

CONGRESS TO SEEK ATTACK CONTINGENCY FUNDS

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WASHINGTON -- House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) wants Congress to provide \$100 million this year so lawmakers could meet if the Capitol were to be attacked by terrorists, House Appropriations Committee Chairman C.W. "Bill" Young said Thursday.

Young, a Florida Republican, and several House aides would not provide details of how the money would be spent. A Senate aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it would help prepare a place for the House to conduct business in case the Capitol were rendered unusable. The money probably would go for such items as telephones, computers and voting equipment.

House and Senate leaders have intensified contingency planning since the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and the Pentagon and the Oct. 15 receipt of an anthrax-laden letter by aides to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.). Both chambers have designated secret locations in the Washington area where they would meet if the Capitol were devastated or could not be used for a period of time. The Capitol was evacuated the morning of Sept. 11, but lawmakers resumed meeting there the following day. When the anthrax letter was received, Congress ended its week early and the Capitol was closed so it could be checked and given a precautionary cleaning. Some of Congress' separate office buildings were closed for weeks or months for decontamination.

Young said Hastert asked him to attach the money to an emergency \$27.1-billion measure that President Bush has requested for anti-terrorism and other programs. Two aides said the money would be included in a classified section of the bill, for which details

will not be publicized.

A Democratic aide said the request probably would get bipartisan support.