

the United States. The bill authorizes \$4.35 billion in critical hurricane research funding to help scientists study and better understand how hurricanes form and intensify. This bill also provides enhanced information on early warning systems, infrastructure durability standards, and hurricane tracking and prediction capabilities.

The National Hurricane Research Initiative Act of 2007 takes the general recommendations of the National Science Board and assembles the expertise of the nation's science and engineering experts to gain a better understanding of hurricane prediction and intensity. Under the bill, research is directed to further develop communications emergency networks for government agencies and non-government entities to improve disaster response and recovery. This bill also establishes a National Infrastructure Data Base to develop standards and establish public policy to better understand hurricanes and tropical storms.

Madam Speaker, our nation, and my State of Florida in particular, are all too familiar with the immense damage hurricanes can inflict. When faced with strong hurricane predictions for this year, it could not be more a more appropriate time for Congress to act. We need a forward thinking approach that collects and utilizes comprehensive and improved hurricane research. My legislation would do just that. By investing in scientific research now, before the hurricanes strike, we will be able to better plan and mitigate these disasters, saving infrastructure and lives.

I ask for my colleagues' support and urge the House Leadership to bring this legislation to the floor for its swift consideration.

CHRISTOPHER RYAN COOMES

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, 11-year-old Christopher Ryan Coomes, or Ryan, as he is more familiarly called, is an outstanding young man. A native of Texas, born in Houston and raised in the suburb of Spring, Texas, Ryan lives a normal, average American life with his father, Tim, mother, Brenda, big sister, Candance, and little brother, Chase.

Ryan is finishing the 5th Grade at Salyers Elementary in Spring, Texas; however, he is no ordinary 5th grader because Ryan has a gift for excelling in school. In December 2005, when Ryan was a 4th grader, he competed in the Salyers Elementary Spelling Bee. Spelling the word, "walrus," Ryan was named the champion of the spelling competition. When he competed the following year, in 2006, Ryan beat out 30 other participants and would-be spelling bee champion hopefuls to win by spelling the word "staccato"—which is a musical term, meaning to cut short or crisply. Ryan also competed in the Spring ISD District Spelling Bee competition in February of 2007.

Spelling is not the only thing Ryan excels in. Ryan is also an outstanding student, who has been and is on the honor roll at Salyers Elementary. His favorite subjects are history (which also happens to be mine), science, and math. While most kids scheme to get out of going to school in the morning, Ryan eagerly gets up and goes. Currently, he is trying to

maintain a perfect attendance record for the 2006–2007 school year. Ryan has a love of reading and is very skilled at writing, having his work continually used by his teacher as an example. He participates in several extra-curricular activities, such as the Chess Club and the Safety Patrol.

Already at 11, Ryan has set goals for himself: He wants to make Eagle Scout—an honor only 5 percent of Boy Scouts ever achieve; he wants to attend college at either Texas A&M, Rice, or an Ivy League college (Yale); he wants to visit England and see Stonehenge.

Ryan has been a long time member of the Cub Scouts, which is a division of the Boy Scouts. The Cub Scouts were formed for boys in the first through fifth grades and was established to promote character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. Boys involved with Cub Scouts are required to go through 5 different award levels of the Cub Scouts before they are promoted to the highest award level, Arrow of Light.

To be awarded the Arrow of Light, the Cub Scout must demonstrate the specific skills and activities of each of the previous Cub Scout levels. The Cub Scout is also required to learn the Scout Promise and Scout Law. Finally, the Cub Scout is required to attend one Boy Scout Troop meeting and one Boy Scout Troop Activity. Ryan Coomes has met all of these requirements and on March 3, 2007, he was awarded the Arrow of Light for the Cub Scouts of America, Pack 355.

Madam Speaker, Ryan Coomes is a remarkable young man. An honor student, spelling bee champion, and Cub Scout recipient of the Arrow of Light award, Ryan is an example to his fellow students, his fellow citizens of Spring, and his fellow Texans. We need more young people like Ryan. I congratulate Ryan on being awarded the Arrow of Light for the Cub Scouts and I am proud to pay him this tribute today.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING ARMY SPECIALIST ROBERT J. DIXON OF MINNEAPOLIS

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Army Specialist Robert J. Dixon of Minneapolis who died on May 6th in Baghdad. His funeral service occurred on Thursday May 18th in Minneapolis and I would like to read the following May 11th, 2007 Associated Press Article about Army Specialist Dixon into the record:

A Minneapolis soldier who graduated from high school in Gladwin and was just three months into his tour in Iraq was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle, the military said.

Army Spc. Robert J. Dixon, 27, died May 6 in Baghdad, the Defense Department said Wednesday. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kan.

Dixon was born in Portland, Ore., but moved to Gladwin in 1992, said Irene Dixon, who said she and her husband Daniel were

Robert Dixon's legal guardians. In high school, Robert was a running back for the football team, set the school record in the 100-meter dash and also wrestled, his mother said.

"He especially enjoyed family activities," Irene Dixon told The Associated Press on Thursday. "We did a lot of family activities. He hunted, he paint-balled, he snowboarded. We went camping, snowmobiling.

"If you ever knew Bobby, you'd love him. Every time we got a report from a teacher it couldn't have been any better. We got a call from a commander who said everybody there (in Iraq) loved him."

After graduating from high school, Dixon attended Olivet College for a year and later was briefly enrolled at Northwood University in Midland.

Dixon joined the Army in the summer of 2005, shortly after he moved to Minneapolis in search of work, his mother said.

