

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2006 THROUGH 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 17, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act which provides for the comprehensive reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA.

The Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, is a truly bipartisan success. Since VAWA was enacted in 1994, we have made great strides toward ending domestic violence and preventing the cycle of abuse in our communities. States have passed more than 660 laws to combat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline has answered over 1 million calls. We have come a long way since the initial passage of VAWA. But there is no doubt we have a long way to go.

All Americans should feel safe in their communities, their workplace and their homes. Yet domestic violence remains a serious problem across the country, and every year thousands of Americans become victims in their own homes. Nearly one in four women will experience domestic violence during her lifetime. And slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age 12. Growing up in a violent home may be a terrifying and traumatic experience that can affect every aspect of a child's life, growth, and development. To end the cycle of violence and promote healthy families, we must ensure that communities have resources to prevent abuse and provide victims of domestic violence the support they need. We are on the way to making that a reality.

The Violence Against Women Act provides aid to law enforcement officers and prosecutors and helps to reduce domestic violence and child abuse by establishing training programs for victim advocates and counselors in addition to a host of other areas including tightening criminal penalties against domestic abusers and creating new solutions to other crucial aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In the past, in the present, and in the future, VAWA has been, and will continue to be a critical tool to combat violence.

But even with VAWA's great successes and promising future, we know that our work is not yet done.

There are solutions to preventing the 960,000 incidents of violence that are reported against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend each year. The country must not tolerate the violence, abuse, and sexual assault that pervades our society. We must continue to fight for measures that will provide better economic security for victims of violence, increase protections for battered immigrants, promote awareness in underserved populations, enhance protection of victims' personal information and develop programs designed to prevent domestic violence before it occurs.

Together, we can eliminate domestic violence from homes across the country and en-

sure that our children grow up in healthy, peaceful communities. Passage of H.R. 3402 marks our continuing effort to do just that.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3199, USA PATRIOT IMPROVEMENT AND REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to the conference report to the reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Mr. Speaker, I stated after the House voted on H.R. 3199 in July, that it was my hope that the conference committee would temper the extremes that are present in this legislation, and that the conferees would keep the American people's respect for privacy and desire for freedom in mind, I do not believe that this conference report reflects those ideals.

National security, homeland security and the collection of intelligence need to be balanced with the fundamental freedoms and civil liberties granted to Americans by our Constitution. Terrorism is a real threat to our security, but so are laws that threaten our liberty by allowing an over-zealous government to infringe on the privacy of individuals, based on vague, undefined, and at times, "classified" evidence. It is possible to be safe, and free, and to protect security while still respecting civil liberties. Unfortunately, this conference report fails to recognize this reality and come to bipartisan agreement in protecting both the security and civil liberties of Americans.

I voted in favor of the motion to recommit, which would have replaced the text of the conference report with the text of the original bill passed by the Senate. The original Senate bill included far more protections for civil liberties than this conference report. That Senate-passed bill would have included a process of judicial review for recipients of a National Security Letter, as well as a standard requiring the Government to show a connection to a suspected terrorist or organization when requesting business or library records. This conference report before me today only requires the Government to demonstrate "relevance" in an investigation.

This conference report makes 14 of 16 controversial PATRIOT Act provisions permanent. In making these provisions permanent, Congress is relinquishing its responsibility to review their use, granting more permanent power to the executive branch. Congressional oversight has been maintained only through the two provisions scheduled to sunset in 4 years, as well as through the inclusion of a "lone wolf" provision, also scheduled to sunset in 4 years. Congress has a responsibility to check the power of the executive branch, not cede that authority, potentially threatening the civil liberties of our citizens. The conference report voted on today unfortunately fails to safeguard individual privacy rights, and allows the Government, with little burden of proof, to scrutinize nearly every aspect of a person's life.

