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**Updates for Your Information**

The Sojourners fight preemptive audits for low-income households, and the Children's Defense Fund releases their Action Guide.

Sojourners (Christians for Justice and Peace) has started a campaign against the proposed effort by the IRS to "pre-audit" taxpayers claiming an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). If the IRS action goes into effect, it will require of low-income households the most exhaustive proof of eligibility of any class of taxpayers. The IRS says that in 1998, EITC filers who were not entitled to the credit received between \$8.5 and \$10 billion. (Given how complicated the process is, much of this is likely simple mistakes, as opposed to tax evasion.) In contrast, a Harvard economist's study showed that corporations avoided \$54

billion in taxes in 1999 by hiding profits in tax shelters. See the Sojourners' for more information.

The recently released Children's Defense Fund is a useful tool for state advocates arguing against more tax cuts. It discusses the skewed benefits of the 2001 tax cuts and proposed tax cuts (at pages 14-15) and provides state-by-state charts showing child poverty, number of uninsured children, and spending on education (at pages 42-44).

## **Federal Budget**

### **Garbage In, Garbage Out: Two Bad Tax Cut Bills Won't Make One Good One**

Conference negotiations to reconcile the tax cuts bills passed by the House and Senate are expected to begin tomorrow, and Congress hopes to pass a tax cut bill by the Memorial Day recess, although this may prove impossible.

The chart below compares the Senate and House passed tax cut bills. Both are seriously flawed:

- More tax cuts, coming on top of the 2001 Bush tax cut bill with a ten-year cost of over \$1.3 trillion, are a mistake.
- Neither bill will act as a short-term job-creating, market boosting stimulus to the economy; both will worsen the long-term fiscal condition, leading to rising deficits and more federal debt. The budget deficit is expected to exceed \$300 billion this year – an all time record.
- Both bills will negatively affect state tax revenues, at a time when most states are in their worst fiscal crisis since WWII.
- Both bills rely on the device of phased in cuts and “sunsets” (expiration of tax cuts) to keep the cost down. Given the difficulty of reinstating, or “raising,” a tax upon its sunset, most experts believe that the cuts will be extended making them much, much more costly than stated. Further, all these changing provisions make the tax code even more complex and confusing.
- Both bills give more benefits to higher income taxpayers, at the same time that the services that benefit low- and middle-income taxpayers will be cut to pay for the costs of the tax cuts. See Citizen's for Tax Justice analyses of the [Senate bill](#) and the [House bill](#).

In addition, polling continues to strongly show that most Americans don't want more tax cuts, especially when program tradeoffs are considered. See [analysis](#) of the latest New York Times/CBS News poll.

In a historical context, the proposed tax cut, even at the Senate level of \$350 billion over ten years, is huge. This makes it even more outrageous for Congress to use a strategy of fooling the American people, who overwhelmingly express that they don't want tax cuts at all, by hiding the true cost. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [estimates](#) that the Senate bill will cost at least \$660 billion if the dividend tax cut elimination and two other “temporary” tax cuts are made permanent. The true cost of the House-passed bill, with even more sunsets, is [estimated](#) to be at least \$1.1 trillion. This is on top of the \$1.6 trillion tax cut already enacted in 2001.

The only good thing is found in the Senate bill that gives \$20 billion in emergency fiscal relief to the states. However, with the loss of revenue to the states from the federal dividend investment tax cut [estimated](#) by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at \$40 billion, even that is no cause for celebration.

Further, in these bills, the dividend investment tax break is no longer even about “double-taxation,” but

actually eliminates any taxation of some corporate profits. Currently, a corporation is taxed on its income, and individuals who invest in company stock are taxed on the dividends they are paid from the corporation's income. This results in "double taxation." (Double taxation, by the way, goes on frequently. There are often different taxes for different recipients of goods and services. Congress has just chosen to focus its efforts on corporate "double-taxation.") The President's proposal at least follows the "double-taxation" argument logically -- if a corporation hasn't paid income taxes on its profit, dividends paid from those profits remain taxable (or whatever percentage of the dividend that has not already been taxed). The House and Senate bills, however, do not. To varying degrees, they allow corporate profits to be untaxed as corporate income and as investment dividends. See the Tax Policy Center [explanation](#).

