

to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today unfortunately with the news that the Rules Committee rejected several major Democratic amendments that could have greatly strengthened the National Defense Authorization Act. It is sad to see that so many relevant and necessary amendments to this Defense Authorization were not ruled in order. Among the most relevant amendment were those submitted by my distinguished colleagues including Mr. WAXMAN's amendment on government contracting, Mr. SKELTON's amendment on women in combat, Mr. TIERNEY's amendment on the Truman Commission, Mr. MARKEY's amendment on torture, Mr. SALAZAR's amendment on Survivors Benefit Plans, Mr. TAYLOR's amendment on TRICARE, Mr. MARSHALL's amendment on concurrent receipt and Mr. SPRATT's amendment on nonproliferation. It is truly unfortunate that such pertinent amendments were not ruled in order and debated by this entire body. When the amendment process is compromised like it has been here then the legislative process suffers and unfortunately that means our Armed Forces will suffer as a result of this Defense Authorization.

I am most outraged by the fact that there will be no consideration of the Taylor amendment on TRICARE for reservists, the Salazar amendment on ending the Military Families Tax, and the Marshall amendment on ending the Disabled Veterans Tax. These amendments are three key provisions in the GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century, which House Democrats unveiled in March. It seems blatant, that the Rules Committee would not allow the full body to consider these vital amendments which could have greatly strengthened this Defense Authorization.

My colleague Mr. TAYLOR's amendment would have provided full TRICARE to all members of the Guard and Reserve and their families. Currently, the Guard and Reserve are covered by TRICARE only when they are mobilized for active duty. Under the Taylor amendment, all members of the Guard and Reserve could buy into TRICARE for an affordable monthly premium. The Taylor amendment was in fact adopted by the Armed Services Committee by a vote of 32 to 30. However, after the mark-up, Chairman HUNTER stripped the amendment from the bill based on a violation of the Budget Act, instead of allowing Representative TAYLOR to make a slight modification to his amendment which would have addressed the violation. It is the slightly modified version that Representative TAYLOR had sought the Rules Committee to make in order and which the Rules Committee has egregiously rejected for consideration. It is a travesty indeed because this amendment could have done so much good for so many Guardsmen and Reservists. The simple fact is that more than 433,000 of our National Guard and Reserves have been called up over the past two and one-half years. Reserve Components make up almost 50 percent of our forces in Iraq. It is time that we as a body recognize their service to our Nation by providing TRICARE for Reserve Component personnel on a permanent basis. It is disgraceful that this Congress will not demonstrate the level of commitment for its citizen-soldiers that they so richly deserve.

I am also greatly disturbed by the fact that there will be no consideration of Mr. SPRATT's

amendment on nuclear nonproliferation. The amendment offered by Mr. SPRATT would have provided an additional \$80 million for nuclear nonproliferation activities. These vital activities would have been paid for by a modest decrease to future silo construction of ground-based missile defense. Clearly, this Administration and this Congress would rather waste money on futile missile defense systems that have proven not to work instead of safeguarding against the proliferation of nuclear weapons which pose a threat to our entire Nation and indeed the world. I can not even fathom how so many officials elected by the people can have such misplaced priorities. I can only pray that clearer judgment will prevail one day soon before we have to face the consequences of these misplaced priorities.

Mr. SALAZAR's amendment would have ended the Military Families Tax. Currently, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) penalizes survivors, mostly widows of those killed as a result of combat. These widows lose their survivor benefits if they receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits because their spouse has died of a service-connected injury. The Salazar amendment would have ended this offset requirement—the Military Families Tax—for the 53,000 spouses who continue to pay this unfair tax, which affects families that have made the greatest sacrifice for our country. Again, I find it disgraceful that this Congress will not have the opportunity to aid those military families that are penalized under the Military Families Tax and who have made the ultimate sacrifice to our Nation.

Mr. MARSHALL's amendment would have completely ended the Disabled Veterans' Tax for about 400,000 military retirees who were left behind under the partial repeal which the GOP-controlled Congress reluctantly enacted in 2003 and would speed up the end of the Disabled Veterans' Tax for the remaining disabled military retirees. For almost two years Democrats have been working to end the Disabled Veterans' Tax, and we have only been partially successful because the Republican leadership has put up roadblock after roadblock to eliminating this most unfair tax. Now, the Republican leadership and the Rules Committee have completed a hat trick of disgrace by rejecting the Marshall amendment for consideration which would have completely ended the Disabled Veterans Tax for all disabled military retirees.

I can only hope in the future that such significant legislation as this will involve the debate and full consideration of all necessary and relevant amendments. The men and women of our Armed Forces and indeed the American people as a whole deserve as much.

