Unfortunately, I was unable to be present for the vote on this conference report due to a visit to my district by President Bush. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on agreeing to the conference report.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGETTE BALET

HON. SCOTT McINNIS
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise and pay tribute to a remarkable young woman, Brigette Balet. Brigette Balet from Montrose, Colorado sacrificed her summer break to assist friends in need. For her service, Brigette recently received the Key Citizens Award from the City of Montrose and I am proud to join the citizens of Montrose in recognizing Brigette’s contributions before this body of Congress here today.

Last summer, Susan and Paul Beaston lost their home to fire. Without being asked, Brigette donned a mask and set to work helping the Beastons clean up the mess. Throughout the summer, and into the fall, Brigette worked tirelessly to clean the home and itemize the damage.

Brigette’s service to the Beastons illustrates her selfless and altruistic nature. It is truly a tremendous young woman who is willing to forego a summer vacation to work in a soot and smoke filled home.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise and pay tribute to Brigette Balet. She is an amazing young woman who is willing to forego a summer vacation to work in a soot and smoke filled home.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. LETER VIRGINIA SCARBOROUGH GEORGE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Mrs. Leter Virginia Scarborough George, who celebrated her 100th Birthday on November 16, 2003. Mrs. George, whose life has reflected not only her exemplary character, courage and commitment to family, but also a dedication to the education of her children, her faith and an untiring work ethic.

Mrs. George, which was born on November 16, 1903, to Samuel and Lydia Scarborough of Lee County in Bishopville, S.C. Later, Mrs. George married Jimmy George from Wysacky, SC. They purchased their first home on 75 acres of land, which Mrs. George still owns today. Mr. and Mrs. George placed great importance on educating their children and found the resources to send them to Mayesville Institute, a private, boarding school attended by the incomparable civil and human rights pioneer Mary McLeod Bethune. Despite grave challenges, the Georges successfully balanced the financial demands of schooling their children and running a farming operation.

At the young age of 45, Mr. Jimmy George suddenly passed away, leaving Mrs. George with eight children to raise and a ninth child on the way. With undaunted courage, Mrs. George resolved to hold on to their home and farm, and continue pursuing their shared dreams. Mrs. George demonstrated her business acumen and success as a farmer by converting the horse and plow operations she inherited to a completely mechanized farm. In 1983, she was named by the Smithsonian Museum as head of one of the eight outstanding farm families in America.

Mrs. George’s greatest legacy and contribution to society are the self discipline and burning desire for the instilled in each of her children. All nine of whom went to college and received graduate degrees. Their achievements against remarkable odds attest to the determination and sacrifices of Mrs. George. Her oldest son, James, now deceased, attended Morris College, owned several businesses, and served as director of Training and Rehabilitation for the City of Sumter; Rosella G. Toney, now retired, was an Assistant Principal at Bishpohville High School; Mary G. Hopkins, served as a college librarian at Virginia State University and retired as head librarian for Franklin County Middle School in Rocky Mount, VA; Dr. Ruth G. Kennedy retired from North Carolina Central University as an Associate Professor of English and served for a year as Executive Assistant to the Interim Chancellor; Ivorie Lowe retired as Dean of Girls at Bloom Township High School in Chicago, IL; Arthur L. George, former an educator with both local schools and the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, retired as a sales manager with Prudential Insurance Company and presently serves as Senior Chaplain for the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center in Virginia; Kershaw George, a former University of South Carolina Administrator in Admissions, has become an entrepreneur; Dr. Eugene George, formerly an Assisstant Professor of Education at the University of South Carolina and Associate Superintendent of Richland School District #1, presently a school principal in Columbia; Doris Baskette, a former school principal, is now a principal leader and mentor with the South Carolina Department of Education.

A dedicated and lifelong member of St. Mark Baptist Church, Mrs. George received St. Mark’s “Mother of the Church” honor this year. An active member, she has served as president of the Missionary Society and Floral Auxiliary. For her years of service to the community in congratulating Brigette on a tribute to Brigette Balet. She is an amazing young woman who is willing to forego a summer vacation to work in a soot and smoke filled home. It is truly a tremendous young woman who is willing to forego a summer vacation to work in a soot and smoke filled home.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1598, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

SPEECH OF
HON. TOM UDALL
OF NEW MEXICO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, November 7, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, today, with our soldiers in harm’s way around the globe, and as seemingly constant reports come on the television of brave men and women either killed or wounded, I rise in support of the FY04 National Defense Authorization Act conference report. This important legislation provides much-needed pay increases for our troops, as well as authorizes funding for important construction projects at New Mexico’s military bases. This is, however, far from perfect legislation and I have very serious concerns about several provisions included in this year’s bill. This legislation has traditionally been free of traditional pork-barrel issues, which, unfortunately, have found their way into this year’s authorization.

