

As I write my last Witness for Justice column, I wish for young people who are ready and willing to take up the leadership in the struggle for a world of peace with justice. I am reminded that there has been no viable struggle for justice and peace which did not include young people in the leadership in the last century and I am sure that will be true for this century as well. Young people were a part of the leadership in the civil rights struggle in the U.S., in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, in the people power struggle in the Philippines, even in Tiennamin Square in China. We need young people willing to say war is not the answer, poverty is not the solution and racism can be no more and to do the difficult work of making such a world a reality. That may mean using old tried and true methods of protest like marches and demonstrations and letter-writing, and it might include new 21st century high-tech methods of protest driven by the internet. We need the energy and enthusiasm of young people in the work for peace and justice and my Christmas wish is that each one of us who are elders will mentor a young person to take the lead in this millennia-old struggle.

My third wish is for health care for every American. If there is one issue which can impact every one of us and which can be won in the next two years, I believe it is national health care. Simply put, the health care system is imploding all around us. Corporations large and small know it, labor unions know it, non-profit organizations know it, retirees know it, those 45 million Americans with no health care insurance know it, the medical profession knows it, and hospital administrators know it. Even the politicians know that the health care system we now have is not working for any group in America except possibly the insurance industry, but unless we DEMAND an immediate change, however, politicians will not do anything about it until it collapses around us. Maybe the total collapse of General Motors or maybe the influx of Asian bird flu into the U.S. with millions unable to afford treatment or maybe millions of retirees losing their promised health care benefits or millions of workers being required to pay higher and higher deductibles will be what propels the collapse of our present-day system, but my Christmas wish is that Americans demand that our nation come up with national health insurance before the system collapses not afterwards.

My wish is for a return of a value which seems to be disappearing from our landscape—the value of integrity. Integrity is a value which can only be earned through a life of honesty, fairness, forthrightness and a commitment to the common good of all humankind. It is a value which seems to be sorely lacking in government, in politics, in media, in business, even in religion. Integrity means standing up for what is right and just and true, no matter which way the winds of the world blow. It means speaking truth, not words of political spin. It means looking out not just for oneself, but for the whole community, especially those who are powerless and can't stand up for themselves. It means being willing to admit mistakes and to ask for forgiveness, knowing that we are all human and fallible. It means matching your words with your life. My Christmas wish is for an increase in integrity in our world.

My Christmas wish list this year is for health and wellness for every reader, for laughter and joy, for strength and comfort in the days ahead. In the words of the great American writer, Maya Angelou, "I wouldn't take nothing for the journey".

The struggle continues!!!

REVERSE MORTGAGES TO HELP AMERICA'S SENIORS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2892, the Reverse Mortgages to Help America's Seniors Act.

By removing the cap on the number of these loans that HUD can guarantee, this bipartisan bill allows the program to grow with demand.

A reverse mortgage is a creative financing tool that allows seniors to take some of the equity out of their homes without having to sell the home, or take on a new monthly mortgage payment.

Because it allows seniors to remain in their homes and provides them an income, it has proved very popular. These funds can be used for the everyday demands that many seniors face and that can become particularly urgent for those surviving on a fixed income, such as paying off existing debts, paying health care expenses, or paying daily living expenses.

When the statutory cap of 150,000 loans was reached this spring, there was consternation that the program would be suspended even though it is a win-win: it makes money for taxpayers and benefits seniors.

As those events demonstrate, the cap serves no useful purpose and should be removed. There is no reason to deny seniors this benefit if they decide it works for them, especially since it makes substantial money for the government—almost \$40 million annually after the first year.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2892 and make this financial tool available to any senior who wants to use it.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1815, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 1815, the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006.

Mr. Speaker, torture can never be tolerated. As a country that has historically stood for the promotion and strengthening of human rights, our government must not be allowed to blur the line, bend the rules or otherwise distort the truth on acts that are clearly degrading, inhumane and cruel. Senator JOHN MCCAIN's amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Authorization, and subsequently Appropriations, bills, was overwhelming supported in the Senate, and had bipartisan support in the House. Regardless of who we are fighting, and regardless of how the war is going, as Americans, we must never allow ourselves to again be accused of torture. Torture destroys the lives of those who are its victims as well as the lives, moral authority and strength of those who commit such devastating acts or support them.

