanding opportunities for individuals and families to become economically self-sufficient.

CARE Act (S. 476) – Passed Senate

This bill provides a number of tax incentives and other measures to encourage charitable giving, saving, and equitable treatment of religious and secular charitable organizations.

PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act – Title VIII of P.L. 108-447

This Act improves recreational facilities and visitor opportunities on Federal recreational lands by reinvesting receipts from fair and consistent recreational fees and passes.

Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting Act Amendment – P.L. 108-444

This law modifies the termination date for livestock mandatory price reporting and extends the current program, first enacted in 1999, through September 30, 2005. This law benefits ranchers by increasing transparency in livestock markets.

Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendment – P.L. 108-399

This law reauthorizes the National Estuary Program designed to promote comprehensive planning for long-term protection of estuaries through collaborative voluntary efforts of Federal, State, local, non-profit, and private interests.

National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Act – P.L. 108-327

Volunteers play a vital, growing role in the operation of many units within the Refuge System, assisting in education, habitat management, maintenance, research, and public use. This law reauthorizes volunteer programs and community partnerships for national wildlife refuges, and the appropriation of \$2 million a year for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2009 for volunteer programs and community partnerships administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tropical Forest Conservation Act Reauthorization – P.L. 108-323

This law works to protect the environment and relieve the heavy debt burden of many countries which must resort to exploiting natural resources to generate revenue to service their external debt. The Act authorizes the President to allow eligible countries to engage in debt swaps, buybacks, or reduction/restructuring in exchange for protecting threatened tropical forests on a sustained basis – an estimated 30 million acres of which are lost each year.

Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 – P.L. 108-318

This law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish institutes to demonstrate and promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and to restore the health of fire-adapted forest and woodland ecosystems of the interior West.

Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 – P.L. 108-148

This law improves the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire. In addition, it will improve the capacity to enhance efforts that protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire.

Agriculture Disaster Assistance – P.L. 108-7

The Senate provided \$3.1 billion in disaster relief to farmers and ranchers to cover losses resulting from the drought of 2002 (contained in the consolidated appropriations bill).

Water Resources Act Reauthorization (S. 2847) – Passed Senate

This bill authorizes continued appropriations to fund the Water Resources Act.

Native American Programs Act Reauthorization (S. 2436) – Passed Senate

This bill supports the development of economic, social, and governance capabilities of Native American communities. The program helps communities begin and expand businesses, enhance tribal capabilities to promote natural environments, and preserve and restore native languages.

Energy Policy Act of 2003 (H.R. 6) – Passed Senate

This bill provides for security and diversity in energy supply for the American people, and enhances energy conservation, research, and development.

DEMOCRATS' OBSTRUCTIONISM

As the above sample of accomplishments shows, the Republican-led Senate made significant progress in enhancing the welfare of all Americans. Unfortunately, obstruction by Democrats prevented even greater achievement in the 108th Congress. The minority party continually blocked important measures, including:

- **The Class Action Fairness Act of 2004 (S. 2062)**, which would close a loophole in federal court jurisdiction rules and create a consumer bill of rights in order to prevent trial lawyers from abusing class action procedures at the public's expense [filibustered in the Senate];
- **The Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act of 2004 (S. 2290)**, which would reduce the prevalence of attorney-driven fraud and manipulation in asbestos-related lawsuits by establishing a privately funded trust fund to compensate asbestos victims [filibustered in the Senate];
- **The Patients First Act of 2003 (S. 11)**, which would help healthcare providers afford medical liability insurance coverage by setting sensible limits on compensation for non-economic damages [filibustered in the Senate];
- **The Energy Policy Act of 2003 (H.R. 6)**, which would provide a comprehensive national energy policy that balances domestic energy production with conservation and efficiency efforts to enhance America's security and decrease our dependence on foreign sources of oil [House passed Conference Report in 2003; Conference Report filibustered in the Senate];
- **The Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone (PRIDE) Act (H.R. 4)**, which would maintain the phenomenal success of the 1996 welfare reform law by continuing to give states flexibility in providing the services that low-income families need to become self-sufficient [House passed in 2003; filibustered in the Senate];
- **The Confirmation of Highly Qualified Federal Judges.** For the first time in U.S. history, a partisan minority of Senators has filibustered judicial nominations to the

federal bench, threatening the administration of justice as the nation's federal courts continue to struggle to cope with judicial vacancies. Democrats have blocked up-or-down votes on 10 judicial nominees this Congress.

In addition, Democrats refused to go to conference on the following bills passed by the Senate: the Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act of 2003 (S. 476), and the Workforce Investment Act (S. 1627/H.R. 1261). These bills did not become law due to Democrats' obstructionism.

Prepared by the staff of the Senate Republican Policy Committee,
with the assistance of RPC Intern Kristen Glenn, 224-2946