

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5121, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAVE CAMP**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2002*

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my support for the fiscal year 2003 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. This is a responsible bill that will provide necessary resources for the Legislative Branch to carry out its duties in fiscal year 2003.

For the past several years, I have proposed an amendment to the Legislative Appropriations bill that requires all unspent office funds from Members' Representative Allowances be returned to the U.S. Treasury and used for debt reduction. This amendment has received bipartisan support every year and I am pleased the committee has included the proposal in the base bill.

I have been proud to work with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to reduce the national debt and incorporate fiscal responsibility into federal spending. We have reviewed programs and guidelines to make them more effective. Today, we again have the opportunity to reaffirm our promise of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction to the American people by passing this legislation.

Although we are in a mild recession and a time of economic hardship we must maintain our commitment to pay off the national debt by pushing for more frugal spending. Without the unspent office funds provision, left over funds can be spent on other budget purposes. We must maintain our commitment to end wasteful spending and incorporate fiscal responsibility into this Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

National security and winning the global campaign on terrorism are our top priorities, but if the government pursues pro-growth policies and maintains spending discipline, we can quickly return the budget to surplus. Now more than ever, every penny must be looked after and accounted for and it is important to reduce spending and cut government waste.

I would like to thank the Chairman LEWIS for his support and for including my unspent office funds provision in H.R. 5121 and I urge all members to support and pass this legislation.

**VETERANS HEALTH CARE AND PROCUREMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2002**

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEVE BUYER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 22, 2002*

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, First, I want to thank our Full Committee Chairman Chris Smith and the Health Subcommittee Chairman JERRY MORAN for all their hard work on the bills before us today.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3645, the "Veterans Health Care and Procurement Improvement Act of 2002," introduced by Representative LANE EVANS. H.R. 3645, as amended, would, among other things, provide

for improved management of the purchasing of medical and surgical supply equipment through the Federal Supply Schedule as prescribed by the VA Procurement Task Force. The bill ensures that current and future VA-DOD sharing initiatives would not be impacted by passage of this measure. The legislation also increases health care benefits to certain World War II Filipino veterans; authorizes dental care and services for all former POWs; and provides the authority to allow DOD to purchase medical supplies through VA's revolving supply fund; provides for the renaming of the VA community outpatient clinic in New London, Connecticut by designating it as the John J. McGuirk outpatient clinic.

There is one provision, in particular, that I would like to talk about. Section 7 of the bill provides for greater accountability for VA Research and Education Corporations. This provision is legislation I introduced, H.R. 5084, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Research Corporations Accountability Act of 2002," which was incorporated into H.R. 3645. I introduced H.R. 5084 because we need to insure that the strictest set of accounting measures are in place to make sure we know how funding to these corporations is being administered. It's important to point out that these corporations were established by Congress in 1988 to provide a flexible funding mechanism for approved research being performed at medical centers. Prior to giving VA this authority, any funding received from private sources, such as pharmaceutical companies, was placed in a General Post fund. However, it became virtually impossible to track the funding stream. There was no way to identify the source of the funding, nor how the money was being spent. The impetus behind establishing the research corporations was to create an accounting mechanism whereby the VA would submit to Congress an annual report on the number and location of corporations established and the amount of contributions made to each such corporation.

Earlier this year, the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Health held a hearing on VA Research Corporations. We heard from the VA's Assistant Inspector General for Auditing that during the years 1994 through 1997, that his office published three reports which identified the need for stricter accountability and oversight with regard to the administration of funds by the Veterans Health Administration research corporations. For instance, in 1994, the IG audit of a million dollars of the \$3.6 million in expenditures spent at three research corporations and identified approximately \$625,000 that was spent on salaries of medical residents, staff travel not clearly related to research or administration. Funds were also spent for non-research related conferences, honorary gifts, awards, entertainment, other than non-research expenditures. This is just one example of how money can be misspent when in this case the corporation is not held accountable.

Under current law, the VA nonprofit research corporations are required to provide Congress with an annual report summarizing their activities and accomplishments. These reports have turned out to be nothing more than bare bones financial statements.

