

Democrats Renew Fight Over Faith-Based Contractors

Democrats *really* don't want faith-based military contractors to be able to perform their work while protecting their religious freedom.

After failing to stop Republicans from adding a provision to do just that in the National Defense Authorization Act, they have now tried twice to use "policy riders" in budget bills to "defund" that measure. Their latest attempt came Thursday morning, when they attached the rider to the controversial water and energy appropriations bill.

President Obama was adamant that he would veto the legislation because it included a Republican rider to curtail his administration's ability to enforce its "Waters of the U.S." regulations. It was expected to pass the House, where Republicans had pledged to pressure their Senate colleagues to keep the measure through the reconciliation process.

Democrats have been trying to get their provision passed so that an executive order made by President Obama in 2014 would become law. Conservative Republicans, led in this case by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), have pulled out all stops to prevent it from passing.

A number of Democrats voted Thursday against the spending bill because of the Republican policy riders already contained in it. With a majority of Republicans opposed to the Democrat policy rider, it ultimately failed on a 305-112 vote.

According to news reports from *Politico* and *The Hill*, the House Republican Conference met Thursday morning with the intent of hammering out differences over the proposed Puerto Rico bailout bill, but instead spent their entire time bickering over the Democrat policy rider. Some had hoped a

last-minute change to its wording would make it more palatable to conservatives.