

coalition to stop funding the war

PENDING LEGISLATION

During the next two months Congress will act on two important pieces of legislation relating to Indochina. The first is the FY 1975 Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill, which contains economic aid for all of Indochina and military aid for Cambodia. The Authorization Bill which passed last month allocated \$617 million in economic aid -- a \$113 million increase from last year's level.

The Appropriations Bill will probably be voted on in early February. Our goal is to make at least substantial reductions below last year's level. That can be accomplished either in committee or on the House and Senate floors. The relevant committees are the following: House and Senate Subcommittees on Foreign Operations and the full House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Check with the Coalition to see if your Congressperson or your Senators are on these important committees.

Probably the most important piece of legislation will be the Administration's request for supplemental military aid. President Ford will reportedly ask for \$300 million for South Vietnam and \$220 million for Cambodia. The Vietnam request will go through the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Cambodia request will go through House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations. Floor votes may be expected sometime in March.

MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

One of the most effective approaches to lobbying Congress is to meet with your Representatives in Washington. There is one basic rule about such a meeting: Be prepared with background information.

1. Study the Representative's voting record on the war. Begin with areas of agreement. Commend him/her for stands they have taken of which you approve.
2. Plan the interview. Select a spokesperson who will introduce the group, give a two or three minute statement on its concerns and encourage others to share views or direct questions. Decide specifically what you would like the Representative to do, such as...

- a. support, co-sponsor, or introduce an amendment
 - b. view a film about American involvement in Indochina, such as "A Question of Torture" or "Still America's War"
 - c. if important amendments are currently being considered by a committee they are not on, ask your Representatives to speak to others from the same state who are on it, or to send a letter of support for the amendment to all members of that committee (called "Dear Colleague" letters -- we have samples)
 - d. meeting with some particular group when he/she returns home
 - e. inserting articles and statements in the Congressional Record.
3. Do not soft-peddle differences but, at the same time, try to avoid confrontations. Be courteous and friendly, without undercutting the urgency of your concern. Don't be afraid to take a stand based on religion or morality, and state it forcefully.
4. State your views clearly and concisely. Tell of personal experiences you have had which illustrate your point. Tell your legislator if your church, club, or organization has taken a stand on the issue. Make your questions as specific as possible. Leave some printed material with him/her (reprints, resolutions, etc.). It may be helpful to have a run-through first, with one person taking the Representative's role and presenting questions and challenges to the group's arguments.
5. If the Representative indicates that he/she is against an important amendment or bill, find out why and be ready to respond. Make careful notes of the objections in order to organize a campaign for the amendment in the district.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Write the Representative and thank him/her for their time. Repeat your concerns and try to respond to any points the Representative may have raised which you have since researched and formulated an answer. Enclose any additional material.
2. Let the Washington office of your organization in addition to the Coalition to Stop Funding the War know the results of your visit. This is vitally important to our work and allows us to evaluate how responsive a Representative is.

Voting records and further background material are available from the Coalition to Stop Funding the War.