I would first like to touch on the exemptions to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) that were included in this legislation. I was a con- feree on this section of the bill and believe that the exemptions included in the conference report do not strike an adequate balance between maintaining a level of high military readiness, which I strongly support, and protecting at-risk species.

The DOD argues that the existing national security exemptions in our environmental laws are not good enough for the military, even though the GAO found that claim was without basis. The DOD Authorization Conference Report creates a far weaker and unwarranted regulatory process for the Navy. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we should have rejected the exemptions to the ESA and MMPA. As Mr. Rumsfeld acknowledged in Qatar, we have the “best trained, best equipped and finest troops on the face of the earth.” Considering this, the military exemptions this legislation creates are unnecessary and should have been struck from the Report.

MISSED ROLLCALL VOTES

HON. DOUG BEREUTER
OF NEBRASKA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, on November 17, 2003, this Member unavoidably missed Rollcall Votes Number 620, 621, 622, 623, 624 due to official business off the Hill. Had this Member been present, this Member would have voted “aye” on these rollcall votes on three suspensions and one procedural vote. The three suspensions were S. J. Res. 22, a resolution commending the General Accounting Office for its work in the United States Senate, and for his lifetime of work as an ambassador for the poor and powerless citizens of the United States of America. The fourth vote was a procedural motion changing the hour of meeting for Tuesday, November 18, 2003.
Another issue that I believe is inadequately addressed in the report before us today has to do with the Disabled Veterans Tax, also known as concurrent receipt. This conference report includes a Republican proposal that would only partially end the tax, thereby leaving our military retirees affected by the tax and forcing those covered to wait 10 years for full benefits. Mr. Speaker, since I have been in Congress, I have cosponsored H.R. 303, to provide full concurrent receipt for all veterans eligible for both retirement and disability pay. I have signed the discharge petition to get H.R. 303 on the floor; I have signed numerous letters on this topic; and I strongly support ending this inequitable situation. For that reason, since I support a total fix to this tax, today I will be supporting the Democratic motion to recommence the conference report with instructions to report it back with the complete elimination of the Disabled Veterans Tax.

The conference agreement also contains a number of important provisions relating to the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. The agreement authorizes the administration’s request of $15 million for research on the nuclear “bunker buster,” the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, plus $6 million for an advanced concept initiative. These provisions are activities that I strongly oppose these provisions. Instead of building new nuclear weapons, I believe we should fund weapons that have just as strong deterrent capability, but do not encourage new uses for nuclear weapons or encourage a new nuclear arms race.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against H.R. 1588 when it first passed the House because of many of the provisions I just discussed. However, even during its first time through the House, I supported the across-the-board 4.15 percent pay increase for military personnel, and I strongly support these provisions again as it is included in the conference agreement.

However, there are a few provisions in particular that I strongly support which were not included in the initial House version of the Defense Authorization legislation. Now that they are included in the conference report, I will be voting in support of this conference agreement today.

One provision not included in the House version, but one that I have been working hard to ensure it is included in the conference report, is authorization of $9 million for Cannon Air Force Base located in my district in Clovis, New Mexico. $7.7 million of this $9 million would be used to construct a much-needed new Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) Complex and $1.3 million would be used to install a permanent Simplified Short Approach Lighting System (SSALS) with sequenced flashers on a runway at the air force base. These are both very important upgrades that will improve the safety of our troops stationed at Cannon Air Force Base and, in turn, help improve the safety of our nation.

One other provision that has helped sway me to support passage of this authorization is making it an advantage for the 7,000 legal permanent reservists who serve in the military eligible to apply to become U.S. citizens after a year of service for citizenship in the United States. I believe that if immigrants are willing to serve in war, then a grateful nation should give them what they are fighting for, American citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, clearly there are provisions that are both good and bad. In a bill this size, it is inevitable that this is the case. As such, because I believe the conference agreement includes important provisions that were not included in the House version of the bill, I will be voting in support of passage of this important legislation. With our men and women overseas in harms way, supporting this bill with its important pay raises for them and their families is a fitting way to show our support for them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER
OF OREGON
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the following votes on November 17, 2003, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 620: I would have voted “yea” on S.J. Res. 39, recognizing the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture for 50 years of service to the Nation.

