

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DISBAND AMERICORPS

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I express my deep concerns about yet another wasteful and inefficient government program championed by the Clinton-Gore administration. AmeriCorps, the Nation's failed "volunteer" program, is currently up for reauthorization. Recently, 49 governors signed a letter to Congress requesting their support for the program. Fortunately, Colorado's Governor Bill Owens had the courage to stand alone in declining to sign, and I applaud him for his reluctance.

There are three indefensible problems with AmeriCorps. Before Congress considers acquiescing to Bill Clinton's demand for a \$533 million increase, it should think long and hard about the disappointments of AmeriCorps.

First, AmeriCorps distorts the notion of volunteerism. The AmeriCorps web page boastfully states, "Service is and always has been a vital force in American life. Throughout our history, our Nation has relied on the dedication and action of citizens to tackle our biggest challenges." I could not agree more. Three-quarters of American families give to charity, and 90 million adults in our Nation volunteer. Americans are the most philanthropic people in the world.

This inevitably begs the question, why would the Federal Government set up a paid "volunteer" program when private citizens, churches, and organizations are fulfilling this role independently? Just as Bill Clinton has stripped the White House of dignity, he has adulterated the notion of American volunteerism.

Second, how many \$500 million corporations in America are not auditable? Certainly none that survive. AmeriCorps' books have been unauditable since 1995, just two years after its inception. When AmeriCorps Inspector General, Luise S. Jordan, was asked at a 1999 Education Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing if AmeriCorps was auditable, she replied, "Although the Corporation [AmeriCorps] puts its Action Plan into effect in December 1998, its August 21 update indicates that none of its goals to improve the Corporation's operations and its financial management have been achieved." As Members of Congress, it is our duty to shield the American taxpayer from such abuse. Furthermore, how can the Congress even consider reauthorizing a program with a 25-percent increase when, almost eight years after its inception, AmeriCorps is still not able to be audited because of its extreme financial disorganization?

Finally, Public Law 103-82 prohibits individuals or organizations who receive Federal funds from performing or engaging in partisan political activities. One of AmeriCorps' largest abuses of taxpayer dollars occurred in Denver, CO. The AmeriCorps division was supposed

to use its "volunteers" to help the needy in northeast Denver. According to state records, the AmeriCorps leaders organized "volunteers" to make and distribute political fliers attacking Hiawatha Davis, a local city councilman. The Denver Rocky Mountain News reported, "The volunteers had to draft campaign fliers and distribute them door-to-door in April and May (1995) when Davis and [Mayor Wellington] Webb were fighting for re-election." Americans' tax dollars were used for political activities through AmeriCorps, in this case, which is but one example of a larger trend.

Mr. Speaker, the best action Congress could take is to disband AmeriCorps—that is obvious. Reauthorizing AmeriCorps and possibly increasing its budget by the President's request of \$533 million would be foolish. To allow more tax dollars to be wasted on an ill-conceived Clinton-Gore social program is to belittle the authentic charity of philanthropic Americans and to treat their hard-earned money with unabashed disrespect.

A MILITARY INSIGNIA THAT MATTERS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2000

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, recently the Chief of Staff of the Army took it upon himself to permit all members of the Army, including all reservists and National Guardsmen, to wear a black beret. Traditionally, this honor has only been conferred upon Army Rangers, with Airborne units being permitted to wear maroon berets and Special Forces the well-known green beret.

While the Army chief's motive of enhancing morale may have been laudable, the decision to permit all Army personnel to wear the prized beret diminishes its significance. A nation does not create crack troops by giving everyone the insignia that previously had been reserved only for the elite.

Mr. Speaker, symbols often have meaning. The symbolism and mystique of the black beret was earned on the battlefield, and in countless thankless peacekeeping operations. Making the prized black beret common headgear diminishes the efforts and the sacrifices of those who have earned the right to wear the beret. This Member urges the Army to reconsider this decision, and submits into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article in the November 4, 2000 edition of the Omaha-World Herald entitled "Still Time to Save the Black Beret."

STILL TIME TO SAVE THE BLACK BERET

The black beret is a symbol of the mighty effort that U.S. Army Rangers put into training, readiness and service. An effort in the brass to usurp that badge of honor must feel like a bayonet in the gut.

Gen. Eric Shinseki, the new Army chief of staff, came up with the idea personally and unilaterally, apparently after giving a talk

to an audience of black-bereted Rangers, maroon-bereted Airborne and green-bereted Special Forces. His thought: Give every member of the Army, including reservist, the right to wear a black beret. National Guard, too.

