

RECOGNIZING THE JAVITS-WAGNER-O'DAY PROGRAM AND THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program, often referred to as JWOD. This important federal program provides needed employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In fact, JWOD provides more than 40,000 Americans who are blind, or who have other severe disabilities, with the job skills and training necessary to earn good wages and benefits, allowing them to gain greater independence and quality of life.

People with disabilities are often underserved in this nation. They traditionally face an unemployment rate of 70 percent, and thus rely heavily upon social support programs. JWOD empowers these Americans by helping them enjoy full participation in their community and marketing their JWOD skills into other public or private sector jobs. This, in turn, increases their independence and self-esteem.

The National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH work with local nonprofit organizations nationwide to create new employment opportunities for people with blindness or severe disabilities. Such efforts benefit my constituency in San Antonio, Texas. Demonstrating a superlative federal-private sector partnership, NIB, NISH, and local nonprofits, such as San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, enhance opportunities for economic and personal independence for people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities, primarily through creating, sustaining, and improving employment.

Through the JWOD program, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind provides employment opportunities and training for over 5,000 people each year with visual and other severe disabilities. This enables them to lead more productive and meaningful lives, support their families, and gain important work experience.

On behalf of people with disabilities, I recognize and honor the important contributions of JWOD and the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind. Their tireless work to enhance employment opportunities for people with visual and other severe disabilities does a great service to the city of San Antonio and its citizens.

TRIBUTE TO HOUR OF POWER
FULL GOSPEL TABERNACLE, INC.

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hour of Power Full Gospel Tabernacle, Inc. of Farrell, Pennsylvania on its 30th anniversary.

On Saturday July 1, 2006 the Hour of Power Full Gospel Tabernacle, Inc. will hold its 30-year anniversary celebration at the Shenango Valley Senior Center in Hermitage, Pennsylvania. At the celebration the church will also hold a Recognition Banquet.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Hour of Power Full Gospel Tabernacle, Inc. on its 30th Anniversary. It is an honor to represent the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

HONORING THE CITY OF MERIDEN,
CONNECTICUT ON THE OCCASION
OF ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the City of Meriden, Connecticut, on the occasion of its 200th Anniversary on June 16, 2006.

This city was known as the North Farms area of nearby Wallingford until 1806, when it was officially recognized as the Town of Meriden. The 1800s saw the beginnings of what would become a torrent of manufacturing activity in the city. Belts, hoops, pewter, guns, cutlery, nails, buttons, lamps, ivory combs, tin ware, organs, coffee grinders, and silver—the product that would lend its luster to Meriden's reputation as the "Silver City"—were all manufactured here. Stately mansions were constructed as manufacturers prospered. As the thriving city's population grew to over 24,000 in 1900, the Castle Craig was dedicated in Hubbard Park and the Curtis Memorial Library opened soon thereafter.

In the 1920s, the airport was built and the downtown traffic tower erected. Although the world wars and the depression brought hardships to the city as well as to the rest of the country, in March 1944, Meriden was proudly honored as "The Nation's Ideal War Community" for its industrial and patriotic contributions to the Nation.

During the mid-1900s, some of the city's older businesses, including International Silver, moved or closed. Urban redevelopment changed the look of some sections, but the "pleasant valley"—possibly the ancient meaning of the name Meriden—endured. Newly arriving immigrants added their own energy to the growing town. Civic groups grew in numbers and in service; daffodils, long planted at Hubbard Park, became the city's official flower with the celebration of the inaugural Daffodil Festival in April 1978.

In recent years, Meriden's downtown has undergone a renaissance, as a new hospital was erected and many corporate headquarters relocated to the east side of town on Research Parkway. City manufacturing firms produce electronics, nuclear instruments, automotive devices, plastics, gaskets, communications equipment, filters, vaccines, jewelry, food, candy, pewter, tools, and machines. The city is proud of its past as it eagerly embraces its future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the city of Meriden in the United States House of Representatives, and I extend my best wishes to the city and its citizens for another 200 years of prosperity.

IN RECOGNITION OF HAYLEY
HEATH FOR OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH
NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to extend my congratulations to Hayley Heath, a student in my district whose academic achievement in her National History Day project will be shared with the Nation.

