

Another issue that I believe is inadequately addressed in the report before us today has to do with the Disabled Veterans Tax, also known as concurrent receipt. This conference report includes a Republican proposal that would only partially end the tax, thereby leaving out two-thirds of military retirees affected by the tax and forcing those covered to wait 10 years for full benefits. Mr. Speaker, since I have been in Congress, I have cosponsored H.R. 303, to provide full concurrent receipt for all veterans eligible for both retirement and disability pay; I have signed the discharge petition to get H.R. 303 on the floor; I have signed numerous letters on this topic; and I strongly support ending this inequitable situation. For that reason, since I support a total fix to this unfair tax, today I will be supporting the Democratic motion to recommit the conference report with instructions to report it back with the complete elimination of the Disabled Veterans Tax.

The conference agreement also contains a number of dangerous provisions relating to the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. The agreement authorizes the administration's request of \$15 million for research on the nuclear "bunker buster," the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, plus \$6 million for "advanced concept initiatives." I strongly oppose these provisions. Instead of building new nuclear weapons, I believe we should fund weapons that have just as strong a deterrent capability, but do not encourage new uses for nuclear weapons or encourage a new nuclear arms race.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against H.R. 1588 when it first passed the House because of many of the provisions I just discussed. However, even during its first time through the House, I supported the across-the-board 4.15 percent pay increase for military personnel, and I strongly support these provisions again as it is included in the conference agreement.

However, there are a few provisions in particular that I strongly support which were not included in the initial House version of the Defense Authorization legislation. Now that they are included in the conference report, I will be voting in support of this conference agreement today.

One provision not included in the House version, but one that I have been working hard to ensure it is included in the conference report, is authorization of \$9 million for Cannon Air Force Base located in my district in Clovis, New Mexico. \$7.7 million of this \$9 million would be used to construct a much-needed new Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) Complex and \$1.3 million would be used to install a permanent Simplified Short Approach Lighting System (SSALS) with sequenced flashers on a runway at the air force base. These are both very important upgrades that will improve the safety of our troops stationed at Cannon Air Force Base and, in turn, help improve the safety of our nation.

One other provision that has helped sway me to support passage of this authorization is making an additional 12,000 legal permanent reservists who serve in the military eligible to apply to become U.S. citizens after a year of service for citizenship in the United States. I believe that if immigrants are willing to serve in war, then a grateful nation should give them what they are fighting for, American citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, clearly there provisions that are both good and bad. In a bill this size, it is

inevitable that this is the case. As such, because I believe the conference agreement includes important provisions that were not included in the House version of the bill, I will be voting in support of passage of this important legislation. With our men and women overseas in harms way, supporting this bill with its important pay raises for them and their families is a fitting way to show our support for them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the following votes on November 17, 2003, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 620; I would have voted "yea" on S.J. Res. 22, recognizing the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture for 50 years of service to the Nation.

Rollcall vote 621; I would have voted "yea" on S.J. Res. 18, commending the Inspectors General for their efforts to prevent and detect waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the Federal Government during the past 25 years.

Rollcall vote 622; I would have voted "yea" on H. Con. Res. 299, honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver for his dedication and service to the United States of America.

Rollcall vote 623; I would have voted "yea" on the motion to change the hour of meeting.

AMERICA'S PRIVATE SECTOR AIDS CIVIC EDUCATION EFFORT, VOTER PARTICIPATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, a recent Gallup poll that asked Americans what keeps our country strong found some very interesting results. While 67 percent identified "willingness to serve in the military" as important to keeping America strong, 84 percent and 86 percent, respectively, identified "high level of voting (in national elections)" and "having a well-educated populace". Yet other polls show that our citizens' civic knowledge is low and that our voter participation is among the lowest in the world.

A number of Americans, from my district and from virtually every other district across the country, are undertaking a major effort to keep our country strong, according to the definition expressed in the Gallup poll. They are working to keep Americans well educated about civic matters and to encourage citizen participation in our democracy.

