

HONORING RETIRING EVANS TOWN COUNCILMAN TOM CSATI

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of a dedicated elected official from the town of Evans who has served with distinction as a member of his Town Board. I am speaking of retiring Evans Town Councilman Tom Csati.

Tom Csati is a strong leader who worked hard to get things done in Evans and Angola. A member of the Town Board for 8 years, Tom Csati is a public servant who always put people first. The town of Evans and its residents are better for the service he provided, and I am proud to honor his service here today.

TRIBUTE HONORING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 125th anniversary of the University of the Incarnate Word, an institution of higher education in San Antonio, Texas that serves students from Texas, as well as throughout the United States and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, the University of the Incarnate Word evolved when three sisters went to San Antonio to help serve people in need of health care and children in need of homes.

After founding several hospitals and two orphanages, the sisters established Incarnate Word School, which began as an elementary and secondary school but has blossomed into a university that has a campus in Mexico City and one in China.

The university's service is based on the belief in God, their love for God, and their desire to serve God's people.

The university is also celebrating the 20th anniversary of Dr. Louis J. Agnese, Jr. as president of the university. He is a great leader and his long service is a testament to the dedication of the school.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the privilege of celebrating the 125th anniversary of the University of the Incarnate Word and the 20th anniversary of Dr. Louis J. Agnese, Jr. as president.

TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE EXTENSION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 467, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Extension Act of 2005, TRIA. The brutal attacks of September 11, 2001, shook the Nation, caused enormous grief, and strengthened

the country's resolve. Congress pledged to do all we could to help the victims' families and to write policy that would help in the aftermath if such an attack ever occurs again.

One tangible way Congress can help is to make sure that businesses can afford terrorism insurance; to do this, we must reauthorize TRIA. Before the terrorist attacks of 9/11, most insurers offered terrorism insurance. Between 9/11 and the signing of TRIA in 2002, it was estimated that more than \$15 billion in real estate transactions had been canceled or put on hold because owners and investors could not obtain the insurance protection they needed. TRIA, a public/private partnership, protects consumers, keeps an engine of our society going, and respects state regulation of insurance.

As cochair of the New Democrat Coalition, I have long believed that TRIA has worked well for individuals, businesses large and small, and our country. I am proud that the NDC has been a leader on this issue, and I am pleased that Speaker HASTERT has responded to the letter our coalition sent to him earlier this year, urging him to bring TRIA to the Floor. TRIA is scheduled to expire at the end of this month, but Mr. Speaker, threat of terror has not expired.

I plan on supporting this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4241, DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Republican plan to cut billions of dollars in services for the most vulnerable people in our country while giving away billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans—the so-called "budget reconciliation package."

This plan will harm low-income children and seniors, students, working parents and local government. It is an appalling plan that I oppose on both policy grounds as well as moral grounds. Denying access to food stamps to our poorest families is cruel and immoral when we live in a generous country of abundance.

The Republican budget reconciliation bill also makes significant cuts to Medicaid, a critical program serving children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Republicans propose to cut \$11.4 billion from Medicaid, primarily through imposing increased costs on families which will result in decreased access to care. At a time when health care costs and the number of uninsured families in our country are increasing, this proposal is both unwise and unfair.

The Republican plan also cuts \$14.3 billion from student loan programs, which will make higher education more expensive and less accessible at a time when our nation should be focused on educating and training a highly skilled workforce to compete globally. An investment in higher education is an investment in our future. The Republicans have chosen instead to ignore this reality and balance their mismanaged budget on the backs of students and families. .

It is also extremely disappointing that the Republicans chose to include their punitive re-authorization of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in this bill. This plan increases work requirements and sanctions while severely underfunding child care. In order to work, families need access to safe, affordable child care. We know that Congress needs to fund child care at \$7 billion in order match the new rigid work requirements, yet this bill provides an inadequate \$1.3 billion. Families want to work but that is not possible if there is not safe, affordable child care available. In addition, the leadership has included a cut to child support enforcement funding in this package, which will make it more difficult for families to access the resources they need to care for their children.

My opposition also extends to the Republican desire to cut \$70 billion in taxes, primarily for investors and the wealthy, while adding over \$20 billion to the federal budget deficit. Rewarding the rich, punishing the poor and passing the cost on to the next generation is a disgraceful way to lead this nation. I will vote against this Republican reconciliation package and I urge my colleagues to join me.

HONORING RETIRING ELMA TOWN COUNCILMAN BILL CIROCCO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of a dedicated elected official from the Town of Elma, Bill Cirocco.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I like most of my colleagues represent a large number of different communities. All told, I represent all or part of 19 towns and 2 cities in Erie County, as well as 27 towns and 2 cities in Chautauqua County. But Elma is a very important town in my district it's where my parents live.

It's that closeness that I have to Elma that leads me to commemorate Bill's service to Elma. As a public official, Bill always had the best interests of his constituents—his neighbors—first in his mind. As time went on, and as battles were waged in town about this issue or that, Bill Cirocco always looked at each issue individually and kept the residents and taxpayers first in his mind.

Now, as Bill contemplates retirement from elective office, I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedicated service to Elma, and to the people who live, work and raise their families there. Elma is a better place for his service to the town, and I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to honor Bill's service.

TRIBUTE TO JUAN ARECHIGA, SR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Juan Arechiga, Sr., a decorated World War II veteran and lifelong resident of Laredo, Texas who passed away Saturday, December 3, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Arechiga was a veteran of the U.S. Army and was a member of Company F, 333rd Infantry, serving in the Rhine-land and Central Europe. He served bravely from November 25, 1942 to December 9, 1945, when he was honorably discharged.

For his dedication while in the service, he received the American Theater Campaign Ribbon, the EAME Campaign Ribbon with three bronze stars and a Good Conduct Medal.