Any way you look at it, these tax bills are fatally flawed. The best that could happen is that Congress is unable to agree on a compromise bill. However, given Congressional energy to pass a tax bill -- any tax bill -- that seems unlikely. What is striking is that the President and Congress are so determined to pass tax cuts over the wishes of so many, including deficit hawks, conservatives striving for fiscal responsibility, progressives worried about the shrinking human safety net, or just ordinary middle class Americans who are daily seeing a decline in services as states tighten their belts.

### Comparison of House and Senate Tax Bills

	House Bill	Senate Bill
<b>Dividends and Capital Gains</b>	Cuts maximum tax on dividends and capital gains from 38.6% current to 15% (and 5% for taxpayers in lowest bracket) through 2012. Full tax reinstated in 2013.	Excludes 50% of dividend income from tax in 2003. Exempts 100% of dividend tax in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Full dividend tax is reinstated in 2007.
<b>Individual Rates*</b>	<p>Lowers income tax rates starting in 1/1/03:            38.6% to 35%            35% to 33%            30% to 28%            27% to 25%            All rates return to 2001 levels beginning in 2011.</p> <p>Expands 10% bracket to \$7,000 (instead of \$6,000) in 2003, 2004, 2005. Expires in 2006.</p> <p>Raises AMT exemption to \$43,250 for singles and \$64,000 for couples, through 2005</p>	<p>Same</p> <p>Same, but doesn't expire until 2011.</p> <p>Raises AMT exemption to \$41,750 for singles and \$64,000 for couples, through 2005.</p>
<b>Marriage Penalty*</b>	Expands 15% bracket and increases standard deduction for couples to twice that of singles for 2003, 2004, and 2005.	Phases in expansion of 15% bracket and increases standard deduction for couples in 2003 and 2004.
<b>Child Credit*</b>	Increases credit from \$600 to \$1000 in 2003, 2004, and 2005.	Increases credit to \$1,000 through 2012.
<b>Business Tax Cuts</b>	<p>Small business expensing limit increased from \$25,000 to \$100,000 through 2007.</p> <p>Increases bonus depreciation from 30% to 50%, through 2005.</p> <p>Extends five year operating loss carry back through 2005.</p>	<p>Increases small business expensing to \$100,000 through 2007.</p> <p>Taxes multinationals on repatriated foreign profits at 5% instead of 35% for one year.</p>
<b>State Aid</b>	None	\$20 billion over 2003 and 2004: \$10 billion for Medicaid assistance, \$4 billion to local and \$6 billion to state governments.
<i>Total 11 year Cost</i>	<i>\$550 billion</i>	<i>\$350 billion (with offsets)</i>
<b>REAL TAX COST WITHOUT SUNSETS</b>	<b>\$1.1 TRILLION</b>	<b>\$660 BILLION</b>

*\* Both the House and Senate bills propose to accelerate the phase-in of some of the elements of the Bush 2001 tax cut. All of the 2001 tax cut provisions expire (or sunset) effective 2011. If the accelerated*

*provisions in the House and Senate bills expire before 2011, they are replaced by the provisions of the 2001 tax cut until expiration in 2011.*

## **Information Policy**

### **FBI Finally Returns Illegally Confiscated Package**

An Associated Press package that was illegally confiscated, as reported in a March 24 [OMB Watcher article](#), was finally returned to the AP after 7 months. The FBI returned the package on May 11, with general counsel Patrick Kelley acknowledging that they had mishandled the material. An internal disciplinary inquiry is taking place, as well as the development of guidelines on handling news media material.

Kelley reinforced that the FBI believes the seized documents were "law enforcement sensitive," although they are an unclassified 8-year old lab report which had been released publicly before. The package was sent from an AP reporter in the Philippines to John Solomon, an AP reporter in the U.S. and was intercepted by U.S. Customs and handed over to the FBI. The AP was never notified, and only learned of the incident from leaked information. This is the second time that Solomon has been targeted for government seizure.