It has been said in this debate that we must sacrifice some of our freedoms in the name of

security. This is the wrong approach, and the American people have the right to expect better from Congress. We cannot allow terrorism to erode either our national security or our civil liberties—both present a danger to this country. I urge my colleagues to vote against this conference report, and support both the rights and security of the American people.

WELCOMING THE NEW SWAZI AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to welcome the new ambassador of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the United States.

Ambassador Ephraim M. Hlophe presented his credentials to President George W. Bush at the White House on Monday, October 3.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Ambassador Hlophe was principal secretary for his country's Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and has served as Swaziland's National Contact Point for the Southern African Development Community and as a member of the Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority (SIPA).

Ambassador Hlophe told President Bush that he hopes to see "increased attention in the United States toward trade and investment opportunities in Swaziland. Our country welcomes American firms to explore the many possibilities Swaziland has to offer in mining, tourism, manufacturing, agribusiness, and international services."

Swaziland, Ambassador Hlophe has explained, "is working with the United States in developing an investment code, and the United States is working with the Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority to help attract foreign investment. We appreciate the work USAID is doing to develop an 'investor road map' to identify barriers to foreign investment and to form the basis of a new investment code."

Mr. Speaker, the lively monthly publication, *The Washington Diplomat*, recently published a profile of Ambassador Hlophe in its biweekly "Diplomat Pouch" newsletter. With no objection, I ask that the article by correspondent Anna Gawel be entered into the RECORD as a welcome to Ambassador Ephraim Hlophe.

[From the *Washington Diplomat*, Dec. 1, 2005]

NEW SWAZI AMBASSADOR HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

(By Anna Gawel)

Shortly after presenting his credentials to President Bush, Ephraim M. Hlophe, the new ambassador of Swaziland, got to work promoting his small Southern African kingdom to Washington audiences.

Shortly after his arrival, Hlophe met with Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-N.J.), chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations. The ambassador also plans to meet with other members of Congress as well as officials from USAID in the next few weeks.

Hlophe, a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, is trying to boost foreign investment in areas such as manufacturing, particularly in sugar and textiles, as well as

tourism, which is a major draw for Swaziland. "I'd say the whole kingdom is a tourist attraction area," Hlophe noted.

The ambassador is also working to tackle the more serious issues that his country faces, namely the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to plague much of Africa. Swazi King Mswati III is expected to visit Uganda early next year to examine the successful "ABC" model (abstain, be faithful and use condoms) that Uganda has been using.

Like its neighbors, Swaziland has an especially high rate of HIV infection. "We've seen some significant improvement in terms of people who are willing to be tested so that they benefit from these drugs that are made available through the Global Fund," the ambassador said, referring to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. But as a small kingdom, Hlophe said an aggressive approach that encompasses all the methods of prevention and treatment will be crucial to the king's efforts to combat the epidemic.

In addition, Hlophe must address the backlash that often stems from the king's rule of what is Africa's last absolute monarchy. Swaziland has been criticized for its lack of democratic reforms and human rights record, particularly with regard to women's rights.

But Hlophe, a jovial and easygoing man, prefers to highlight the positive advancements his country has made. He pointed to the new constitution scheduled to take effect early next year—Swaziland's first in more than 30 years—explaining that the entire country had a hand in its drafting. "I think that instrument is not the king's instrument. It is our instrument; it is every Swazi's instrument."

The king has also been heavily criticized for his many wives, which he often picks out from among a lineup of topless virgins at an annual dance. On the topic of women's rights, Hlophe noted that when he served as principal secretary for the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, he took over from a woman—a "visible effort" that is reflective of the drive to include more women in decision-making roles, something that is often overlooked by the media. "People always highlight the negative and not highlight the good points," he said.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to offer their own expressions of good wishes to Ambassador Hlophe as he takes up his post to represent Swaziland in Washington. I am certain that he will enjoy a major measure of hospitality on the part of the American people.

THE FY 2006 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT (H.R. 2863), AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, we are here today because the Senate rightly rejected the Defense Appropriations conference report—not because they didn't support our troops, but because they honored their service enough to insist on a military spending bill unsullied by special interest politics.