Mr. Arechiga was an electrician who was one of the founding members of the Laredo Electrical Association which was formed in 1948. As his business expanded, he developed a construction firm that was contracted to build the first Sears and Roebuck buildings in Barcelona, Spain and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

When he returned to Laredo, he became a well-known residential contractor and established his own local construction company. Mr. Arechiga was an important part of Laredo's growth in the late 1970's and we are proud to have had such a respected person as a citizen of Laredo.

ON THE 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSING OF DANIEL FAULKNER: HONORING PENNSYLVANIA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE LINE OF DUTY

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on December 9, 1981, Daniel J. Faulkner, a five-year veteran of the Philadelphia Police Department was shot and killed while making a routine traffic stop. Although he was only 25 when he left us, Officer Faulkner achieved many things. He was a loving husband, an active church parishioner, and a respected member of his Northeast Philadelphia community.

Since Officer Faulkner's murder, more than 115 brave men and women in uniform have given their lives while serving and protecting the communities of Pennsylvania.

My colleagues, these fallen officers paid the ultimate price for their service to our Nation. They left behind family, friends and colleagues. And we must never forget their contributions to the safety, security and betterment of our neighborhoods.

So today, I rise to pay tribute to and remember the 140 law enforcement officers who died this year in the line-of-duty in our Nation. In particular, I rise in honor of the four fallen law enforcement officers from my home state of Pennsylvania:

York County Sheriff Deputy Edward "Skip" Schroeder;

Easton Police Department Officer Jesse Sollman;

City of Philadelphia Officer Paris Williams; and

Newton Borough Police Department Officer Brian Gregg.

Mr. Speaker, these officers' sense of dedication will forever be remembered by their family, friends, loved ones, and the Nation. And I know that all of my colleagues, and all Americans, join me in honoring their sacrifice in the line of duty.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

HONORING OUTGOING CITY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY CONRAD

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on Military Quality of Life/Veterans Affairs appropriations for Fiscal Year 2006 and to commend the conferees for their hard work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a difficult year for veterans—there has been misrepresentation, confusion, and overall misuse of the funding allocated to the Medical Services Account for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have heard from veterans in my District, and throughout Minnesota, of their extreme concern regarding funding for the VA. Veterans in Minnesota and this country have told me that they are worried about how the funding shortfall that was revealed over the summer will directly impact their VA benefits.

The good news for veterans today is this bill provides \$22.5 billion for Veterans Medical Services for Fiscal Year 2006, \$1.7 billion more than the current funding level and 3 percent more than the Administration's request. This conference report also provides \$1.2 billion in emergency funding for the Medical Services account. I am pleased to be able to tell Minnesota veterans that Congress heard their concerns, values their service, and will keep our promises regarding their health care.

The mental health and welfare of our returning soldiers, and of our veterans, must be a priority. The agreement also includes \$2.2 billion specifically reserved for mental health care, and designates \$15 million for further research into Gulf War Illness. Too many soldiers return and do not have access to proper mental health care. We have an obligation to do all that we can to address these conditions and help these brave men and women rebuild their lives. This bill takes an important step in providing this care.

I am also very pleased that Congress rejected the Administration's proposals for imposing new fees for health care services. When the Administration proposed a \$250 enrollment fee for particular veterans without service-connected disabilities, and an increase in drug co-payments to \$15, I heard loud and clear from the veterans throughout Minnesota that this would greatly impact their health and well-being.

Veterans' health care should not be cut to solve the budget deficit. Veterans deserve to continue to have access to affordable, quality health care. It is what they were promised and it is our responsibility to ensure that those services remain for today's—and tomorrow's—servicemen and women.

Mr. Speaker, the Americans who have served our country in the Armed Services deserve to return home to a country that values their service. This agreement reflects, in part, the gratitude of Congress for their sacrifices, and I am proud to support it.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Jeffrey Conrad, a great son of South Buffalo, New York, who will complete his service as a member of the Buffalo Common Council on December 31, 2005.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Buffalo Common Council, I know of what I speak. Having served as a member of that body in the same seat as Mr. Conrad from 1988 to 1993, I know and understand the position of district councilmember in the city of Buffalo. In that job, Mr. Speaker, you are never presented with good news; you are only presented with crumbling sidewalks and broken streetlights, with poorly paved roads and neighbors complaining about nearby lots that need mowing.

In short, Mr. Speaker, this job is one of the toughest in local government. Jeff Conrad handled that job with dignity and aplomb, and I am pleased to honor his service here today.

Jeff Conrad is a bright young leader in South Buffalo. While his first run for public office was unsuccessful, Jeff is a solid individual from a great South Buffalo family, and he has a very bright future full of promise in months and years to come.

While Jeff Conrad served only a few short months as a member of the Buffalo Common Council, his commitment to the neighborhoods we live in and the people who inhabit them can never be overstated. Jeff's service to his constituents was effective and honorable, and I look forward to future opportunities to work with him to make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4340, UNITED STATES-BAHRAIN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the New Democrat Coalition, I rise today on behalf of the New Dem Co-Chairs, RON KIND, ARTUR DAVIS, and ADAM SMITH, to voice support of the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

Passage of this free trade agreement will help strengthen the United States' relationship with Bahrain and build a more secure and productive future for our countries and citizens.

We believe when instituted correctly and fairly, trade agreements open up foreign markets to U.S. goods, create new opportunities for companies and their employees, and lift the standard of living for the people in the countries with whom we are trading.

As our Nation leads the world into the 21st century, we should not shy away from opportunities to guide and expand global trade.

U.S. goods exported to Bahrain totaled \$302 million in 2004, constituting .03 percent of total U.S. merchandise trade in 2004.