

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 8, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2684) making appropriations for the Department of Veteran Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Cunningham amendment to restore funding for the Selective Service System.

The sole mission of the Selective Service is to support our country's military readiness by supplying manpower to the Armed Forces adequate to ensure the security of the United States during a time of national emergency. The Selective Service is a small agency with a budget of less than \$25 million. It relies on more than 10,000 volunteers who would serve on local, national and civilian review boards during a draft.

Registering for the Selective Service is one of the few requirements we place on our young people. It is also one of the few opportunities we have to encourage young adults to consider public service. Through the response mechanism in the registration process, the Selective Service System provides men 18–25 years of age with information about a range of ways, military and civilian, to serve their country. These messages address all of the armed services, as well as civilian service opportunities, including America's Promise and Job Corps.

At a time when our nation faces recruitment shortages and retention problems, it would be unwise for this body to terminate the one agency responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of people that could be called upon should we need to return to a draft. Defense Secretary Cohen, the National Security Council, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and our nation's leading military service organizations oppose the elimination of funding for the Selective Service System because it could compromise this country's future mobilization capability.

During a time of peace and with a strong economy, it would be very easy to abolish the Selective Service System. Who would notice? Many consider it out-of-date and unnecessary when we have the strongest military force in the world. But it would be a dangerous gamble to assume that we will never again need to rely upon the draft. If the Selective Service System is terminated and our nation was faced with a crisis, it would take more than a year to recreate the System. These sorts of delays could be disastrous in a state of emergency and could prevent a draft from being fair and equitable.

Today's Selective Service System is also prepared to conduct a special skills draft, such as a draft for health care personnel, if the

need arises. The ability to enact a health care draft would be critical if our nation ever experiences a military conflict involving mass casualties from nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. This is just one more benefit of a modern Selective Service System that provides an economically efficient way to support our manpower needs in a state of emergency.

If Congress eliminated the Selective Service, it would be more costly to our nation in the long run to recreate the functions of this agency. A GAO study concluded that the costs associated with dissolving the Selective Service System and then gearing it back up would amount to more than \$100 million. A decision so important to our ability as a nation to fulfill its constitutional obligations of providing for the common defense should be taken up by the Congressional authorizing committees, not the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. Chairman, the House has debated the status of the Selective Service several times in the past decade and, each time, a clear majority has supported maintaining the Selective Service System. I urge my colleagues to continue this commitment to the Selective Service and vote for the Cunningham amendment.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM BARKER

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the passing of William Barker, a leader in the California agriculture community.

A fifth generation Monterey County native, Bill served for forty-three years as the manager of the Monterey County Farm Bureau, guiding the agriculture community through years of profound change. He became manager of the local farm bureau chapter in 1958, when the Salinas Valley had, for the most part, dairies and dry bean farms. Salinas Valley is now a salad bowl, as well as producing wines, cut flowers, organic crops and herbs. Other significant changes developed in environmental and labor regulations, and in the urbanization of farmlands. Bill never failed to keep farmers aware of what was on the horizon and what would be best for the industry.

Bill's emphasis on education programs helped to keep the community-at-large aware of the role that agriculture plays in their daily lives. He was an early supporter of Monterey County Education Inc.; he was deeply involved with local and Statewide 4-H programs and the Future Farmers of America Programs in high schools; and he was founder and Chairman of the County's COLA (Coalition of Labor, Ag and Business).

Bill took a leadership role in the community as well: as President of the Salinas Chamber of Commerce; as a member of the Board of the United Way of Salinas Valley; as director of the Monterey County Fair for 12 years and president of the fair for 3 years; and as President of the Steinbeck Foundation Treatment Center. He was on the Board of Directors of the Monterey Resource Conservation District, and in the 1980's he assisted with the establishment of the Monterey County General Plan.

Bill died January 21, 1999, leaving his wife Norma; two sons, Bill and Tom; two daughters, Carole and Susan, and three grandchildren and a host of friends and admirers. Bill was always an advocate for and champion of the agricultural community. His vision and leadership will be greatly missed.

HONORING MR. ROBERT W. GRAHAM ON THIS, HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY, FOR HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OF JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

HON. WILLIAM L. JENKINS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Robert W. Graham of Johnson City, Tennessee for his ongoing commitment to service toward his community. Throughout his life, Mr. Graham has displayed the hard work and honorable virtue that has won him the respect and admiration of his peers.

