

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, from Wednesday, July 25 to Friday, July 27, 2001, I was absent due to a personal family emergency and missed a number of rollcall votes.

On rollcall votes Numbered: 270, 271, 273, 274, 276, 280, 282, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, and 289, I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall votes Numbered: 272, 275, 277, 278, 279, 281, and 283, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall votes 270 and 271, I would have voted "yea" on both amendments. Like the majority of my colleagues in this House, I support expanded travel for Americans to Cuba. Increasing travel opportunities for Americans to Cuba is a win-win situation for people in both countries, and helps to expand the opportunities to better understand our two cultures and increase exposure to the ideals of American democracy.

Rollcall 271, the Rangel amendment, would have stopped the embargo on Cuba. It should be painfully clear by now that the embargo on Cuba is not working. Castro has ruled the island with an iron-fist for forty years.

Four decades ago, had America interacted, traded, and exchanged ideas with Cuba there is a good chance that Castro would be gone and Cuba free. I see that a large number of my colleagues agree with me, and I hope to work with them in the future to change our nation's outmoded sanctions policy in respect to Cuba.

On rollcall 273, I would have voted "yea." In the past, I have expressed support for private accounts in our Social Security system, but with the understanding that any such proposal accounts for the true cost of transition to a system that includes some element of privatization. I am sorely disappointed in the process and released report by the Administration's Social Security Commission. I believe it has been dishonest in its assessment of the current state of Social Security, and the Administration has unwisely decided to reduce taxes in order to benefit those least in need of tax cuts, thus leaving the government accounts unbalanced. Given recent pronouncements by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget that the Administration may need to dip into Medicare and Social Security to cover its spending proposals, I cannot support the recommendations of this biased panel.

On rollcall 274, I would have voted "yea" on the final passage of the FY 2002 Treasury Postal appropriations act. In addition to the numerous important federal programs funded through this legislation, in particular I want to emphasize my support for the inclusion of \$16,629,000 to upgrade and retrofit the Pioneer Courthouse in Portland, Oregon.

This historic federal courthouse is the second oldest west of the Mississippi River and serves as the cornerstone to my community's public living room, Pioneer Courthouse Square. Each year over 8 million people visit the Courthouse while participating in adjacent public events, riding public transit which intersects at Pioneer Square, or engaging in nearby public and commercial activities. The funds

provided in the legislation will help ensure the safety for the men and women who work in the Courthouse, and the millions of others who enjoy this historic, public structure.

On rollcall 275, I would have voted "nay" on the resolution disapproving of the President's recent Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam. Since coming to Congress five years ago, I have been deeply involved in the process of normalizing relations between our nation and Vietnam. Last winter I traveled to Vietnam with President Clinton, and I was present for the signing of the Bilateral Trade Agreement.

Vietnam is a diverse nation that is growing rapidly and opening both economically and culturally. To disrupt the hard work of engagement between our two nations now would be devastating. Were I here, I would have voted against the disapproval resolution, and I hope last week's overwhelming vote against the resolution (91-324) will encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together to bring the Vietnam BTA to the floor for consideration.

On rollcall 288, I would have voted "yea" on the Bonior amendment to reinstate the arsenic standards put in place by the Clinton Administration. The Public Health Service adopted the current 50 parts per billion arsenic standard in 1942, before arsenic was known to cause cancer. In 1999, the National Academy of Sciences unanimously found that this outdated arsenic standard for drinking water does not ensure public health protection and that a downward revision was required. The Academy said that drinking water at the current EPA standard "could easily" result in a total fatal cancer risk of one in 100. That's a cancer risk 10,000 times higher than EPA allows for food, and 100 times higher than EPA has ever allowed for tap water contaminants.

Arsenic is found in the tap water of over 26 million Americans and is one of the most ubiquitous contaminants of health concern in tap water. The new standard put in place by the Clinton Administration last year was the result of 25 years of public comment, debate and at least three missed statutory deadlines. One of the Bush Administration's first actions was to overturn this rule and instead maintain a less protective arsenic standard. I support the Bonior Amendment and hope that its passage will give a clear indication to the Bush Administration of the need to reconsider their position on this issue and take seriously the threat that Arsenic in our drinking water poses to the health of our families and the livability of our communities.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and for sundry independent agencies,

boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I submit for following for the RECORD in support of the amendment offered by the gentlewoman of Ohio (Ms. KAPUR).

CUYAHOGA METROPOLITAN
HOUSING AUTHORITY,
Cleveland, OH, July 30, 2001.

RE: Public Housing Drug Elimination Grant (PHDEP) Update

Hon. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES,
House of Representatives, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN TUBBS JONES: I am writing to follow-up on our conversation last week about the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP), and to update you on CMHA's implementation of PHDEP grants since 1996. The following table will provide you with a year-by-year breakdown of the amounts we received, expended and the time frame for the grants.

Year	Grant amount	Expended as of 6/30/01	% Spent	Grant date	End date
2001	2,707,766
2000	2,550,794	168,575	6.6	11/14/2000	11/13/2002
1999	2,447,497	1,553,460	63.5	1/24/2000	1/23/2002
1998	2,756,000	2,745,236	99.6	12/22/1998	12/21/2000
1997	2,777,840	2,777,840	100	12/19/1997	12/20/1999
1996	2,832,250	2,832,250	100	11/19/1996	*5/19/1999

*Not yet awarded by HUD.

*Included six-month extension.

By contrast, HUD allows housing authorities two years to expend PHDEP funds from the date the grant agreement is signed by HUD. With only two exceptions CMHA has expended all PHDEP grant funds during the contract period. Once we received a six-month extension from HUD to fully expend the 1996 PHDEP grant, and once CMHA returned \$10,764 (0.4%) of unexpended funds from the 1998 PHDEP grant. Presently, we are on schedule to fully expend the 1999 and 2001 PHDEP grants, and HUD has not yet executed a grant agreement for the 2001 PHDEP funds. As you can see from this matrix, CMHA has not allowed funds to go unused, and is, as well as has been in compliance with HUD requirements.

As we have previously discussed, PHDEP funding is essential to CMHA safety efforts and social service programming, and as a reminder, the loss of \$2.7 million in PHDEP funding could eliminate CMHA support of the following programs:

• CMHA Police Activities League (PAL), which provides after school athletic programs for more than 700 youth from ages 5-18 annually.

• Boys and Girls Clubs located at four CMHA estates, which provide safe havens for almost 500 children annually to find fun and recreation.

• Several self-sufficiency programs, which have provided employment opportunities for 100 adults annually through job readiness, job training and entrepreneurial programs.

Adult Outpatient Substance Abuse programs, which have provided services to over 600 residents annually.

Teen Outpatients Prevention/Treatment programs, which serve more than 900 youth annually.

CMHA Police Department's Community Policing and Narcotics/Gangs Units, which employ 24 Police Officers, who are instrumental to CMHA's overall crime prevention efforts.

We have heard that the House mark-up of the FY 2002 Appropriations Bill would eliminate the PHDEP program, and increase the Operating Fund by \$114 million to \$3.505 billion to help make up the difference. Given that public housing industry estimates indicate that at least \$3.5 billion is needed to

fully fund the Operating Fund, especially with increasing energy costs, this proposed budget still virtually eliminates \$310 million of PHDEP funding available to housing authorities.

Thank you for understanding how the loss of PHDEP funds would severely affect CMHA

and our 15,000 public housing residents. We truly appreciate your continuing efforts to preserve this important funding source, and I hope the information provided in this letter answers any questions you or other members of Congress have expressed. Please call me at

216-348-5911 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

TERRI HAMILTON BROWN,
Executive Director.