

UNITED STATES SECURITY ACT

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Democratic Caucus' Homeland Security bill, the United States Security Act (USA Act).

This legislation is a collaborative effort crafted by my democratic colleagues on the Homeland Security Task Force. I was honored to have served as the vice chair of the Transportation Security task force with my friend, Bob BORSKI, who chaired the task force.

The USA Act addresses funding needs to improve our homeland security in the following areas: public health, transportation, physical and informational infrastructure, law enforcement and the military. As the attacks of the 11th clearly and unfortunately demonstrated, our nation is vulnerable to attack. This bill goes a long way to minimize those vulnerabilities.

In the past five years—and prior to the 11th—there have been international events which highlighted potential weaknesses in our transportation systems. In Tokyo, Japan, individuals caused harm by releasing sarin gas in the subway system. The USGS *Cole* was attacked in a seaport that, although in Yemen, was considered safe. While these attacks occurred overseas, they could have taken place here in the States.

With the passage of the Aviation Security Act earlier this year, significant improvements to aviation security were mandated. However, other modes of transportation could still be susceptible to attack. This legislation authorizes funds to secure bridges, tunnels, dams, seaports, rail, and public transit.

Specifically, the bill provides \$3.6 billion to strengthen bridge and tunnel structures, improve inspection facilities and the inspection of Hazmat materials on highways, supply the traveling public with real-time information about availability roads and bridges if terrorist attacks were to occur again, and improve security for locks and dams. It also provides \$992 million to enhance security at our seaports by increasing coast guard personnel, establishing a sea marshal program, requiring transponders for foreign vessels in U.S. waters, and screening ship cargo by x-ray. To improve security on transit systems, \$3.2 billion is authorized. Funds would be used to hire additional security personnel, improve communications and refine mass transit evacuation plans. With the appropriation of funds, the security of these transportation systems will markedly improve.

The USA Act also authorizes funds to strengthen communities responses to emergency incidents. This is done by increasing the number of firefighters, providing grants to communities and first responders and improving technology so that important information can be more readily shared between local, state and federal governments. Our nation's first responders are an integral component in response to a terrorist attack, and we must ensure that they are well prepared.

In addition, the bill also takes major steps towards improving the preparedness of the military to effectively fight terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction. We have the best military in the world; however, the war on terrorism is unlike any we've ever fought, and enhancement of current training is important.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have produced a good bill. This legislation addresses many real needs in enhancing the security of the United States. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the legislation.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF DANIEL HARTER

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bid farewell to Daniel Harter, an intern with my office. Daniel has provided a unique perspective along with legal expertise as a member of my staff for the past three months, and became an invaluable resource.

Daniel started with me shortly after completing law school, wanting to learn as much as possible about the workings and intricacies of Capitol Hill. Despite being confronted with challenges and pressures most would fold under, Daniel persevered and became a valuable part of my Washington, DC, office.

Like so many capable and hard working young congressional staff members, Daniel is moving on to work as an attorney. Although my staff and I are saddened to see him leave, Daniel's commitment to the legal process, his passion for public service, and his vigorous pursuit of perfection will serve his clients and his profession well.

Daniel tackled every task head on, from helping with day-to-day operations, to aiding with the daunting legislation and constituent demands of post-September 11 life on the Hill. His contribution to our office and his work for the people of Middle Tennessee will be missed.

U.S. HAS LONG TRADITION OF HELPING MUSLIMS, AS SHOWN BY 1952 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO NEARLY 4,000 MECCA PILGRIMS

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the fact that our nation has a long history of helping Muslims. While we are familiar with the actions America has taken in recent years to intervene for the benefit of Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, among numerous other locations around the world, America is hardly new to coming to the aid of people of the Islamic faith.

In particular, I would like to call the attention of the House to an instance brought to my attention by an alert constituent, Mr. Leonard Mulcahy of Wyoming, Pennsylvania. In light of recent events, Mr. Mulcahy recalled seeing an article in the July 1953 issue of National Geographic magazine about the U.S. Air Force assisting nearly 4,000 Muslims in 1952, and he

was kind enough to provide me with a copy of that issue of the magazine.

