

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 from my district. Brigitte Balet from Montrose, Colorado sacrificed her summer break to assist friends in need. For her service, Brigitte recently received the Key Citizens Award from the City of Montrose and I am proud to join the citizens of Montrose in recognizing Brigitte's contributions before this body of Congress here today.

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

Brigitte'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 Brigitte Balet. She is an amazing young woman with a bright future and a fine example to young people everywhere. I would like to join the Beastons and the Montrose community in congratulating Brigitte on a well-deserved award.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. LELER 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. Leler 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 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 education that she 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 Bishopville 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, formerly 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 Assistant Professor of Education at the University of South Carolina and Associate Superintendent of Richland School District #1, is 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 Club, Treasurer of the Sunday School, and member of the Usher Board. She maintains her political activism through her membership with the National Council of Negro Women.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. George's 100th birthday marks a life of stellar achievements, and she is still going strong. There is no question that Mrs. Leler Virginia Scarborough George is a role model for all of us, and ask you and my colleagues to join me in wishing her God-speed.

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 recognizing the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture for 50 years of outstanding service to the Nation through agricultural research; S. J. Res. 18, a resolution 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; and H. Con. Res. 299, a resolution honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver for his dedication and service to the United States of America, for his service in the United States Navy, 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.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1588, 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 highly controversial 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 conferee 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.

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 out two-thirds of 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 unfair tax, today I will be supporting the Democratic motion to recommit 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 dangerous 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 "advanced concept initiatives." I strongly oppose these provisions. Instead of building new nuclear weapons, I believe we should fund weapons that have just as strong a 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 an additional 12,000 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 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. 22, 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 of America.

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 keep our country strong, according to the definition expressed in the Gallup poll. They are working to keep Americans well educated about civic matters and to 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, and Constitutional author Caroline Kennedy in this effort. The CCA provides free, award-winning civic videotapes to America's high schools, cable television sta-

tions, 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

John 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 Argonne Credit Union

Dr. G. William Benz, President of Ashland University

Ricky A. Burke, Vice President of Metro Region Operations of Atmos Energy

LuAnn C. Williams, Corporate Communication Officer of Bangor Hydro-Electric Company

Dr. Michael Allkins, 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 Jacobstein, President and COO of Developers Diversified Realty Corp.

Andrew "Flip" Flipowski, President and CEO of divine interVentures, inc.

Vince R. Volpe, President of Dresser-Rand

Doris Grose, President of Educaid, Wachovia Corporation

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Robert Anestis, Chairman, President and CEO of Florida East Coast Industries, Inc.

Patrick 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

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Dr. Linda Stegall, President of Kingwood College

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Dr. L. Michael Metke, President of Lake Washington Technical College

Hank Hernandez, CEO of Las Palmas Medical Center

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Mark Hillard, CEO of Maricopa Integrated Health System

Sister Mary Reap, IHM, President of Marywood University

Kenneth Rudzewick, President and CEO of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association