As a cosponsor of the Interrogation Procedures Act of 2005, H.R. 3985, which is identical to Senator MCCAIN's amendment, I am pleased that conferees were able to come to a good agreement in regard to Senator MCCAIN's amendment. This amendment deserved the utmost support and respect, and I believe that in the end, the conferees were able to incorporate a clear, unambiguous statement on the unacceptability of torture by the U.S. government and military.

As media reports of alleged torture and extraordinary rendition become increasingly common, and as reports continue of "secret" CIA prisons operated throughout Eastern Europe, I am extremely pleased that the Administration has finally, publicly supported the MCCAIN ban on torture. I was appalled earlier this month, and in November, to hear of Vice President CHENEY's lobbying of Members of Congress to have this provision stripped, arguing that the provision would restrict the "flexibility" of the intelligence and military communities to wage an "effective" war against terror.

With this conference report, the United States has made a clear, unambiguous, and strong statement condemning torture and outlawing its use by any U.S. military personnel or on any U.S. facility in the world. This is to be greatly commended and I thank my colleagues for their support of this provision.

WELCOMING THE KOREA INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATION TO WASHINGTON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Korea International Trade Association (KITA), which has had offices in New York City since 1967, is expanding its presence in the United States by opening up a major office in the Nation's Capital.

Founded in 1946 with 105 members, KITA now represents more than 80,000 Korean businesses seeking to sell their products and services overseas, and in turn buying products and services from foreign countries.

Mr. Andy Mun, the president of KITA's branch in the United States, has said that having a presence in Washington will be important now that South Korea and the United States are engaged in negotiations to create a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

In order to create a more prominent profile in Washington, DC, the Korea International Trade Association has purchased a building at 1660 L Street, NW., in the heart of the bustling commercial center of the city. While KITA will occupy several floors of the building, which will be designated the Washington Hankook Center, the rest will be used by American companies, law firms, non-profit groups, trade associations, and business consultants. The building is part of KITA's effort to build trade centers around the globe. In fact, KITA participates in the World Trade Centers Association, which has more than 300 members in 101 countries. It works closely with virtually all World Trade Centers to promote trade by providing facilities and services on a reciprocal basis.

In addition, to promote bilateral economic cooperation, KITA sponsors the Korea-U.S. Economic Council, the Korea-Japan Industry

and Trade Committee, and the Korea-Hong Kong Business Roundtable.

In its efforts to promote freer trade, not only between the United States and South Korea, but around the world, KITA organizes various functions and events to enhance mutual understanding on trade issues, seeking to resolve private-sector trade disputes through dialogue. It also works together with its overseas counterparts and international economic organizations to provide member firms with opportunities to interact fully with the international community.

Moreover, KITA places special emphasis on developing and maintaining cooperative relationships with overseas trade promotion organizations as well as major international organizations to facilitate trade and investment on a reciprocal basis. These cooperation activities include trade information exchange, organizing trade promotional events, joint research, and provision of facilities, such as the new office building on L Street in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, as January 13, 2006, will be the first time we celebrate Korean-American Day, as designated by the vote of this Congress, I think it is appropriate that we recognize the mutual benefits of trade between our country and South Korea, which has been a partner of ours in so many endeavors over the years, from fighting side-by-side with our Armed Forces to contributing \$30 million in assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Barely half a century ago, South Korea was an impoverished casualty of imperialism and war; it has now grown to be the 13th-largest trading nation in the world. Korea is also the 7th-largest trading partner of the United States, with over \$70 billion in business between our countries each year. Credit for such remarkable development belongs in large part to the efforts of the Korea International Trade Association.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to extend their good wishes and welcome to the Korea International Trade Association as it opens its new offices in Washington, DC.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this conference report—and the breathtaking abuse of power it represents.

The purpose of a Defense Appropriations bill is to fund the fighting forces of the United States and to provide our troops with the support and equipment they need. At no time is that obligation more solemn than when our soldiers are at risk in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

That is why it is so inexcusable for this congressional leadership to put our troops in jeopardy by playing politics with this bill.