Mr. Speaker, the article states that in August 1952, "with the opening of the hadj only a few days away, nearly 4,000 desperate Moslems found themselves in Lebanon . . . with air tickets but no reservations. Commercial lines, flooded with applications, could take only a few." As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the hadj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which each Muslim is expected to undertake at least once in his or her life if possible.

The article continues, "To help in the emergency, American Ambassador Harold B. Minor asked the United States Air Force to fly 14 C-54s from Libya and Germany. Quickly a shuttle service was set up; in 75 flights 3,763 pilgrims were transported 900 miles from Beirut to Jidda in time to begin their hadj. In gratitude, the Mufti of Lebanon ordered prayers for Americans in all mosques, and King Abdul Aziz al Saud presented Arab robes to 86 airmen."

The article also states, "The Air Force accepted no money for the pilgrim passages. Fares collected by commercial airlines, for flights they were unable to complete, went to Moslem charity."

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank Leonard Mulcahy for making sure that America's assistance to the Muslim pilgrims in 1952 is not forgotten. Despite our imperfect history, Americans can be proud that ours is a generous and tolerant nation, and I believe the fact that we provided this type of assistance to thousands of Muslims nearly half a century ago helps to illustrate that fact.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE VOTING RIGHTS OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS WHOSE HOME OF RESIDENCE IS AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce federal legislation to protect the voting rights of active duty military members whose home of residence is American Samoa.

Since 1977, active-duty service members serving overseas or on the United States mainland have been excluded from fully participating and voting in both general and runoff Federal elections in American Samoa due to several factors, including local law that requires active duty military members to register in person, limited air and mail service between the U.S. mainland and American Samoa, and delays in the preparation of new ballots in the case of runoff elections.

However, under the provisions of 42 U.S.C., 1973ff-1, Federal law states that:

Each State shall—

(1) permit absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in general, special primary, or runoff elections for Federal office;

(2) . . .

(3) permit overseas voters to use Federal write-in absentee ballots . . . in general elections for Federal office."

American Samoa law requiring uniformed service voters to register to vote in person is contrary to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act recognizes that there is a considerable cost involved for a service member, and often a spouse, to travel to his/her home of residence to register to vote. Federal law also recognizes that active duty service members have little to say about where they are stationed. Yet, wherever they are sent, and whatever dangers they may encounter, Federal law recognizes that our service members are fundamentally entitled to the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the discrepancy that exists between Federal and territorial law must be addressed. Soldiers from American Samoa serving in the active-duty military should be afforded a fair opportunity to vote in American Samoa as required by federal law.

The fact of the matter is our military men and women place their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. The least we can do is ensure that their fundamental right to vote is also protected. Now more than ever, when our country is at war, and our nation is in crisis, we should make every effort to afford our service members and their dependents the right to vote.

To ensure that American Samoa's election laws comply with Federal law, I have suggested that a division should be created within our local election office to deal specifically with absentee ballot and registration procedures. I also believe that the territory needs to reconsider matters pertaining to run-off elections.

Under territorial law, it is nearly impossible for absentee voters to cast votes in a run-off election because local law mandates the run-off election to be held two weeks after the general election. This local mandate discriminates against active service members and other absentee voters. To address this problem in terms of Federal elections, I believe the best solution is to establish non-partisan primary elections during an election year in the event that there are three or more candidates running for Congress.

Primary elections in the summer followed by general elections in the fall will afford all of our qualified voters an equal opportunity to cast their ballots. This will also ensure that our active duty service members are afforded the same rights and privileges as every other American serving in the U.S. Armed Services.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I look forward to its timely passage.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because I had to return to my district to handle very urgent business, I missed a number of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted 'yea' on rollcall votes 505 and 508. On rollcall votes 506, 507 and 509, I would have voted "nay".

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT (SPACE) ACT

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the United States is an economic powerhouse. We work to keep the economy strong and to maintain a high standard of living for the people who reside here. Yet we have a drain on the economy estimated to be \$137 billion annually, a drain that goes unchecked and relatively unpublicized because it is not a "glamorous topic." This drain is spreading, continually invading our natural spaces and crowding out our native flora and fauna.