### **\$28 Billion Question Mark**

The Pentagon has spent almost all of the \$28.5 billion in "emergency-response" funds allocated to them by Congress in the year after the September 11th attacks. However, almost nothing is available to the public explaining how the taxpayer's money was spent. Apparently, even confidential reports to congressional staff leave too many questions about the expenditures unanswered.

In response to a national crisis Congress granted the money to the Pentagon without a full explanation of how the money would be spent. The expectation was that greater details would be forthcoming to account for the money. Most of the \$28.5 billion was spent on unclassified programs, so the lack of specifics in the reports to Congress does not appear, in most cases, to be driven by security concerns.

The public certainly has the right to know how so much of taxpayer money has been spent on such an important issue. However, the only publicly available document, a quarterly report to Congress, lists vague entries with huge amounts such as \$4.8 billion spent for "Increased Worldwide Posture," and \$1.7 billion for "Offensive Counter-terrorism." There is no detail about exactly what was actually purchased with these vast amounts.

The lack of detailed information indicates a staggering lack of accountability. Congress and the public have the right and need to understand what government agencies are doing in response to the increased risk of terrorism. Unfortunately, this lack of spending information is only the most recent piece in a larger mosaic of secrecy by an administration that ignores all concerns of accountability. Since the September 11th attacks the Bush administration has used heightened concern about terrorism to increase the powers of government, decrease information and accountability, and establish questionable policies that greatly benefit certain corporations.

Meanwhile efforts by Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ) to pass legislation requiring chemical plants to evaluate

and reduce risks has been stuck over concerns that it may be an imposition on companies to implement. The administration is helping to draft alternative legislation that imposes fewer requirements on corporations, possibly at the cost of security for local communities. Unfortunately, even in the post September 11th world, security matters seem to be more about the money than about safety or accountability.

## **Data Quality Counter-Challenge**

Recently, the [U.S Fish and Wildlife Service](#) and the [National Marine Fisheries Service](#) received their first challenge under the Data Quality Act. Soon after, they also received a precedent-setting counter-challenge. While several agencies have received a variety of challenges under the Data Quality Act, none have received a counter-petition.

Fjord Seafood filed the initial data quality challenge questioning the transparency and reproducibility of information supporting limitations imposed on salmon farmers. The limitation was enacted after Maine's wild Atlantic salmon was listed as an endangered species in 2000. Fjord asserts that the primary data for the study that was relied upon to set permit limits has not been released, in spite of repeated requests including a Freedom of Information Act appeal filed by the state of Maine.

Long time opponents of salmon farming, including U.S. Public Interest Research Group, the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club, Conservation Law Foundation, Charles Fitzgerald and Stephen Crawford, filed an opposing petition with the same agencies urging them to reject the company's request. The opposing petition claimed that the data had been fully disclosed and reviewed by a subsidiary of Fjord.

It is unclear what legal standing the opposition's challenge will be given in the data quality process. While every agency was required to include details on an administrative mechanism for data quality challenges to be filed and processed in their data quality guidelines, no agency has official procedures in their data quality guidelines to handle counter-challenges. The precedent set if the opposing petition is granted standing could be a double-edged sword. While it might allow other public interest groups to counter the expected misuse of the data quality guidelines by industry, it could also further bog down a mechanism that many believe will delay the regulatory process.

## **Nonprofit Issues**

### **Stay of Campaign Finance Decision Granted**

A host of entities involved in the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of last year's Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) have been granted a stay of a special federal three-judge panel's ruling that declared some parts of the Bipartisan BCRA unconstitutional, while upholding others. The same panel granted the stay of its ruling on May 19th

The original ruling's impact on issue advocacy is unclear, since some, like the National Rifle Association (NRA), are saying the ruling effectively creates new restrictions. The case is being appealed to the Supreme Court. The three-judge panel cited a desire to prevent litigants from having to abide by potentially three different sets of rules within a short time span as a major reason for the stay. The court also noted a potential for confusion caused by the fractured original decision of the panel.

The original May 2nd ruling struck down BCRA's blanket ban on broadcasts that refer to federal candidates within 60 days of a federal election or 30 days of a primary. It also upheld the portion of BCRA's "backup" definition of banned issue ads that prohibits broadcasts that promote, support, attack or oppose federal candidates even if they do not expressly advocate a vote for or against a candidate.