These patriotic Americans have joined with the Committee for Citizen Awareness (CCA) and other notable Americans like Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Constitutional author Caroline Kennedy in this effort. The CCA provides free, award-winning civic videotapes to America's high schools, cable television sta-

tions, community colleges, libraries and others in every congressional district in the country.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the efforts of the CCA and to individuals and organizations such as the following:

Tom Beddow, Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Markets of 3M Company

Donald J. Gillespie, President and CEO of A.M. Community Credit Union

John Schofield, Chairman, President and CEO of Advanced Fibre Communications

James W. Barner, President and CEO of Altoona Hospital

Barney B. Chapman, Vice President of America First Credit Union

Marite Plume, President and CEO of Argonne Credit Union

Dr. G. William Benz, President of Ashland University

Ricky A. Burke, Vice President of Metro Region Operations of Atmos Energy

LuAnn C. Williams, Corporate Communication Officer of Bangor Hydro-Electric Company

Dr. Michael Allkins, President of Bay De Noc Community College

Dr. Robert Fisher, President of Belmont University

Michael Cascone, Jr., Chairman, President, and CEO of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Florida

Gary A. Regoli, President/CEO of Boeing Wichita Credit Union

Truman L. Gates, Chief Executive Officer of Desert Regional Medical Center

David Jacobstein, President and COO of Developers Diversified Realty Corp.

Andrew "Flip" Flipowski, President and CEO of divine interVentures, inc.

Vince R. Volpe, President of Dresser-Rand

Doris Grose, President of Educaid, Wachovia Corporation

Dr. Roger S. Newton, President and CEO of Esperion Therapeutics

Marla K. Shepard, President and CEO of First Future Credit Union

Robert Anestis, Chairman, President and CEO of Florida East Coast Industries, Inc.

Patrick L. Taylor, CEO of General Electric Evendale Employees Federal Credit Union

Dr. Craig Turner, President of Hardin-Simmons University

Dr. Charles D. Dunn, President of Henderson State University

Ray Romero, Chairman of Hickam Federal Credit Union

Dr. Jean Goodnow, President of Illinois Valley Community College

Andrew L. Farkas, Chairman and CEO of Insignia Financial Group

Dr. Jerry W. Weber, President of Kankakee Community College

Dr. Joseph G. Burke, President of Keuka College

Dr. Linda Stegall, President of Kingwood College

Thomas Fleming, Chairman of the Board of Kirkbride Center

Walter Malinowski, President of Labat-Anderson Inc.

Dr. L. Michael Metke, President of Lake Washington Technical College

Hank Hernandez, CEO of Las Palmas Medical Center

Brian T. Flynn, CEO of Manatee Memorial Hospital

Mark Hillard, CEO of Maricopa Integrated Health System

Sister Mary Reap, IHM, President of Marywood University

Kenneth Rudzewick, President and CEO of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association

Frank VanderSloot, President and CEO of
Melaleuca Advantage Federal Credit
Union

Aiken Regional Medical Centers
Akzo Nobel, Inc.
American Savings Foundation
Anglo Gold Jerritt Canyon, Inc.
ARROW Electronics, Inc.
Aultman Health Foundation
AvMed Healthplan
Baltimore City Community College
Bluebonnet Savings Bank
Boston University
Bridgewater State College
Brinks Home Security
Catholic Medical Center
Central Ohio Technical College
Chandler, Franklin & O'Bryan
Chicago Patrolman's Federal Credit Union
Christiana Care Health System
Coastline Community Credit Union
Columbia University Health Sciences
Computer Sciences Corporation
Cushman & Wakefield, Inc.
Cuyahoga Falls General Hospital
Fiorello H. Laguardia Comm. College
First Community Bancshares, Inc.
Flushing Savings Bank
FMC Airport Systems Jetway
Glendale Memorial Hospital
Graceland University
Grenada Lake Medical Center
Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation
Harper-Wyman Company
Hawaii State Federal Credit Union
Holyoke Hospital
Jewish Hospital College of Nursing
Kindred Hospital Greensboro
Laney College
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company
Merck & Co., Inc.
Montreat College
Nassau Educators Federal Credit Union
National Park Medical Center
North Brooklyn Health Network
Northland Area Federal Credit Union
Northwest Florida Community Hospital
Novartis Pharmaceutical Corporation
O-Cedar Brands, Inc.
Provena St. Mary's Hospital
Santa Clara University
Saturn Corporation
Seven Rivers Community Hospital
South Carolina State University
St. John's Regional Medical Center
The Rockefeller Group
The Summit Federal Credit Union
The University of Iowa
Tri-County Technical College
Utah Valley State College
Valley Baptist Health System
Washington County Health System Inc.
Wells Fargo Bank
WesCorp
Wesleyan College
Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division

HONORING NICK BECK

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nick Beck on the occasion of his retirement from the Madera City Fire Department after 39 years of service. A celebration in his honor will take place on Sunday, November 16th in Madera, California.

