

## **Congress Approves Financing For Military and Immigration**

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### **Body**

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The Senate voted unanimously on Tuesday to pass a bill that included \$82 billion for supplemental military spending as well as several immigration and border security measures that had provoked fierce debate in Congress that is likely to continue for months.

The nature of the bill, mainly providing support for American troops overseas that President Bush had requested, made it all but politically impossible to oppose in its final form.

"Our brave men and women in uniform will not relent in their fight against terror, and we must not relent in our support of them," Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee, the majority leader, said. "I'm glad that the House and Senate were able to move so swiftly on this legislation."

Before voting to approve the measure, Democrats complained one last time about the use of an "emergency supplemental" bill to pay for potentially foreseeable military expenses and accomplish a variety of other things Congress wanted.

"Having this supplemental, unfortunately with the big title of emergency over it, appears to be an effort to rush things through to avoid Congressional oversight and scrutiny," Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democrat of New York, said in the brief debate over the bill.

The most contentious aspects of the bill were a set of immigration measures sponsored by Representative F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. and attached by the House, which he argued would make it harder for foreign terrorists to operate in the United States. Those include provisions, known as the Real ID Act, which will require states to check the citizenship or legal residence status of any applicant for a driver's license, imposing new costs on state governments and requiring more paperwork for drivers.

The bill also overrides environmental rules that have impeded the construction of a barrier intended to deter illegal immigrants along the Mexican border near San Diego. A third provision would make it harder for immigrants to gain amnesty by making claims of persecution or human rights violations abroad.

The amnesty provision drew heavy criticism from religious and human rights groups who argued that it could harm genuine victims who failed to make their case effectively enough. Republicans senators persuaded the House and Senate conference to loosen its language.

Aides involved in the negotiations said the bill had been modified to ensure asylum-seekers a right to appeal immigration decisions. The measure was also changed to say that immigration officials "should consider the

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totality of factors" in evaluating an applicant's credibility to allow for traumatized asylum seekers' making inconsistent statements.

One Democrat, Representative Robert Wexler of Florida, faulted his party as not fighting harder to oppose the measures.

"I am baffled that so many Democrats caved in to the parliamentary tricks of the Republican leadership," Mr. Wexler said.

Partly in response to the legislation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops began a "justice for immigrants" campaign on Tuesday.

"The bishops have grown increasingly concerned with the current public discourse surrounding immigrants, in which newcomers are characterized as a threat to our nation and not a benefit," Cardinal Theodore W. McCarrick, archbishop of Washington, said.

The debate over **immigration** policy, begun during consideration of the supplemental spending bill, is expected to continue as Congress considers a broader **immigration** policy package including some form of a foreign guest-worker program that would enable currently illegal immigrants to become citizens.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, and Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, are expected to introduce that proposal within days.

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