

I voted Yes on H.R. 2055, the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2012 Conference Report.

This legislation keeps the federal government running through the end of the fiscal year. It provides funding in Fiscal Year 2012 for several federal departments including Defense, Energy, Treasury, Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, State, Health and Human Services, as well as Congress itself. The bill cuts \$6 billion from last year's level for these same agencies.

While the bill makes responsible spending cuts overall, it does invest in critical and important programs of relevance to Upstate and the nation. Especially important to residents of Oneida County right now, the Child Care and Development Block Grant is funded at \$60 million above last year's level.

The bill provides funding to support our troops, and provides adequate resources needed for a strong national defense. The bill also includes a well-earned 1.6 percent pay raise for the military. It funds veterans' programs so that veterans receive the services they deserve as a result of their sacrifices and service to the country.

H.R. 2055 significantly and rightly cuts Congress' budget (including my own) for a second year in a row. The funds included for the Legislative Branch is \$237 million – or 5.2% - below last year's level. Counting this reduction, total funding for the House of Representatives has been reduced by more than 10% over the last two years.

Moreover, H.R. 2055 includes an amendment I inserted to ban Members of Congress from leasing luxury vehicles on the taxpayer dime. Before the Hanna Amendment was adopted, Congressmen could spend over \$1,000 each month on cars for themselves. We do not need to be spending taxpayer dollars leasing luxury vehicles. If Senators can get by without car leases, Members of the People's House can get by with less expensive vehicles, too. This is a step to make sure elected representatives better live by the standard of fiscal responsibility that we try to set for the nation. I'm glad that this practice will be put to an end.

For the second fiscal year in a row, Congress has actually reduced discretionary spending.

Importantly, the legislation for Fiscal Year 2012 includes zero earmarks. In Fiscal Year 2010, for example, there were 10,000 earmarks in that appropriations bill – at a cost of over \$10 billion to taxpayers. The bill also terminates 28 wasteful and duplicative programs saving taxpayers over \$1 billion.

This is major progress towards restraining spending and fiscal responsibility.

The bill was approved by a vote of 296 – 121.