Mr. Beck proudly served our country in the United States Army before working with the Madera City Fire Department. After training in California and Georgia, he was assigned to

Company B of the 97th Signal Battalion in Germany. Nick was also selected to attend the 7th Army Non-Commissioned Officers Academy where he graduated in the top 10 of his class. Just months after his service in the Army ended, Mr. Beck started his employment with the Madera City Fire Department.

In 1969, Nick was promoted to Apparatus Engineer, a specialist in the operation of heavy fire equipment vehicles. He was named Fire Lieutenant in 1976, then Battalion Chief in 1979. Each promotion was achieved through a competitive examination, and Nick scored number one on each test. In the early '90s, Mr. Beck was instrumental in the city's efforts to contract for fire protection with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Through his efforts, a contractual agreement was met, which led to an estimated \$2 million in savings for the City of Madera over the last 10 years. Nick also received two Madera County Firefighter of the Year awards.

Mr. Beck has also been a prominent member of numerous professional organizations. He is a past-President of the Central California Fire Training Officers Association, the Madera County Employees Federal Credit Union, the Central California Fire Prevention Officers Association, and the Madera Firefighters Association. He is also a member of the 1st Fresno City College Fire Science Advisory Board and the California State Firefighters Association.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nick Beck for his valiant service to the Madera City Fire Department. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Beck an exciting, well-deserved retirement.

TRIBUTE TO BEN STEPHENSON

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise and pay tribute to a remarkable man from my district. For his dedication to the students of Montrose, Colorado, Ben Stephenson was recently named Colorado's Assistant Principle of the Year. I am proud today to call Ben's contributions to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation.

As Assistant Principle of Columbine Middle School, Ben goes beyond the call of duty each day. To best serve the children, Ben works in conjunction with teachers, parents, and administrators to assure the well being of Columbine's students. In addition to his official duties, Ben also works tirelessly for the safety of his students. He has been instrumental in implementing anti-bullying and classroom safety programs in the school. The students of Columbine Middle School are truly safer and happier as the result of Ben's contributions.

For his award, Ben will receive \$1,000 from the Colorado Association of School Executives. Although he could keep this prize money, Ben has decided to use it to spearhead a school project to build a student weight room. This selfless donation is illustrative of Ben's true compassion for the students of Columbine.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to call to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation the contributions of Ben Stephenson. Ben has dedicated his life to educating young minds.

His passion for student safety, and his desire to pass along his knowledge and morals to the next generation, is truly admirable. I would like to join the students of Columbine middle school, and the community of Montrose, in congratulating Ben on a well-deserved award.

HONORING THE REMARKABLE CAREER OF MR. RAMON PUIG

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the remarkable accomplishments of Mr. Ramon Puig. He truly is the embodiment of the American dream.

Mr. Puig was born in the central mountain town of Zaza del Medio, in the Cuban province of Las Villas in 1920. At a young age, he learned to be a tailor and at 23, he opened shop in his hometown and began making and selling tropical dress shirts called guayaberas.

As his popularity grew, he traveled throughout the island, taking skillful measurements and delivering his custom-made guayaberas. Eventually, he became a regular supplier of guayaberas to Cubans throughout the entire country.

When Cuba fell to totalitarianism in 1959, Mr. Puig left his shop as he was forced to work in the dictatorship's sugarcane fields.

He arrived in Miami on one of the Freedom Flights of October 18, 1968. There, he worked for eight months as a hotel dishwasher for 95 cents an hour.

He put his life back together and in 1971, opened his first guayabera shop in Miami. His superb work, skillful craftsmanship and attention to detail have earned him the nickname, el Rey de las Guayaberas, the Guayabera King. His stylish shirts have earned him national attention, including a recent article in GQ magazine.

Every day, he drives to his store and personally takes his customers' measurements, cuts the patterns, and supervises the seamstresses who stitch his custom-made guayaberas. His shirts are superbly made with embroidery and fine details that make each shirt unique.

He carefully keeps track of everyone who buys his tailor-made guayaberas with record books filled with names, occupations, measurements and cuttings from the fabric he used to make their particular guayabera.

Mr. Puig's list of clients includes stars George Hamilton, Robert Duvall, Emilio and Gloria Estefan, mayors, governors, senators and every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan. Their autographed photos adorn his office.

In 1995, he moved his shop, La Casa de las Guayaberas, to 5840 SW Eighth Street in Miami. The store carries about 8,000 guayaberas and has hundreds more in storage.

But the love of his life is Juana Maria, the wonderful woman he married 60 years ago. She is his partner in business as well as life.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my friend, Mr. Ramon Puig, for his long and remarkable career.

I commend him for his hard work and wish him continued success and happiness. I am honored to call this great man, my friend.