The VA Research Corporation Accountability Act amends section 7366 of Title 38 of the United States Code to require each VA corporation to submit a detailed statement that

includes the corporation's operations, activities, and accomplishments during the preceding year to the Secretary of the VA. The report should include the amount of funds received along with the source of funding; and an itemized accounting of all disbursements. Those corporations with funding in excess of \$300,000 must obtain an audit of the corporation for that year, corporations with funding totaling less than \$300,000 must obtain an audit every three years. These audits must be conducted by an independent auditor and shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

The VA's Inspector General will be required to randomly review audits to determine whether or not they were carried out in accordance with the auditing standards outlined in the legislation. My bill would also extend the life of the corporations by providing authority to establish such corporations until December 31, 2006.

The VA has made tremendous contributions in the field of medical research. I think we all recognize the many accomplishments made by the VA in discovering new drug therapies and developing medical devices that have benefited not only veterans but all Americans. For instance, the VA invented the implantable cardiac pacemaker, developed the nicotine patch, performed the first successful liver transplant, and the development of the first oral vaccine for smallpox.

It is not my intention to prevent VA research from continuing to make great strides as it has in the past, but we must ensure that all research funds are directed with focus and accountability.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3645, which was favorably reported by the full VA committee and has widespread support among our nation's veterans.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. BOB RILEY**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 23, 2002*

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for Roll Call No. 324, H. Con. Res. 439, Honoring Lindy Boggs and the Honoring Corinne "Lindy" Claiborne Boggs. Had I been present I would have voted yea.

I was also unavoidably detained for Roll Call No. 325, H. Res. 492, Expressing Gratitude for the World Trade Center Cleanup and Recovery Efforts at the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, New York. Had I been present I would have voted, "yea."

**EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT CHINA SHOULD CEASE PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS**

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 22, 2002*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly support H. Con. Res. 188, Sense of Congress that the Government of

the People's Republic of China Should Cease Its Persecution of Falun Gong Practitioners. I urge the immediate release of the organization's leaders and members arbitrarily detained in a nationwide sweep aimed at suppressing the group. When the Chinese government judged the organization of Falun Gong as illegal, and banned all its activities, stories about Falun Gong have made headlines of major news media around the world. The Chinese authorities have launched a crackdown on the practice of Falun Gong on the Chinese mainland.

The suppression of Falun Gong in China has been brutal. It has been systematic. The police used force against the group, reportedly kicking and jumping on the peaceful protesters before removing them. The leaders of the People's Republic of China have arrested, jailed, beaten and tortured thousands of peaceful followers of Falun Gong, a religious synthesis of traditional Chinese physical exercises and Buddhist and Taoist teachings. Adherents to this meditation movement have done nothing more than express their humble belief that people should be kind to one another and work on themselves to change their own lives. They are nonviolent and have not adopted any so-called foreign beliefs. They do not promote nor do they use drugs. They are not a cult. They only want to meditate, take their lives into their own hands and attempt to live productive and peaceful lives.

H. Con. Res. 188 expresses the sense of Congress that the Government of the People's Republic of China should cease its persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Falun Gong is a peaceful and nonviolent form of personal belief and practice with millions of adherents. There are millions of practitioners in the United States. This is wrong and must be stopped. H. Con. Res. 188 requires that the United States Government use every appropriate public and private forum to urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to (1) release from detention all Falun Gong practitioners and put an end to the practices of torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment against them and other prisoners of conscience; and (2) abide by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by allowing Falun Gong practitioners to pursue their personal beliefs.

China should stop persecuting the practitioners of Falun Gong and stop exporting its tactics of terrors.

Therefore, I strongly support H. Con. Res. 188.

IN RECOGNITION OF A GREAT AMERICAN SOLDIER: MR. ELTON L. HATLER

**HON. ERNIE FLETCHER**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to stand here today to recognize a great soldier and a great American, Mr. Elton L. Hatler. On May 2, 1945, Mr. Hatler was serving as a Browning Automatic Rifleman of Company G, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division, action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands.