Because there are no time limits in this definition, the NRA was concerned its planned campaign on gun legislation criticizing particular Senators' positions could violate the new rule if paid for with their treasury funds instead of regulated "hard money" campaign contributions.

It seems unlikely that the court intended to ban all criticism of Members of Congress in broadcast media. Genuine issue ads that comment on a Member's position on an issue, without commenting on his or her candidacy, character or fitness for office should not be considered lobbying activity.

The issue will not be definitively resolved until the Supreme Court makes its decision. In the meantime the primary definition in BCRA will apply. Under Federal Election Commission regulations, 501(c)(3) organizations are exempt from that ban because tax law prohibits them from engaging in partisan electioneering.

## Charitable Giving Bill Filed in House

See our [summary of the House Charitable Giving Act and its comparison to the CARE Act](#).

On May 8th Rep. Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Rep. Harold Ford Jr. (D-TN) filed the "Charitable Giving Act of 2003" [H.R. 7](#), which is similar to the CARE Act passed by the Senate last month. It has been assigned the same number (H.R. 7) as the controversial faith-based legislation passed by the House in 2001.

The new bill includes provisions that address charitable giving incentives, simplification of the lobbying rules for charities, the Compassion Capital Fund, and changes in the rules for foundation payout. Like the Senate's CARE Act, it does not deal with grant rules for faith-based organizations. Unlike the CARE Act, it does not include elimination of tax shelters to offset the cost of its giving incentives or restoration of funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). Rep. Blunt said he hopes the House can vote on the bill by July 4.

The House will be considering restoration of funding for SSBG in a separate bill, [HR 1858](#), filed on April 29 by Reps. Nancy Johnson (R-CT), Sander Levin (D-MI), and Bob Matsui (D-CA). Its provisions are the same as the SSBG section of the CARE Act – it increases funding to \$28 billion, as previously authorized.

The sections of the new H.R. 7 relating to foundations are causing controversy about what constitutes reasonable administrative expenses for foundations and how much private foundations should pay out in grants each year. While the bill lowers the excise tax on net investment income to a flat 1% (simplifying a complex formula that could result in a tax of up to 2%), private foundations would not be allowed to count administrative expenses toward their annual grant payout requirement of 5%. A [New York Times article](#) published May 19th notes that not counting administrative expenses of 64,000 foundations would increase payout by less than 1%. Some foundations say this would effect perpetuity. Others disagree, claiming that the change would not force foundations to spend down, and would increase grantmaking.

## Hill Briefing Highlights Problems With Church Electioneering Bill

On May 9th a panel of religious leaders, a former IRS Commissioner and a campaign finance expert presented a series of problems raised by the Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act ([H.R. 235](#)). The bill, which now has 124 co-sponsors, would allow houses of worship to take sides in elections during any service, meeting, or other gathering. While the version of the bill introduced in the current Congress limits electioneering to religious services (unlike a similar bill in the 107th Congress), panelists raised concerns that it would result in houses of worship becoming soft money conduits.

At the briefing, Sheldon S. Cohen, a former Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, noted the history behind the prohibition on partisan electioneering for all 501(c)(3) organizations -- to prevent an indirect tax subsidy for partisan activity based on tax deductibility of donations to religious organizations. Cohen noted that under current law there are no restrictions on a congregation's ability to talk about any

issues, saying "Most of what they [the bill's sponsors] complain about is artificial. The point is subsidy vs. non-subsidy."

Since last year's Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act only applies to federal elections, and tax law applies at the federal, state and local level, passage of the bill would create "open season" for church based campaigning at the state and local level, Cohen said.

Glen Shor of the [Campaign and Legal Media Center](#) said that although this bill is narrower than one introduced last year, it would allow widespread distribution of partisan messages from religious events.

For more background see our [February 24, 2003 Watcher article](#).

## **Regulatory Matters**

### **EPA Blasted for 'Senior Death Discount'**

During a recent series of public meetings, senior citizens and public health advocates attacked EPA's practice of assigning less value to the lives of those over 70 when monetizing the benefits of prospective regulation -- causing agency Administrator Christie Whitman to denounce the method herself.