In this regard, I am referring to harmful non-native species, invasive species; an issue which is not yet fully in the public's eye. Even if a person has little concern with native fish and wildlife and the habitats they live in, even if that person resides in a city where the major wildlife is found only in alleys, the fact remains that invasive species are a drain on our economy. Included in the \$137 billion figure I referred to earlier are the negative impacts on agricultural production, control costs, and costs in lost land and water resources and uses. This number is too large to ignore, particularly when trends suggest that the number will only go up over time.

For example, my home State of West Virginia is a relatively small in terms of land mass, but here are only a few of the impacts from harmful nonnative species:

The balsam fir tree, on the state list of rare plants, is being infected by a small insect, the balsam wooly adelgid, which sucks the sap, killing the tree. This tree is a unique species for the State, and unless drastic measures are taken, it will be completely wiped out by this insect.

Shale barrens, one of the most unique natural plant habitats in West Virginia, have been invaded by many non-native species over the years, but two of the most problematic are spotted knapweed and barren bromegrass. These plants out-compete native species and slowly eradicate them from these unique ecosystems.

In a continuation of the plight of the Great Lakes, the zebra mussel has found its way to West Virginia. So far, the zebra mussel is responsible for the federal listing of five species of mussel in the Ohio River, not to mention economic damage from its clogging of water pipes.

These are only three of the over 150 harmful non-natives that currently affect West Virginia. In my view, we have an obligation to our native species to protect, conserve and restore them from the introduction of harmful invasive species.

For these reasons, today I along with the gentleman from Maryland, WAYNE GILCHREST, and the gentleman from Guam, ROBERT UNDERWOOD, are introducing a bill to protect, conserve and restore our native fish, wildlife and their habitats by addressing the threat of these space invaders, harmful invasive species. Maryland, for example, has a nutria problem, too many nutria, and the veined rapa whelk, both of which I know Mr. GILCHREST

has great concern with. Mr. UNDERWOOD has chosen to be an original cosponsor because of the enormous impacts the brown tree snake has on Guam, its power lines and native bird species.

The Species Protection and Conservation of the Environment Act, or SPACE Act, would provide the missing link in existing efforts to combat the pernicious and destructive space invasion of some of our most valuable natural areas by:

1. Providing incentive money to States to write State-wide assessments to study exactly where their native species are being threatened by harmful nonnative species;

2. Providing incentives for projects to implement the State assessments;

3. Encouraging the formation of partnerships among the Federal government and non-Federal land and water owners and managers;

4. Addressing harmful nonnative species' migratory pathways;

5. Implementing specific recommendations of the National Strategy written by the National Invasive Species Council;

6. Creating a Federal-level rapid response capability; and

7. Tasking the National Invasive Species Council to develop standard monitoring requirements for projects combating harmful nonnative species.

Using a two-pronged approach, the SPACE Act would provide resources to States and U.S. territories, including Indian Tribes, to address real problems and real solutions. The first prong is a grant program to provide resources to States, territories and tribes to develop assessments to control their harmful nonnative species. Participation in the program would be voluntary, but once this bill becomes law we believe that all States, territories and tribes will want to take advantage of this opportunity and the benefits it can bring to them, aiding them in the organization, prioritizing and specific actions with regards to their harmful non-native species problems and allowing them to apply for what the bill refers to as Aldo Leopold Grants. Technical assistance would also be available to the States, territories and tribes through the National Invasive Species Council to ensure that all assessments would be effective and include the recommendations of the Council's overarching Management Plan.

The second prong is implementing the assessments through what would be known as Aldo Leopold Native Heritage Grant Program, which would be available on a 75% federal, 25% non-federal cost sharing basis. Through a variety of partnerships land and water owners and managers would be eligible to receive grants administered by the Secretary of the Interior. The approved assessment would serve as a guide for developing projects with partners, including Department of Interior and Forest Service lands, working together to control or eradicate harmful nonnative species on the lands and waters under their governance. With the assessment as the foundation for all projects, this legislation would encourage addressing all problems at the ecosystem level and including all land and water owners. To support the use of innovative methods and technologies, grants would be available on an 85% federal, 15% non-federal basis if new techniques are used. Reporting and monitoring requirements are mandated by the grant, allowing for the creation of a database which would track the methods and results of