Private Hatler's platoon had been forced to withdraw in the face of heavy enemy fire. Although Private Hatler had suffered wounds from the enemy fire, he refused to leave the side of a Marine whose legs had been blown off below the knee. Private Hatler held off the enemy for three grueling hours, attempting to drag his fallen comrade to the safety of American lines. It was only after the man succumbed to his wounds, and Private Hatler had expended his ammunition, that he abandoned his position.

In a citation directed by the Secretary of the Navy on behalf of the President of the United States, Private Elton L. Hatler was awarded the prestigious Distinguished Navy Cross, stating that "His personal valor and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

The Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs will again honor Mr. Hatler, a resident of Winchester, Kentucky, at a special ceremony on July 26, 2002.

**NURSE REINVESTMENT ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased we are here today to pass this legislation that will immediately begin to alleviate the nursing shortage across the nation. I introduced legislation last year to address the nursing shortage because of the tremendous impact the lack of nurses has had in New York and across the country. I am pleased that many of the provisions in my legislation are included in the bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, the nursing shortage is quite possibly the most important issue in health care. Nurses are on the front lines of the delivery of health care. They provide direct day to day care to patients and are invaluable to our health care system. As the number of nursing vacancies continues to rise, the number of nurses entering the field continues to decline. Statistics have shown that the average age of the nursing workforce is about 44 and that many are leaving the field for more lucrative professions. Enrollment in nursing schools is down as well, which leads many to believe that this is a problem that will only get worse. Compounding the problem, the baby boomer generation will soon hit retirement age and will require more acute care.

For these reasons, the legislation before us today is critically important. Included in the Nurse Reinvestment Act are provisions to create scholarships for nurses wishing to enter the field and loan repayment programs to encourage nurses to continue practicing. In an effort to address the number of nurses leaving the nursing profession, the legislation includes grants for nurses to continue their education while practicing nursing.

Mr. Speaker, nurses deserve these programs and I congratulate everyone involved in this process for their hard work and commitment to this issue. This is truly legislation that will help us all. Everyone at one time or another is in need of care and the first person you see when you get that care is a nurse. So we can all be proud to pass this legislation

today. As a Member of the Subcommittee on Health, I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes.

**FLIGHT 93 NATIONAL MEMORIAL ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, on the morning of September 11th, 2001 passengers of United Airlines Flight 93 were getting ready for the long flight to California. Their thoughts may have been consumed with family, friends, or work. What was about to occur on that tragic journey was probably the furthest thing from their minds. As the mayhem of that morning unfolded in New York City and in our nation's capital, the passengers of Flight 93 were about to directly experience the horror for themselves. Four terrorist hijackers had moved all of the passengers to the rear of the plane and attempted to seize control of the cockpit and direct the plane to its destination of destruction.

One can only imagine the fear that rushed through the veins of each passenger on that doomed flight. Like many people, I have wondered, "What would be going through my mind? What would I have done?" The passengers and crew of Flight 93 provided us with their answers. Knowing of the chaos that was taking place on the ground below, these brave individuals decided to push fear aside and control their destinies and our futures for the last time.

Although the outcome was fatal for the passengers and crew of Flight 93, one could only guess at the countless number of lives they may have saved had those passengers not reacted with bravery, courage, and pride. September 11th was a day that showed us how vulnerable we as Americans can be, but the passengers and crew of Flight 93 reminded us of how the greatness of this country can still shine through us, even in our darkest hour.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3917, which establishes a memorial at the crash site of United Airlines Flight 93 to honor the passengers and crew of Flight 93, to always remind us of what it truly means to be an American.

**CONFERRING HONORARY CITIZENSHIP ON THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

SPEECH OF

**HON. TIM ROEMER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. J. Res. 13, a joint resolution conferring honorary membership of the United States on Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, also known as the Marquis de Lafayette.

At a time in our history when we face challenges from enemies who oppose the very ideals that make our nation great, we are reminded of those brave individuals throughout our nation's history who have made sacrifices