National History Day encourages students to examine the past in order to create a better future. The students' projects allow for creativity in displays through exhibits, documentaries, and performances as they focus on a specific event or time period in history. In shaping America's future leaders, educators share a certain responsibility in allowing young people the opportunity to thoroughly examine and analyze the subject of history.

Hayley Heath, a student at the PATS Center in Pensacola, Florida, is one student who is seizing this opportunity. Her National History Day project, entitled "Forcing Justice: James Meredith Takes a Stand against Segregation at Ole Miss," won her great recognition at the district and State levels. Hayley was chosen as one of the twelve students selected from over thousands of entries across the Nation to display her National History Day exhibit in the White House Visitor's Center on June 15, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to a student who serves as a shining example of the hope we invest in the future of our Nation. I congratulate Hayley for her achievement and the recognition she will receive, and commend her for all of her hard work and dedication. I join with the citizens of Florida's First District in wishing her the best in all her future endeavors and thanking her teachers for their guidance as they continue to strive for academic excellence.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 850

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, in the course of my excused absence from official duties on Thursday, June 8, 2006, I regrettably missed the vote on the question of consideration of H. Res. 850, providing for consideration of the bill H.R. 5252, the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006. A point of order arose on the grounds that the bill included unfunded mandates as defined by the Congressional Budget Office, CBO.

It was argued that based on supposed inter-governmental mandates identified by CBO, the threshold required under the rule for identifying the unfunded mandate had been met, and thus was subject to a point of order. CBO stated that in implementation of the COPE Act, new entrants along with incumbent cable

providers, while engaged in a national franchise as proposed by the bill would be required to pay each franchise authority six percent of their gross revenues as a fee to support use of local rights-of-way and local Public Education Government channels. This payment was seen as an unfunded mandate.

However, under all franchise agreements across the country, companies are required to pay this type of fee in some form. It is not something newly mandated. I believe that the bill merely continues, and in most estimates, could exceed, the current flow of money from cable providers to local franchise authorities. In doing this, I believe the bill's authors intended to make sure that cities would not lose revenue they counted on from local franchise agreements, and I fully support that cause.

Due to this, I would have supported the opportunity to consider H.R. 5252, so that a true debate could continue on the underlying provisions of the bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I was inadvertently detained and missed rollcall votes No. 251–254. Had I been present I would have voted “aye” on each.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 4939, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND HURRICANE RECOVERY, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 12, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this defense supplemental without hesitation, but with a number of concerns.

As I've said in the past, I opposed the resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq because I thought President Bush's decision to begin military action in Iraq was premature. I thought it would have been better to allow more time for other measures, including coercive inspections, to accomplish the goal of disarming Saddam Hussein. However, Congress—by adopting the resolution authorizing the use of force—left it to the President to decide if and when military action would begin.

But with our troops still in the field, actively engaged in operations that Congress has authorized, we have an obligation to fund those operations. I won't make our soldiers the victims of my regrets by failing to support this bill to provide them what they need to carry out those operations.

It's too bad the Republican leadership evidently didn't see the urgency in getting this funding to our troops to pay for key equipment and benefits. The president requested this funding back in February, but somehow the Republican leadership couldn't get it done until

now. In the interim, the Army was forced to cut back on ordering spare parts and supplies and freeze civilian hires, among other constraints.

So I'm glad we're finally focusing on this legislation today, which includes funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as funding to train and equip the military and police forces of those countries. I'm pleased that the conference report funds more up-armored Humvees, provides nearly \$2 billion to procure and develop countermeasures to prevent improvised explosive device attacks on our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and funds the recently enhanced \$100,000 death benefit for soldiers' families.

I'm also pleased that—more than 9 months after Hurricane Katrina struck—the conference report includes funding for levee improvements and for Community Development Block Grants for the Gulf Coast States. The report also includes important funding for pandemic flu preparedness and for border security.

I do have strong concerns about some things that are in this conference report and some things that were left out.

I am disappointed that it does not include the additional funds that the Senate approved for work to reduce the increased danger of severe wildfires in Colorado forests caused by prolonged drought and insect infestations.