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN I. SOUTHERLAND

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John I. Southerland for his loyal service to the community.

John I. Southerland was born in Sanford, N.C. to the late Annie Bell Southerland. He

graduated from W.B. Wicker High School in 1959, then relocated to New Jersey and later to Brooklyn, N.Y. He is married to Eva Thomas Southerland and they are the proud parents of Jonathan Southerland, Stephanie Southerland-Raimer and Nydia Southerland.

In 1968, Mr. Southerland joined the New York City Police Department. During his 27 years with the department, he earned numerous commendations and certificates. He received the Certificate of Merit for 27 years of service and a Certificate of Attendance, which is given to staff members who had not been late or absent for five more years. After retiring from the Police Department in 1995, he pursued his interest in fire safety. He then received a certificate and worked as a fire safety officer in the World Trade Center until September 11. Also during the 1990's, Mr. Southerland was installed as a Deacon, by the late Rev. Dr. Paul C. Hayes, at Mercy Seat Baptist Church of Brooklyn.

In 2001, Mr. Southerland turned his attention to community advocacy. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Community Action Project (CAP), a community organization located in East Flatbush. As a board member, he has met with local politicians to lobby against fraudulent immigration services and rampant illegal truck traffic. Currently, he and the board strive to sustain the area's economic growth through better coordination of city services, specifically sanitation and police. He is also attending Queens College to broaden his understanding of political activism to better serve his community.

Mr. Southerland is an active member of local DC 37. He was chosen as a delegate to go to Albany to meet with state representative to discuss issues pertaining to the union and its members.

He continues to show commitment to the community by visiting the sick and helping senior citizens. He is always willing to share a smile and words of encouragement with everyone he meets. As a result, Mr. Speaker, today we acknowledge John I. Southerland, an asset to the community.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL CHAMPION KELLER HIGH SCHOOL GIRL'S SOFTBALL TEAM

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the teamwork and spirit of the State and National Champion Keller High School girls' softball team. These young women have established themselves as true champions among the citizens of Keller, Texas.

The Keller High Lady Indians Girls softball team recently won the State Championship in Austin, Texas, and was crowned National Champion by the USA Today National Fastpitch Coaches Association.

The Lady Indians have exhibited their commitment to each other and their common goals this past season by completing their District 5-5A schedule undefeated. Among their successes were four victories at the prestigious Tournament of Champions in Arizona. Throughout the season these outstanding women have shown the success that comes

from working as a team to achieve a great goal. Under the leadership of head coach Moe Fritz and assistant coach Lesley Weaver, the team—Aly Presswood, Amber Tramp, Kirsten Shortridge, Becca Byers, Brittany Cusumano, Kori Pickowitz, Michele Huffman, Kylie King, Erin McNally, Adria Park, Kati Pickowitz, Tiffanie Boone, Alisha Rams, Erin Hinojosa, Hayley Siebman, Sara LaSala, Maria Levasseur—has demonstrated the essence of the American spirit.

It is with great honor that I stand here today to recognize this group of individuals who have made their community so proud. It is this dedication and perseverance that is personified by these women that makes us certain that the future is bright for our nation and for our communities.

RECOGNIZING AMBASSADOR
RASTISLAV KACER

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Rastislav Kacer, the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States and welcome him to the Fifth Congressional District of Missouri. Ambassador Kacer has the distinct honor of representing one of America's closest allies. This new democracy dates back to 1993 when Slovakia peacefully seceded from Czechoslovakia in what has become known as the "Velvet Divorce." Since the beginning of the war in Iraq, the Slovak Republic has fought by our side, joining the United States under flags of red, white and blue.

Ambassador Kacer's legacy is entrenched in his efforts to promote the Slovak Republic's stature in the world and at home. He served as Director General of the Division of International Organizations and Security Policy at the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As State Secretary with the Ministry of Defense, he was instrumental in obtaining full membership for the Slovak Republic in NATO and the European Union. He was appointed Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States in July 2003 and on September 8, 2003 was named Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to the United States of America.

During his first visit to the Fifth Congressional District of Missouri, the Ambassador will participate in the 20th Anniversary of the Sugar Creek Slavic Festival promoting our country's rich Slavic heritage. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the rich traditions and cultural customs of the beautiful mountainous region now known as the Slovak Republic. The festival will feature ethnic dancing, including the polka, folk singing, and Slovakian music.