While I continue to have concerns about a number of unrelated provisions in the underlying bill, I also believe it is critical to ensure that our soldiers get the equipment they need to protect themselves and succeed in their missions.

Therefore, with the ANWR issue out of the way, I am prepared to support this legislation and forward it to the President for his signature.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1932,
DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, There's a lot of talk about "savings" associated with this budget reconciliation, but let's be honest with ourselves and our children. This Congress continues to add to our \$8 trillion national debt. Nothing is being done here that is making any serious attempt to balance the national budget. Any reduction to our budget deficit will be more than offset by the tax cuts that Congress is still negotiating.

What makes matters worse are the programs being targeted to pay for these tax cuts. Republican leadership is cutting federal child-support enforcement aid, reducing states' capacity to help families make sure that children get the financial support they are owed. Student loans are the subject of some of the largest cuts, \$16 billion over 5 years.

This budget cuts programs that help protect the financial well-being of our children and grandchildren; cuts that help them cope with an increasingly expensive education. Even worse, this budget will then add to the national debt that these future generations will have to payoff.

It is a sad day for this country and a poor reflection on this Congress when our children will inherit a worse world because of what we do here today. This situation is a result of the Republican leadership's inability to legislate. Honest debate, open dialogue and legislating would not create bills so detrimental to society. This is the shameful outcome of backroom negotiating and ideological policy making.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2830, PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2830, the Pension Protection Act of 2005.

Any bill that is called the "Pension Protection Act" should protect pensions, but the bill we have before us makes things worse in many ways for many current pensioners in this country and for many future pensioners.

First and foremost, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation was first created to protect some of the retiree benefits of people if pension plans went bust or the corporations went bust. We are now told that this legislation makes that problem worse. The Congressional Budget Office tells us that this will make it at least \$9 billion worse over the next decade.

This is an agency that can look out into the future and can see up to \$100 billion of liabilities possibly coming their way. Much of which will come because this bill makes it easier to terminate plans. Simply, it makes it easier to put plans into bankruptcy.

This bill does nothing to solve the problems we have seen with airline industry pensions because their pension plans can be dumped during bankruptcy just as easily as they can now. This bill does nothing to prevent this.

The way we can tell that this legislation does not do the job is the way the Republican Leadership is making us debate the bill by taking the unusually restrictive step of not allowing us to debate substitute legislation. I guess they realize that this bill is so bad that if they allowed us the substitute, it certainly would have prevailed over this legislation. I would have supported the legislation that Congressmen RANGEL and GEORGE MILLER had prepared.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation. Its only accomplishment is to make the problems of America's pensioners even worse than they are today.

H.R. 2017, THE TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2017, the Torture Victims Reauthorization Act of 2005.

Building on great legislation originally introduced by former Minnesota Senator David Durenburger, this bill further enhances the work that was started nearly a decade ago. The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act reauthorizes funding for both domestic and foreign treatment centers for victims of torture, as well as the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that Minnesota is the home of the world-renowned Center for Victims of Torture. The work being done at the Center by Mr. Doug Johnson and his extremely qualified, compassionate staff is changing the lives of thousands of people around the world. The Center not only works directly with survivors of torture, but they also train American and International professionals, who return to their communities with the skills needed to better assist victims in rebuilding their lives. Through the work of the Center for Victims of Torture, and other centers like it, survivors of torture are able to reclaim their dignity, their hope, and their futures.

For years, Minnesotans have committed themselves to providing a safe haven for people who have been victims of torture. This is why I, along with so many of my constituents, am so deeply disturbed by recent media reports that the U.S. government might be the source of violence similar to what these victims of torture have suffered. I am extremely disappointed by the Bush Administration's strong opposition, earlier this month, to a provision added to the Senate Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Authorization bill. That provision would ban the use of torture and cruel, and inhumane treatment by members of the U.S.