

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1268, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND TSUNAMI RELIEF ACT, 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I voted in support of the Fiscal Year 2005 Iraq and Tsunami Relief Supplemental Conference Report. This decision was very difficult for me. I voted for this legislation because it includes vital equipment and services that our troops desperately need. The bill also provides funding for needed vehicle armor and personal protection for our courageous troops and increases financial support to families of fallen heroes. While I strongly oppose the war in Iraq, I believe it is our government's duty to protect our troops which this Congress sent into the line of fire, as well as their families.

While I voted for this measure, I strongly oppose the REAL ID provisions in it. REAL ID gives blanket authority to the United States Department of Homeland Security to build any roads or barriers at any time and at any border without having to answer to State or Federal authorities and laws. Its driver's license provisions overturn States' rights and impose a massive unfunded mandate on States, while doing nothing to address our outdated immigration system.

I am very disappointed that the REAL ID provision was included in a bill to fund support for our military forces and their families and relief for tsunami victims. While I acknowledge that our immigration system is broken, this legislation is not the right vehicle to do it and REAL ID is not the right approach to fix it. I support comprehensive immigration reform, not attempts by the Republican majority in Congress and President Bush to give the American people a false sense of security at the cost of our civil liberties and values. That is why I urged conferees on the Supplemental bill to remove these harmful provisions from the conference report. Reform of our complex and outdated immigration system deserves a separate and extensive dialogue, and I will continue to fight for immigration policy which both protects our homeland and respects the millions of hard-working immigrants in this Nation.

While I remain deeply opposed to the REAL ID and its inclusion in this conference report, I do not believe withholding funds from our dedicated military and tsunami victims is right. There should be no question that I remain very concerned about the Bush Administration's lack of a clear exit strategy in Iraq. However, I am committed to our troops, and I will continue to fight for a clear plan so they can be reunited with their families and democracy can thrive in an Iraq run by Iraqis.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ABIGAIL HERNANDEZ LEHMAN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the many accomplishments of Abigail Hernandez, Lehman High School Teacher of the Year.

Abigail Hernandez is a graduate of Southwest Texas State University, where she received a BS in mathematics with a teaching certification. She is currently working on a Masters in mathematics education, but she has no interest in leaving the field of teaching.

Her parents were part of the first generation of high school graduates from Goliad, Texas, the town where she was raised. Although they never had the opportunity to attend college, they instilled the importance of a good education in Abigail. She began her career as a tutor of algebra, offering her peers assistance free of charge.

Now a high school algebra and geometry teacher, Abigail Hernandez continues her tireless efforts to educate those around her by encouraging her students to speak out and take risks. She is currently being honored as the Lehman High School Teacher of the Year.

I am honored to recognize the accomplishments of such an industrious and hardworking teacher. Her passion for teaching enriches the lives of her whole community.

HAIL TO CLAIRE E. SANTORO, PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding young American, Claire E. Santoro, of University City, Missouri, who was recently designated as a Presidential Scholar. This honor distinguishes Ms. Santoro as one of our Nation's most accomplished high school seniors.

Presidential scholars are selected for their accomplishments in academics and the arts, as well as for their leadership skills, community service and civic contributions. Seventeen-year-old Ms. Santoro is among 141 presidential scholars who will be honored next month in a ceremony in Washington, DC.

Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Santoro has played varsity field hockey and soccer for four years. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the mock trial team and is in charge of the dance chorus for her school's spring musical.

This spring Claire will graduate from University City High School, in St. Louis County. Next fall she will attend Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, where she intends to study educational policy and environmental issues. I have also been informed that her academic success has been inspired by a

most important teacher, Ms. Roberta L. Steward.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to commend Ms. Santoro on her many fine achievements. By all accounts, she is a major source of pride to herself, her family, her school and the residents of the 1st Congressional District. I wish her every continued success in the future.

TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE POOLE

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to learn recently of the passing of Mr. George Poole, a distinguished senior manager with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Insurance Service. VA's Insurance Service has long been recognized as one of the finest-managed organizations within the federal government, due in no small measure to Mr. Poole and his commitment to our servicemembers, veterans, and their survivors.

Few Americans can match George's years of devoted service to country. He began his public career by serving in the United States Air Force from 1964 through 1968. Following his honorable discharge, he received bachelor and law degrees, taking full advantage of the VA-administered GI Bill. Who can doubt that his military service and studies made possible by the GI Bill inspired him to pursue a career dedicated to helping fellow veterans. This dedication translated into a distinguished 28-year career with the VA's Insurance Service, where he served from 1977 until his death April 27th.

While it is difficult to highlight just one of his many accomplishments, surely his creation and development of the Insurance Service's "Special Outreach" effort warrants particular mention. This outreach involves matching insurance participation and disability reports from various sources to identify recently separated, seriously injured veterans who have not taken advantage of VA's life insurance programs. Based on the efforts of George and his staff, over \$96 million in insurance proceeds have been provided to veterans' survivors. Few among us have had such a dramatic and positive impact on the lives of so many others.

Mr. Poole was always available to provide invaluable research, data, and program explanations to the members and staff of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs—often on short notice. As such, his expertise and professional manner were essential to the Committee when crafting bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, the subcommittee with jurisdiction over VA's insurance programs, I extend my sincere condolences to Mr. Poole's wife, Denise; his two sons, Todd and Corey; his granddaughter, Madeline; and his equally dedicated coworkers at the VA Regional Office and Insurance Center in Philadelphia.