EPA employed this practice, which has been [pushed by OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs](#), in analysis for its recent [watered-down rule on snowmobile emissions](#), as well as its flagship environmental proposal, the [Clear Skies Initiative](#) -- valuing lives of people over 70 years old at \$2.3 million compared to \$3.7 million for those younger. This type of age-adjusted analysis reduces the estimated benefits of regulatory actions and helps justify weak health, safety and environmental standards.

[The agency-sponsored gatherings](#), held in Tampa, San Antonio, Iowa City, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and Baltimore, were convened to gather input from older Americans on environmental protections -- and Whitman and other EPA officials certainly got an earful. Calling it the "senior death discount," senior citizens and other activists descended upon EPA's meetings, battering the administrator and her subordinates with complaints about the devaluation of older lives.

By the final session in Baltimore on May 7, public pressure appeared to have gotten the best of Whitman, as she withdrew her support for the practice, stating, "EPA will not, I repeat, not, use the age-adjusted analysis in decision making," [according to the Washington Post](#).

Of course continued vigilance is still warranted since the "senior death discount" is just one of the Bush administration's [many tools](#) used to skew regulatory decision-making in favor of inaction and against the elderly.

### **Administration Issues Report on Small Business Paperwork**

An administration task force, led by the Office of Management and Budget, published a [draft report](#) on May 9 that makes recommendations to reduce reporting burdens on small business. Comments on the report -- which is mandated by the [Small Business Paperwork Relief Act](#) (SBPRA), enacted a year ago -- are due by June 4.

In the draft report, the task force addresses the following issues:

- **Synchronized reporting.** As required by SBPRA, the task force examined the issue of synchronized reporting (that is, setting a single time or date for reporting), but found that it is not desirable. “Some reporting occurs only at the time of an event, such as admission of a patient to a nursing home, or a chemical spill,” the report states. “Timely submission of this information is critical to fulfill agency responsibilities.” The task force further found that many small businesses prefer reporting that is spread out over time: “A requirement to provide all information required by the federal government on a single date has the potential of creating a greater workload burden for business...”
- **Consolidated information collections.** SBPRA also required the task force to examine consolidated reporting. Based on this effort, the task force is recommending that federal agencies “with similar regulatory authority” partner with each other, as well as state and local agencies, to identify similar reporting requirements and develop consolidated reporting systems. However, the task force also notes limitations of consolidation, including the “diversity of government activities,” lack of harmonization across industries or statutes, and confidentiality and privacy considerations.
- **Agency plans for burden reduction.** The draft report recommends that each agency develop a plan that outlines specific steps to reduce reporting burdens on small business, and sets goals and timelines for achieving those steps. Agencies would be required to submit annual reports to OMB detailing any progress related to their plans.
- **Single point of contact for small business.** SBPRA requires that each agency establish a single point of contact for small businesses. The task force calls this “both feasible and desirable,” adding that the contact (which could be a person or group of persons, according to the draft report) “should be able to provide information about regulatory reporting requirements enforced by the Agency, and technical assistance in fulfilling those requirements.”
- **Outreach to small business.** The draft report advises that a new system should be designed for receiving public comment on new and existing information collections, with emphasis on the Internet. This should be coupled with improved outreach efforts to small business, including “the conduct of public meetings and announcements of public comment periods in industry publications, on all highly burdensome (defined as 1,000,000 burden hours) information collections expected to affect small businesses.”
- **OMB Guidelines on E-Government.** The draft report recommends that OMB “require each agency to incorporate burden reduction as a goal of its [E-Government initiative](#), and issue guidelines to aid Agencies in doing so.” The task force points to the [Business Compliance One Stop](#) -- one of the president’s 25 e-government initiatives -- “as a means for achieving the purpose of SBPRA,” noting that it “is designed to ultimately provide small businesses a single point of entry for regulatory compliance information.”
- **List of information collections.** SBPRA required the task force to examine the feasibility and benefits of publishing a list of information collections applicable to small business, organized by type of business or industrial sector. The draft report states that the team in charge of the [Business Compliance One Stop](#) is “designing an Internet portal with a sophisticated multi-criteria search capability” that would enable small businesses to “self-identify” requirements. This effort, which is being overseen by the Small Business Administration, contrasts with a system organized by business type -- or North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code -- which the task force found lacking. “The list of potentially applicable requirements for a particular NAICS code would not be significantly shorter than the list of all existing information collection requirements,” the draft report says. “Moreover, if a small business were listed under more than one NAICS code, the research to determine applicability would be even greater.”
- **Cost savings.** As required by SBPRA, the task force examined cost savings associated with electronic submissions of information and interactive reporting systems, claiming extensive savings from such efforts. For example, the draft report states that the [Business Compliance One Stop](#) produces estimated annual cost savings of \$56 million by facilitating compliance with regulations. The development of an Internet profiler that refers businesses to appropriate compliance assistance resources across five agencies produces estimated savings of \$62 million. And a one-stop portal on federal and state requirements for the trucking industry will have estimated savings of \$400 million (the administration has just completed the project plan).