Ten years ago, Mr. Graham moved to Johnson City following distinguished service as a government engineer. As one might expect from Mr. Graham, the purpose of his move was to continue his dedication to public service. He organized a local chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Veterans (SCORE), an organization designed to assist under-funded individuals enter into business for themselves. Mr. Graham has been actively involved in SCORE for all of his ten years in Johnson City, and currently serves there as Chairperson of Chapter 584. Under Mr. Graham's watch the program has expanded to include five counties in upper east Tennessee as well as three regional offices.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present to this Congress Mr. Robert W. Graham, who this September 18 will be celebrating his 75th birthday, and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his life of outstanding service and uncommon dedication.

HONORING BOB AND LINDA BARNES ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR RETIREMENT FROM SPRINGVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 43 years of combined service of Robert and Linda Barnes to Springville Elementary School.

Bob and Linda retired from the Springville Griffith Institute School earlier this year, marking the first time in more than two decades neither was there to greet incoming students at the onset of the school year.

Bob served as Principal of Springville Elementary School since 1976. His wife, Linda, has been secretary since 1979. They were married in 1983.

Mr. Speaker, from parental feedback to standardized test scores, Springville Elementary School has thrived under the Barnes'

leadership, ability and devotion. Ninety-eight percent of the students read at levels above the state average; and the majority of second and fourth graders place in the 60th to 80th percentile of the Stanford Achievement Tests.

American historian and writer Henry Adams once noted that "a teacher affects eternity; he can never tell when his influence stops." For Bob and Linda Barnes, the lives they've touched over their years at Springville Elementary School will ensure that their influence carries on far into the future.

But it's not just the children of the Springville community that have benefited from the Barnes' time and talents. Whether the Chamber of Commerce, the Salem Lutheran Church, the Concord Republican Committee, or countless other civic and community activities and organizations, Bob and Linda have always been there to provide a helping hand to their neighbors.

While I'm proud to honor the contributions of Bob and Linda Barnes both to the Springville Elementary School and their community, I'm also honored that they are among my closest and dearest friends. For many years we were next door neighbors, and through morning coffees and late-night conversations, I know how deeply Bob and Linda care about the children of the Springville community, and how sorely they will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Congress join me in saluting Bob and Linda Barnes for their years of service to Springville Elementary School; and in wishing them great health and happiness in their retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent yesterday, Monday, September 13, 1999, and as a result, missed rollcall votes 405 through 407. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall 405, "yes" on rollcall vote 406, and "yes" on rollcall vote 407.

HELP AMERICA'S FARMERS & RANCHERS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the continuing crisis in the farm economy and share with this body a copy of a letter I recently received from a constituent in my Congressional District. America's farmers and ranchers are struggling to deal with some of the lowest commodity prices in decades. Current commodity prices do not even allow farmers to recover their costs of production, much less provide for the needs of their families. When one considers that drought and other damaging weather conditions are also dramatically affecting our crop and livestock production, it is clear that this is nothing short of an emergency situation. And the following letter from a constituent of mine reminds all of us that this situation goes well beyond mere

numbers, projections, and statistics. The fact of the matter is that real people are hurting; the livelihoods of real families and real communities are at risk. This letter from Mr. Bill Faris of Hayti, Missouri, the son of a farmer and someone whose family has farmed for generations, highlights the depth of the problems in farm country and explains why all Americans should be gravely concerned about what is happening out on the farm. I hope Members of Congress will keep Mr. Faris' comments in mind as they vote on farm relief measures that will be considered very soon.

BILL FARIS,

Hayti, MO, August 25, 1999.

Rep. JO ANN EMERSON,
*The Federal Building,
Cape Girardeau, MO.*

DEAR REP. EMERSON, This is a follow up to my earlier letters to you. I had the opportunity to hear you speak at the Rice Field Day on Aug. 18th as I work for the Univ. of MO Delta Center. I was encouraged by what you had to say as you are addressing the central issues facing farmers during this crisis, and it is obvious that you are truly concerned about the plight of our family farmers, and you are taking action to try and help our smaller farmers.