After the Senate acted, I wrote the House conferees to point out that these factors have raised to emergency levels the risk to our communities. I noted that hazardous-fuel reduction projects can reduce that risk, and our State has hazardous fuels projects waiting to be implemented but lacking adequate funding to do so. Unfortunately, the conferees did not include in the conference report the Senate-passed increase to the National Forest System to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires and mitigate the effects of widespread insect infestation.

I am also disappointed that the conference report does not include language prohibiting permanent military bases in Iraq. The House-passed bill contained a provision that I supported—H. Amdt. 750—which would ensure that no funds in the bill would be used to enter into a base agreement with the government of Iraq. The Senate-passed bill also contained a similar amendment—S. Amdt. 3855—which would prohibit funds to establish permanent military bases in Iraq or to exercise control over the oil infrastructure or oil resources of Iraq.

But the conference report includes neither version of this language, which I find baffling, since the clear will of both bodies was expressed through the passage of these amendments. Policymakers and experts across the political spectrum agree that the U.S. should make clear that it does not seek a permanent military presence in Iraq. GEN. George Casey has testified that gradually lowering the visibility of U.S. troops will remove one of the elements fueling the insurgency. And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has testified that, “We have no desire to have our forces permanently in that country. We have no plans or no discussions under way to have permanent bases in that country.” I believe that Congress should have joined the administration in affirming this principle to send a clear signal to the Iraqi people that we fully support their efforts to establish democracy and exercise sovereignty.

Finally, I believe the administration must begin to take responsibility for the full cost of the war in Iraq and consider these costs through the regular appropriations process. With the enactment of this supplemental, Defense Department spending for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq will reach \$400 billion, with the majority of that provided for Iraq. Even though we are now more than 3 years into the conflict, virtually all of this money has been provided for Iraq as “emergency” funding and has not been offset. But there is no “emergency” here. So much of the costs are predictable. Instead, by funding this war through supplementals, the Bush administration avoids having to make tough choices—like raising taxes or making deep spending cuts. The American people deserve greater candor from the administration about both the predictable costs as well as the anticipated benefits of our undertakings in Iraq. I've attached a May editorial from the Rocky Mountain News that amplifies this point.

Nonetheless, as I said, I will vote for this bill without hesitation because its prompt passage is needed not just to support our men and women in uniform as they fight, but also to continue to lay the foundation for the harder mission of stabilizing Iraq.

[From the Rocky Mountain News, May 4, 2006]

A CRAZY WAY TO FUND THE WARS: IRAQ SPENDING IS NO LONGER AN ‘EMERGENCY’

A congressional emergency spending measure is meant to be a quick response to sudden, unexpected and generally one-time events, the Gulf Coast hurricanes being an excellent example. The emergency bills are handled outside the regular budget process and under much looser rules.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, although obviously serious, hardly qualify as emergencies in the normal sense. Yet that is how the Bush administration and Congress insist on funding them, even though we're in our fifth year on one and fourth year on the other.

The result is that Congress has a poor grip on the wars' costs and how they fit in with other competing budget priorities. And the process has allowed Congress to avoid the question of how we are going to pay for those wars.

The Senate took advantage of the urgency of the latest emergency funding bill for Iraq, Afghanistan and hurricane relief to load it up with money for Hawaiian sugar growers, a Northrop Grumman shipyard, riverbank erosion in California and farm relief, among other largesse. A \$92 billion bill is now around \$108 billion.

The wars are not going away. The president himself has indicated we are likely to be in Iraq at least another 3½ years. Its annual cost has risen from \$51 billion in 2003 to \$102 billion this year, and the meter is running at about \$9 billion a month. In a few weeks the total will surpass \$320 billion, and Congress' analysts estimate that even if troop withdrawals begin this year, a best-case scenario, the costs of a phase-out in Iraq and Afghanistan will run an additional \$371 billion.

As was done in previous wars, the expected cost of Iraq and Afghanistan should be submitted as part of the regular annual federal budget, and Congress should give it the regular line-by-line scrutiny it gives every other part of the budget. This might have prevented the squandering in Iraq of the vast sums meant for reconstruction.

Congressional researchers complain that the Pentagon has refused to give them data