In a year's time, the task force is required to make further recommendations "to improve the electronic dissemination of information collected under Federal requirements" and "recommend a plan for the development of an interactive Governmentwide system, available through the Internet," to facilitate compliance.

The task force is co-chaired by John Graham, administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and Mark Foreman, who oversees the administration's [E-Government Initiative](#). It also includes representatives from the EPA, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor (including OSHA), the Department of Health and Human Services, the IRS, and the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy.

## **EPA Drops Risk-Based Exemptions in First of Six Air Rules**

EPA recently issued final [standards](#) to address hazardous air pollution from the brick and clay products industry, leaving out provisions suggested in its draft proposal to exempt facilities based on the level of health risk posed to surrounding communities.

As [OMB Watch previously documented](#), the agency originally requested public comment on the use of such "risk-based exemptions" at the urging of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs -- signaling a desire to abandon stringent technology-based controls, which have been successfully employed for more than a decade. Such a regulatory approach -- focused only on facilities whose emissions pose the greatest health risks -- could significantly weaken clean air standards and result in more pollution over time.

EPA explains that the risk-based provisions were ultimately left out because the agency has already missed the statutory deadline for completion of the brick and clay standards and that the exemptions raised "a number of complex issues."

EPA also sought comments on the risk-based exemptions in the context of [five other recent air proposals](#), and makes clear that it has not ruled out the possibility of including the provisions in these forthcoming standards. "We expect to continue to consider risk-based approaches in connection with other proposed NESHAP [air pollution measures] where we have described and solicited comment on such approaches," [according to the agency](#).

## **OSHA Continues to Issue Unenforceable Ergonomics Guidelines**

The [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) recently released [draft voluntary guidelines](#) for the prevention of repetitive stress injuries -- the [most pressing health and safety issue confronting the workplace today](#) -- at retail grocery stores.

The guidelines are part of the administration's feeble plan to replace mandatory Clinton-era ergonomics standards -- which were repealed by Congress at the urging of the Bush administration -- with a series of unenforceable guidelines targeted at specific industries. OSHA previously released guidelines for [nursing homes](#), and plans to target poultry processing and shipyard workplaces next.

Meanwhile, a work group under the National Advisory Committee on Ergonomics recently expressed interest in formulating generic guidelines for employers not singled out by OSHA to help them develop their own ergonomics plans, according to BNA's Daily Report for Executives, a Washington trade publication.

OSHA will be [accepting comments](#) on the draft grocery store guidelines through July 8.

## **Right-to-Know**

### **Defense Rider Gives Unjustified Secrecy to Intelligence Agency**

The Defense Department's budget authorization bill for fiscal year 2004 includes a provision that would further shroud the National Security Agency (NSA) in secrecy, even though no public case has been made for the provision.

The Senate language, included in the proposed FY 2004 Defense Authorization Act ([S. 1050, sec. 1035](#)), would exempt all "operational files" of the NSA from public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The language is modeled off of an exemption granted to the Central Intelligence Agency in 1984 after numerous congressional hearings and extensive study, a process which created legislation that was specifically designed for the CIA's needs. No such discussion has occurred for NSA and this appears to be an attempt to fill a round hole with a square peg.

A letter signed by 22 groups expressing objections to this "cut-and-paste without debate" approach was sent to members of the Senate Armed Services Committee.