Rollcall vote 621: I would have voted “yea” on S.J. Res. 18, commending the Inspectors General for their efforts to prevent and detect waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the Federal Government during the past 25 years.

Rollcall vote 622: I would have voted “yea” on H. Con. Res. 299, honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver for his dedication and service to the United States and the world.

Rollcall vote 623: I would have voted “yea” on the motion to change the hour of meeting.

AMERICA’S PRIVATE SECTOR AIDS CIVIC EDUCATION EFFORT, VOTER PARTICIPATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, a recent Gallup poll that asked Americans what keeps our country strong found some very interesting results. While 67 percent identified “willingness to serve in the military” as important to keeping America strong, 84 percent and 86 percent, respectively, identified “high level of voting (in national elections)” and “having a well-educated populace.” Yet other polls show that our citizens’ civic knowledge is low and that our voter participation is among the lowest in the world.

A number of Americans, from my district and from virtually every other district across the country, are undertaking a major effort to improve our voter participation and encourage citizen participation in our democracy.

These patriotic Americans have joined with the Committee for Citizen Awareness (CCA) and other notable Americans like Secretary of State Colin Powell, institutional author Caroline Kennedy in this effort. The CCA provides free, award-winning civic videotapes to America’s high schools, cable television stations, community colleges, libraries and others in every congressional district in the country.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the efforts of the CCA and to individuals and organizations such as the following:

Tom Beddow, Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Markets of 3M Company
Donald J. Gillespie, President and CEO of A.M. Community Credit Union
J ohn Schofield, Chairman, President and CEO of Advanced Fibre Communications
James W. Barner, President and CEO of Altoona Hospital
Barney B. Chapman, Vice President of America First Credit Union
Marite Plume, President and CEO of Aorgone Credit Union
Dr. G. William Benz, President of Ashland University
Ricky A. Burke, President of Metro Region Operations of Atmos Energy
LuAnn C. Williams, Corporate Communications Officer of Bangor Hydro-Electric Company
Dr. Michael Alkmins, President of Bay De Noc Community College
Dr. Robert Fisher, President of Belmont University
Michael Cascone, Jr., Chairman, President, and CEO of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Florida
Gary A. Regoli, President/CEO of Boeing Wichita Credit Union
Truman L. Gates, Chief Executive Officer of Desert Regional Medical Center
David J. Jacobstein, President and CEO of Developers Diversified Realty Corp.
Andrew J. Filp” Filpowski, President and CEO of divine interVentures, Inc.
Vince R. Volpe, President of Dresser-Rand
Doris Grose, President of Educaid, Wachovia Corporation
Dr. Roger S. Newton, President and CEO of Esperion Therapeutics
Marla K. Shepard, President and CEO of First Future Credit Union
Robert Anestis, Chairman, President and CEO of Florida East Coast Industries, Inc.
Patrik L. Taylor, CEO of General Electric Evendale Employees Federal Credit Union
Dr. Craig Turner, President of Hardin-Simmons University
Dr. Charles D. Dunn, President of Henderson State University
Ray Romero, Chairman of Hickam Federal Credit Union
Dr. lan Goodnow, President of Illinois Valley Community College
Andrew L. Farkas, Chairman and CEO of Insignia Financial Group
Dr. Jerry W. Weber, President of Kankakee Community College
Dr. Joseph G. Burke, President of Keuka College
Dr. Linda Stegall, President of Kingwood College
Thomas Fleming, Chairman of the Board of Kirkbride Center
Walter Malinowski, President of Labat-Anderson Inc.
Dr. L. Michael Metke, President of Lake Washington Technical College
Hank Hernandez, CEO of Las Palmas Medical Center
Dr. Brian T. Flynn, CEO of Manatee Memorial Hospital
Mark Hillard, CEO of Maricopa Integrated Healthcare
Sister Mary Reap, IHM, President of Marywood University
Kenneth Rudzewick, President and CEO of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association

The Committee for Citizen Awareness, Inc. (CCA) is an organization dedicated to producing high-quality, award-winning rental videocassettes to promote participation in the civic culture for 50 years of service to the Nation.