His reasoning: If the black beret is good for the elite Rangers, it would be good for everyone else, too. The Army must "accept the challenge of excellence," he said in announcing the change. The black beret "will be symbolic of our commitment to transform this magnificent Army into a new force."

Oh, and it's also a fashion statement, too, according to an Army spokesman. Black is the only color beret that would go with every Army uniform. So black it must be.

What is Shinseki thinking? These guys are the Rangers, the Army's least unconventional warriors. They do 15-mile runs just to get warmed up. With full pack. They are known for being able to survive off the land—on rats, snakes and insects if necessary. Their kind of combat is called, with good if understated reason, "extreme prejudice."

They often remain Rangers, in spirit at least, for the rest of their lives. They have active and up-front veterans organizations. And it is these organizations that stepped up to lead the objections to Shinseki's fashion statement. (Active-duty Rangers will, of course, obey any order fully and promptly, no matter how much the order might sear the soul.)

Shinseki offered to give the Rangers an alternative—a group of senior noncommissioned officers is going to come up with a substitute Ranger symbol. An alternative, whatever it might be, is not good enough, the veterans groups said.

Amen to that. Receiving the black beret is an honor earned by hard work, courage and commitment. Handing it out willy-nilly to every soldier who passes basic training is something akin to awarding the Medal of Honor to anyone who reaches the rank of private first-class. But, hey, they'll come up with some alternative or other to give to Medal-of-Honor winners. No prob.

The idea was ill-conceived from the start. Thankfully, there is time to get Shinseki's idea overturned. If veterans organizations can't do the job through official channels, they have said they will go to the new president, whoever he might be, and ask for an executive order. President Kennedy, after all, gave exclusive rights to green berets to the Special Forces. President Bush or President Gore could easily do the same for the Rangers.

And should.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 2796, WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 3, 2000

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, section 430, Atchafalaya River, Bayous Chene, Boeuf, and Black, Louisiana: Nothing in this section

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

should be interpreted so as to delay the immediate implementation of solutions to improve navigation on the Atchafalaya River, Bayous Chene, Boeuf, and Black project as provided under existing authorities and directives.

Section 433, Lake Pontchartrain Seawall: The Corps should take into account the cost savings and benefits to the entire Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane Protection and Flood Control project when determining justification for modifications and rehabilitation to the seawall. Prior cost savings and benefits provided by the seawall should be taken into account when determining whether structural modifications and rehabilitation of the seawall are justified.

Section 530, Urbanized Peak Flood Management, New Jersey: Activities authorized by this section should be carried out in coordination with qualified academic institutions, such as the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Conferees are also aware that NJIT has expressed interest in having its campus serve as the location for such research efforts.

Section 532, Upper Mohawk River Basin, New York: This important project has the potential to provide not just flood control and wildlife habitat (through wetlands restoration) but also water quality improvements and other environmental benefits.

Title VI, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan: First, the provision recognizes the importance of the modified water deliveries project authorized by the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 by presuming that this project is completed.

While the primary purpose of the modified water deliveries project is to restore natural flows to the Everglades, it contains a number of provisions to provide critical flood control and property rights protections to private landowners potentially impacted by the projects.

Nothing in WRDA 2000 should be interpreted to diminish statutory protections to landowners in section 104 of Public Law 101-229.

Second, section 601(h)(3)(C)(ii) addresses the limitation on the applicability of programmatic regulations. Nothing in this paragraph affects the public's ability to participate and comment on the development of project implementation reports, project cooperation agreements, operation manuals, and any other documents relating to the development, implementation, and management of individual features of the Everglades restoration plan. In addition, nothing in this provision expands any agency's authority.

The Corps should undertake a significant public education and outreach effort to describe the Everglades project. I encourage the Corps to work closely with nonfederal institutions that have the respect of the community. I understand one such institution is the Museum of Discovery and Science in Fort Lauderdale, which has entered into an agreement with the south Florida ecosystem restoration task force to provide public education and outreach in conjunction with the restoration effort. As my colleague Representative CLAY SHAW mentioned during consideration of the house bill, the Museum of Discovery and Science is situated to carry out these functions through a planned facility and exhibition. I urge the Corps to work closely with the museum and to provide financial and technical assistance to ensure visitors to south Florida have a fair and balanced understanding of the comprehensive Everglades restoration plan.

