

REDUCING THE POTENTIAL FOR  
CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AF-  
RICA

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 20, 2005*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, five years ago a border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia that killed approximately 100,000 people seemed to have ended. Hope for peace emerged as both countries agreed to resolve their dispute through international arbitration. After two years of debate and discussion, the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission, EEBC, issued its final and binding decision in 2002 to resolve the long-standing border dispute.

Ethiopia did not agree with the EEBC's decision, which was meant to be final and binding on both countries. For the past three years since arbitration ended, Ethiopia has refused to implement the EEBC decision, and the border between the two countries has not been demarcated.

Both countries should abide by the decision. I believe our new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Dr. Jendayi Frazer, can assist Ethiopia and Eritrea in working together toward implementing the EEBC decision.

The time to address this issue is now, and not after hostilities begin again. The EEBC decision needs to be fully implemented without any precondition. Eritrea is ready to implement it, and Ethiopia must be urged to do so.

As a Member of the Armed Services Committee and the International Relations Committee, I see this issue as the kind of challenge that America can no longer afford to ignore. The Horn of Africa is a strategic location with strong implications to our success in the Global War on Terrorism. Another border war in the Horn of Africa would undermine the hope for peace in Sudan and weaken American influence with other border disputes in Africa.

American leadership should not pressure both sides to renegotiate the final and binding decision. Eritrea is unwilling to renegotiate the EEBC findings, while Ethiopia is calling for "dialogue." The EEBC articulated the demarcation process and directives needed to determine the exact locations on the ground for border markers. Eritrea supports full implementation of the EEBC decision and demarcation directives and is therefore ready to work out these technical issues of exact placement of border markers as stipulated in the EEBC decision. Ethiopia's calls for more dialogue are superfluous. The claim that the EEBC used a map that was too great a scale to permit clarity of intent is unfounded.

Eritrea is a society almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. Eritrea has long been a target of al Qaeda and renewed fighting in the Horn would produce opportunities for it to further undermine America's interests.

Many of the fundamental political decisions made by the United States on resolving the border matter were a product of the previous Administration. It is time for our diplomats who agree with President Bush when he says that the spread of democracy, respecting the rule of law and freedom are key to future security, to focus on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully urge the Administration to convince the Ethiopian government to abide by the EEBC's final decision on the border to be mutually beneficial for Eritrea and Ethiopia.

EXTENDING THROUGH DECEMBER  
31, 2007, AUTHORITY OF THE SEC-  
RETARY OF THE ARMY TO AC-  
CEPT AND EXPEND FUNDS CON-  
TRIBUTED BY NON-FEDERAL  
PUBLIC ENTITIES TO EXPEDITE  
THE PROCESSING OF PERMITS

SPEECH OF

**HON. BRIAN BAIRD**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 18, 2005*

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for expediting the passage of H.R. 3765, a commonsense bill that will save jobs and continue to promote economic growth.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Senator MURRAY and Senator CANTWELL for their efforts in reaching a compromise with their colleagues and ensuring swift passage by the Senate. Although I was hoping for a longer extension of section 214, I was pleased that both Chambers were able to pass a temporary fix before the delay caused irreparable economic damage to the Pacific Northwest.

I have been a strong proponent of the section 214 provision since its enactment in WRDA 2000. This provision permits non-federal public entities to contribute funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to help expedite the processing of corps permits. In the Pacific Northwest, we have seen the backlog of permits grow to over 1,000 in past years and seen the residual effect that this has on our region's economy. This provision has allowed municipalities and ports to move forward with vital infrastructure projects. By funding additional staff to work on specific, time-intensive permits, existing corps' staff is freed up to work on the backlog. It is important to emphasize that these entities providing funding are given no partiality by the corps in their review of the project.

This provision was extended in 2003 in the FY04 Energy and Water appropriations bill, and expired on September 30. The temporary extension passed today, will allow the Army Corps to continue section 214 projects until this bill expires on March 31, 2006. It is my hope that we can permanently extend this provision by passing WRDA this year, a bill that is long overdue for reauthorization.

Additionally, some of my colleagues have expressed interest in a thorough study of the use of section 214, and I would urge these efforts to be expedited. It is my view that a report by the GAO to study the effectiveness of this program in the Pacific Northwest would only yield valuable information that can be used to improve and, perhaps, expand the program.

I am proud to be the primary sponsor of this bill and have the endorsement of the entire Washington State delegation. I thank my colleagues for their vote to pass this bill today and promptly send it to the President for enactment.

HONORING THE SENIOR COM-  
PANION PROGRAM OF MONT-  
GOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYL-  
VANIA

**HON. JIM GERLACH**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 20, 2005*

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Senior Companion Program, SCP, of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

The SCP of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania provides an innovative service for senior citizens in need of additional home care, but who are not yet ready to enter a nursing home. The Montgomery County SCP is the sixth of its kind in Pennsylvania and the 250th SCP in the United States.

The SCP of Montgomery County has been in existence since September 2003. Since that time, the SCP of Montgomery County has worked diligently to help senior citizens remain independent at home as long as possible by having their volunteers, or "Companions," make visits to the seniors' homes and provide care and companionship.

The Companions of the SCP are usually low-income senior citizens, committing 20 to 40 hours a week to help other seniors who are frail and in need of additional help. The Companions receive a small, tax-free stipend for their time spent volunteering. During the visits, the Companions engage in all sorts of daily activities from helping seniors with correspondence, monitoring medications, playing games, exercising, helping with errands and appointments, and sharing meals. These activities help seniors continue to lead a regular, active life. The Companions of SCP can also provide much-needed relief for the caregiver in the seniors' home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the Senior Companion Program of Montgomery County. The SCP Companions play a significant role in the Montgomery County community by giving back to its citizens in very important ways. They have worked to improve the overall quality of life for over 200 senior citizens by giving them the extra help they need in order to remain self-sufficient in their homes.