Republicans and Democrats should unite behind a clean, bipartisan conference report that supports our soldiers and provides for a robust national defense. Instead, this legislation arrives on the floor packed with highly divisive, completely extraneous, last minute

giveaways to special interests—giveaways the Republican leadership knows perfectly well could never survive the scrutiny of the ordinary legislative process.

In that regard, I am particularly appalled by the inclusion of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) drilling in this legislation. And I am not alone: Five high profile military officials—including retired General Anthony Zinni—recently implored Congress not to politicize military spending by embroiling it in the ANWR debate. Senator McCain called the ANWR insertion “disgraceful” and “disgusting”.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a spectacular arctic ecosystem, sustaining wildlife so diverse it is sometimes called the American Serengeti. Along with a sizable majority of Americans, I continue to believe we should not despoil this national treasure for what amounts to six months worth of gasoline ten years from now. Instead, we should move expeditiously to diversify the Nation’s fuel mix away from our reliance on foreign oil and embrace the renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies of the 21st century.

I agree with General Zinni and Senator McCain: It is the height of irresponsibility to be playing games with needed defense funds when our men and women in uniform are in harm’s way—and I am hopeful the Senate will reject inclusion of this extremely controversial and unrelated environmental provision in this military spending bill.

Moreover, I strongly object to the eleventh hour special interest liability protections added to this legislation. Once again, this kind of provision is not germane to the defense appropriations process. Furthermore, I am concerned it fails to provide adequate compensation to legitimately injured patients.

Finally, the Defense Appropriations bill is no place to be making spending decisions that have nothing to do with defense. Yet this bill contains a 1% across-the-board spending cut affecting almost every appropriations bill we have passed this year.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I voted in favor of the defense authorization bill to provide the ongoing authority for ensuring our national defense. I am particularly pleased that the conferees on that bill saw fit to include Senator McCain’s language on the humane treatment of prisoners held in American custody.

But on this vote I will not reward the abuse of power dragging down this bill. Shame on this House for playing politics with our troops during wartime. I urge my colleagues to vote no so we can return quickly with a defense bill worthy of our military’s service and sacrifice.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the legislative process has clearly broken down and this conference report reflects that sad state of affairs. Included in this bill are a number of critical issues that have nothing to do with defense and deserve separate votes. Instead,

because they cannot or do not want to legislate, the Republican leadership has decided to play politics with our troops and use this bill as a vehicle to force through harmful provisions.

It is shameful that this conference report contains, for the first time, authority for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Not only is this bad policy, but it has nothing to do with our Nation’s national defense. If Republicans were truly serious about reducing our dependence on foreign oil for security reasons, this bill would contain an increase in fuel efficiency standards for automobiles or a renewable portfolio standard. Instead, it contains an ideological victory for the anti-environmental leadership of this Congress that would only provide enough oil to meet our country’s needs for 6 months to a year.

This bill also contains a significant across the board budget cut, which is an unfortunate and easy way out of making smart spending choices. These cuts will have a harmful impact on everything from transportation to economic development to health care. In addition, the bill contains a damaging provision to provide immunity to drug and vaccine manufacturers.

I am disappointed that the conferees were unwilling to include fundamental provisions such as \$50 million in funding for the African Union Mission in Sudan. Without these funds, there will be no U.S. support for Darfur peacekeepers beginning in 2006. The African Union is the only security force in Darfur that has been able to provide a modicum of security. Yet without this funding it will not be able to continue its current level of around 6,000 peacekeepers for an area the size of Texas, let alone expand its operations to protect more civilians and aid workers. To allow Congress to adjourn without addressing this issue makes Republican leadership and the White House complicit in this ongoing genocide.

We face significant security and military challenges from the war in Iraq to the threat of terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Unfortunately, the spending choices in this bill do not reflect these threats and challenges. The billions we waste on outdated programs like missile defense come at the expense of the less-flashy tools we need to wage counterinsurgency warfare in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, such as armored vehicles and language training for soldiers. The security of the American people and the safety of our men and women in uniform demand better than this conference report.

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTI-
TERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMI-
GRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4437) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws, to enhance border security, and for other purposes:

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to the so-called Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, H.R. 4437. I am deeply