I want you to know I appreciate your efforts on behalf of farmers like my Dad. Unfortunately it is too late for my Dad as I am afraid it will be for many farmers this year.

Dad and I talked the other day, and he told me that he cannot farm after this year. Dad told me that he lost a little over \$50,000 last year due to the low commodity prices and adverse weather conditions and he knows that he will lose more this year than last year. At 72, after a lifetime of doing what he loves the most, farming, Dad knows he has to quit before he loses his home and our farm land. Dad said over the last five years he has used more and more of the money he had put back for his and my Mom's retirement to continue farming, but now he has to quit before he loses it all.

Ms. Emerson, it broke my heart to see the pain and frustration on my Dad's face, but it especially broke my heart to see the helplessness in my Dad's eyes, and to know that there was nothing I could do to help ease Dad's pain. The generations of Faris' farming the land end with my Dad. My Dad is a proud man, and he does not cry easily, but I could see the tears in his eyes as he looked over our land with the resignation that he would never farm it again.

Ms. Emerson, the really sad part of this story is that it will be repeated over and over again at the end of 1999. I fear that thousands of family farms will cease to exist, just as ours will.

I sense a helplessness and a lack of hope in our areas farmers, that I have never seen before. All the farmers laugh with no humor at President Clinton's announcement that many farmers are now eligible for low interest loans. Their standard commit is "what good is a no interest loan let alone a low interest loan when you are losing money each year." Their attitude is that our government seems to want the small farmer to disappear and all we will have left is large corporate farms controlled by a few large conglomerates, and I tend to agree with them.

My Dad is not a large farmer; he only farms 500 acres of wheat and soybeans, but his story is sadly going to be repeated over and over again in 1999. Dad is an excellent businessman, and he is one of the most frugal people I know, but low commodity prices have forced him out of farming. On average Dad lost approximately \$100 per acre in 1998, and he will lose approximately that much again in 1999. Cotton growers will lose more

than that, so you can see what a larger farmer will lose. Our pork producers are facing the same dilemmas as you well know.

Congress must act now, Ms. Emerson, or a way of life that is very dear to me will disappear. Give our farmers legislation that gives them a level playing field in the world markets. Farmers do not need rhetoric from Washington; they need help, and they need it now.

I hope you get a chance to address this issue at our Field Day on Sept. 2nd, and I hope that you can give our farmers some much needed encouragement. I am from Missouri, and our legislators have to show me that they truly care about the plight of our small family farms. I know that you care because you are doing something, please keep up the good work and please keep telling our farmer's story in Washington.

I do not believe many of our legislators realize how serious the problem is, but I know you do.

Again thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of our farmers, and I wish you health and happiness—especially in your new marriage.

Respectfully yours,

BILL FARIS.

STOP THE KILLING IN EAST TIMOR

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, the violence and bloodshed in recent days in East Timor has shocked the world. Pro-Indonesia thugs have run rampant in this tiny former Portuguese colony, killing pro-independence Timorese. The political leadership in Jakarta totally failed in its guarantee of safety to the local Timorese populace, and has become the source of shame both for the government and the Indonesian military.

It is clear that an international peacekeeping force will be necessary to restore order in East Timor. As the Omaha World Herald correctly noted in a September 14, 1999, editorial entitled "First, Stop the Killing," this bloody repression must be stopped. "This is too early to talk about resolving the sides' differences. For now it is enough simply to separate them and try to calm the situation."

Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to this colleagues the excellent editorial in the Omaha World Herald.

FIRST, STOP THE KILLING

Few Americans take any joy in the prospect of sending peacekeeping troops into the violence and intrigues of East Timor. But the situation is relieved greatly by the announcement that Indonesian President B.J. Habibie now welcomes them.

International pressure was mounting to somehow stop the bloodletting. Having to subdue both pro-Indonesian militias and troops, while at the same time strong-arming the legitimate Indonesian government, would have been a daunting prospect. Now Habibie has conceded the obvious—his defense forces can't control the situation—and so relief may be in sight within a few days. Australia, which is literally in the neighborhood, expects to send a force of up to 7,000 on short-notice deployment.

This is appropriate, given the geography and the fact that Australia has been among the staunchest advocates of intervention. It