The Ambassador's agenda includes meetings with civic, business and community leaders, fostering new partnerships and renewing old initiatives. They will explore trade and cultural exchange between the heartland of the United States and the geographic heart of Europe, the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me in expressing our appreciation to Ambassador Rastislav Kacer and the Slovak Republic. This new democratic republic has gained world-

wide stature through membership in NATO and continues to grow in world recognition as they preserve their identity through culture and heritage. In Sugar Creek, and all around Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, Slovakian immigrants celebrate their roots with new generations, linking America's heartland to the heart of Europe. By preserving our past, we will foster an understanding for the future. I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to the Slovak Republic and its Ambassador, Rastislav Kacer.

TRIBUTE TO MR. STEVE PACZOLT
OF LA GRANGE, IL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding community leader in my district, Mr. Steve Paczolt, who recently completed 12 years of service with the Park District of La Grange's Board of Commissioners.

A lifelong resident of La Grange, Mr. Paczolt has helped guide the tremendous growth and improvements the Park District has enjoyed, including the community's recent approval for the construction of a new indoor recreation facility. Steve's community involvement and service goes well beyond his dedication to providing recreation opportunities for his fellow residents. He has served as leader in innumerable other organizations, including: the Rich Port YMCA Board; the H-Foundation, which raises funds for brain cancer research; the Arts and Business Council of Chicago; the Illinois Association of Park Districts; Stage Left Theater Board; the Theatre Building of Chicago Board; the Western Springs Police Department as an Auxiliary Officer; the La Grange Business Association; and West Suburban Chamber of Commerce.

Steve has also found the time to build a thriving insurance and financial services business in the community. He specializes in insuring theatrical productions and musical concerts. He has worked with some of the biggest names in show business, yet he still treats every one of his customers like a superstar. He has also served his profession as an active member of the Independent Insurance Agents of Illinois, including serving on the Education and Government Affairs and Federal Legislative committees.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in a salute to Steve Paczolt for his great service on the Park District of La Grange Board, as well as for his lifetime of dedication and service to the community of La Grange. I give him my best wishes for many more years of giving back to his community.

TRIBUTE TO KARL WALKES

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Karl Walkes for his contributions to the public school system and noble service in the community.

Karl Walkes was born in Brooklyn, New York. He is the fourth of Fitz and Eileen's seven children. He grew up in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn and attended the New York City public schools. After graduating from the Brooklyn High School of Automotive Trades, Mr. Walkes was introduced to Zeke Clement, a charismatic community leader and legendary basketball coach. Through the effort of Mr. Clement, he was awarded an athletic scholarship to Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia where he pursued a teaching career in elementary education.

At Virginia Union University, Mr. Walkes was greatly impressed with the accessibility of the University President, Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor. He watched Dr. Proctor assist students in resolving difficult problems. Most notably, conversations with Dr. Proctor and Mr. Clement inspired him to devote his adult life to helping community youth to embrace their intellect, in order to obtain the unlimited resources that are available to them.

After receiving a Bachelors Degree and completing a tour of duty in the United States Army, Mr. Walkes began a teaching career in Brooklyn at the historic Weeksville Elementary School (P.S. 243). He continued his education by completing the Master's Degree course of study programs in Elementary Education at Brooklyn College and the Administration Supervision program at The City College of New York. He worked at the historic Weeksville Elementary School for more than 32 years, serving as teacher, Dean and Assistant Principal. He has often remarked, "I knew retirement was near when the offspring of past students began registering for kindergarten and completing the sixth grade."

After retirement from the Board of Education in 1995, Mr. Walkes joined the community-based Jackie Robinson Center, JRC, after-school program full-time under the leadership of Mr. Zeke Clement. The Jackie Robinson Center, JRC, for Physical Culture, which focuses on the improvement of student academic skills, sought to encourage participation in academic, sports and cultural activities. At the JRC, Mr. Walkes functioned as the program's sports and cultural director.

His memberships and affiliation over the years include: Brooklyn USA Athletic Association Inc., Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, CSA, Retired School Supervisors and Administrators, RSSA, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Committee to Honor, NAACP, Tournament of Champions, Trustee of Community School Board District No. 16 and the St. John's Flashes.

He has received awards from: Community School District No. 16 "Teacher of the Year"; Boy Scouts of America; Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture; Brooklyn USA Athletic Association Inc.; National Old Timers Clubs Inc.; and Parents of the Weeksville School.

Mr. Walkes is married to Verniece Shiver Walkes. They have one son, Kevin, and presently reside in East Flatbush. He is grateful for Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor and Mr. Zeke Clement who taught him through example that we must work diligently with our youth, for they are the most valuable resource that we have. Mr. Speaker, we in turn acknowledge his commitment and contributions today.