Oklahoma-Tribal Commission: The managers find that the economic trends in southeastern Oklahoma related to unemployment and per capita income are not conducive to local economic development, and efforts to improve the management of water in the region would have a positive influence on the local economy, help reverse these trends, and improve the lives of local residents. The managers believe that State of Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma, and the Chickasaw Nation, Oklahoma, should establish a State-Tribal Commission composed equally of representatives of such nations and residents of the water basins within the boundaries of such nations for the purpose of administering and distributing from the sale of water any benefits and net revenues to the tribes and local entities within the respective basins; any sale of water to entities outside the basins should be consistent with the procedures and requirements established by the commission; and if requested, the secretary should provide assistance, as appropriate, to facilitate the efforts of the commission. Such a commission focusing on the Kiamichi River Basin and other basins within the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations would allow all entities (State of Oklahoma, Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, and residents of local basin(s)) to work cooperatively to see that the benefits and revenues being generated from the sale/use of water to entities outside the respective basins are distributed in an agreeable manner.

Mr. Speaker, many staff worked for many days and months on this landmark and legislation. At the risk of omitting some, I'd like to thank a few by name: Jack Schenendorf, Mike Strachn, Roger Nober, John Anderson, Donna Campbell, Corry Marshall, Sara Gray, Susan Bodine, Carrie Jelsma, Ben Grumbles, Ken Kopocis, Art Chan, and Pam Keller of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Tom Gibson, Stephanie Daigle, Chelsea Henderson Maxwell, Ann Loomis, Jo-Ellen Darcy, Peter Washburn, Catherine Cyr, and C.K. Lee of the Senate; and Larry Prather, Gary Campbell, Milton Rider, and Bill Schmitz of the Corps of Engineers.

SECTION 1422 OF H.R. 4868

HON. BILL ARCHER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2000

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4868, as amended by H. Res. 644 which passed the House and Senate, contains a provision in section 1422 of the bill relating to petroleum and petroleum derivatives. These remarks explain the need for that provision.

In 1990 Congress simplified duty drawback for the petroleum industry by creating a separate section, 1313(p), under the drawback laws. For purposes of duty drawback, a finished petroleum derivative or a qualified article is commercially interchangeable under Subsection 1313(p) of the Tariff Act of 1930 based on Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) headings or subheadings listed within that subsection. As a result, petroleum derivatives are considered to be of the same kind and quality and commercially interchangeable by virtue of matching the HTS classification codes for imports and exports.

In some instances, one or more petroleum derivatives, or products, are listed under a single HTS classification, making those derivatives commercially interchangeable under 1313(p). This long-standing practice is threatened by future modifications of the HTS that would split several products out from under a single HTS classification by creating new and separate HTS classifications, or categories, for those products. Such a "split" would inadvertently disallow drawback under Subsection 1313(p) for certain qualified articles that are now considered commercially interchangeable.

Section 1422 of H.R. 4868 addresses the "split" issue by ensuring that certain qualified articles remain commercially interchangeable as modifications to the HTS are made in which petroleum derivatives are split from single into separate HTS classifications or subheadings. Specifically, Section 1422 provides that any products that are currently commercially interchangeable will remain so based on those products' HTS subheading or classification as in effect on January 1, 2000. Thus, the language of Section 1422 would ensure that products or articles that are currently commercially interchangeable shall continue to be commercially interchangeable, irrespective of whether the HTS is modified and those same articles are split and listed under separate HTS subheadings. This section does not affect any future tariff simplification that would combine certain articles or products under a single eight-digit HTS subheading and thus make those products commercially interchangeable under 1313(p).

HONORING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Russian American Cultural Society of Cleveland. This wonderful organization has been unifying the Russian population of Cleveland and celebrating the spirit of community since 1950.

The history of Cleveland's extraordinary Russian population begins in the post World War II era. The first wave of immigrants left Russia after the civil war in the early 1920's and settled in France and Yugoslavia. Following World War II, many of these Russian immigrants left war-torn Europe and headed for the United States. A second wave of immigration came when a number of displaced Russian citizens chose to make a new start in the U.S. rather than return to the Soviet Union for repatriation. Of the thousands of Russian citizens who came to America in the 1940's, many chose Cleveland, Ohio as the city where they would begin their new lives.

Once settled in Cleveland, these Russian immigrants joined together in an admirable effort to preserve their valued Russian tradition, language, culture, and Orthodoxy. They took their first bold steps toward carrying on their Russian heritage in 1950 with the founding of the Russian American Cultural Society of Cleveland and the St. Sergius of Radonesh Russian Orthodox Church.