"He wanted to further his education, and he always had a desire to be in the Army," she said. "He had planned to make it his career."

Dixon said she last heard from her son last Friday, when he called during a funeral for her uncle to express his condolences.

Robert Dixon is survived by his wife of 1½ years, Rusty Rose-Dixon, and two children. Funeral arrangements were incomplete but were likely to take place at the Gladwin High School gymnasium.

"I can't even convey to you how we're going to miss not having him here," his mother said. "But I also know that he is a Christian and he is with the Lord now."

Madam Speaker, Specialist Dixon served our country, Minnesota and the 5th District with incredible distinction and made the ultimate sacrifice. I know I speak for you, the entire House of Representatives, and our country in sending my deepest condolences to Specialist Dixon's family and loved ones in their time of grief.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill. (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this bill.

I applaud Chairman SKELTON for his leadership in guiding this bill to the floor today. He and Ranking Member HUNTER have done a tremendous job, and they have been ably supported by the expert staff of our committee.

I'm grateful to Chairman SKELTON for working with me to include things important for Colorado, including limits on how the Army can pursue possible expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in Colorado. I agree with Senator SALAZAR and others in the Colorado delegation that any expansion, if it takes place at all, must be conducted in a way that it is a win-win situation for the Army and for Colorado and that any expansion plan should not

involve condemnation of private land. My proposal will shine a necessary caution light before the Army charges forward, and force the Army to do what it has so far failed to do—that is, to make a compelling case for why the proposed expansion is necessary to meet the training needs of our soldiers in the 21st Century.

Other provisions I offered in the bill include: Funding for a new squadron operations facility for the Colorado Air National Guard; promoting agreement between the Air Force and the city of Pueblo about flight operations at the Pueblo airport; urging the Defense Department to use on-site disposal of chemical weapons stockpiled at the Pueblo Chemical Depot; asking the Army to track pilots who train at the High-Altitude Aviation Training School in Eagle, Colorado; reporting on opportunities for leveraging Defense Department funds with States' funds to prevent disruption in the event of electric grid or pipeline failures and encouraging the Defense Department to leverage Energy Savings Performance Contracts with Energy Conservation Investment Program funds to provide additional opportunity for renewable energy projects; and naming a housing facility at Fort Carson in honor of our former colleague Joel Hefley.

I am also pleased that the Committee adopted two of my amendments, including one to repeal a provision adopted last year that makes it easier for the president to federalize the National Guard for domestic law enforcement purposes during emergencies. By repealing this, my amendment restores the role of the Governors with regard to this subject. My other amendment will continue the office of the Ombudsman that assists people claiming benefits under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) and expands its authority.

Mr. Chairman, this bill rightly focuses on our military's readiness needs.

After 5 years at war, both the active duty and reserve forces are stretched to their limits. The bill will provide what's needed to respond, including a substantial Strategic Readiness Fund, adding funds for National Guard equipment and training, and establishing a Defense Readiness Production Board to mobilize the industrial base to address equipment shortfalls.

It also provides important funds for the Base Realignment and Closure process, including \$62 million to assist communities expected to absorb large numbers of personnel as a result of the BRAC decision. This funding is especially important to Colorado, given that Fort Carson in Colorado Springs will add 10,000 soldiers and will be home to 25,000 troops by 2009.

The bill provides substantial resources to improve protection of our troops, including additional funds for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, body armor, and up-armored Humvees for our troops in the field. The bill enlarges the Army and Marine Corps, consistent with the Tauscher-Udall Army expansion bill in the last Congress. And it will provide for a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for service members, boost funding for the Defense Health Program, and prohibit increasing TRICARE and pharmacy user fee increases.

The bill incorporates provisions from the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, which recently passed the House and was driven by

the revelations of mistreatment and mismanagement at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. These provisions establish new requirements to provide the people, training, and oversight needed to ensure high-quality care and efficient administrative processing at Walter Reed and throughout the active duty military services. The bill also establishes a Military Mental Health Initiative to coordinate all mental health research and development within the Defense Department, and establishes a Traumatic Brain Injury Initiative to allow emerging technologies and treatments to compete for funding.

Given the increased use of the National Guard and Reserves in recent years, the bill gives important new authorities to the National Guard to fulfill its expanded role, including authorizing a fourth star for the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, making the National Guard Bureau a joint activity of the Department of Defense, and creating a bipartisan Council of Governors to advise the president on how best to use the National Guard for civil support missions. The bill also requires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to consider how to incorporate more National Guard and Reserve personnel into positions at Northern Command, based in Colorado.

I'm pleased that the bill fully supports the goals of the Department of Energy non-proliferation programs and the Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction program, consistent with the 9-11 Commission recommendations. The bill also slows development of a Reliable Replacement Warhead and the construction of a new plutonium production facility, and establishes a bipartisan commission to evaluate U.S. strategic posture for the future, including the role that nuclear weapons should play in our national security strategy.

I also want to mention funding for missile defense in the bill. The bill increases missile defense funding for systems that address current needs and vulnerabilities, while reducing funding for less mature and higher risk systems. The cuts in missile defense programs in the bill have been cause for concern among some on the other side of the aisle. But the bill funds 93 cents of every dollar of the president's missile defense request, so the cuts are far from extreme. It fully funds the budget request for the Patriot PAC-3 missile, the Ground Based Missile Defense System, and THAAD development and deployment, and adds funding for Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense. But it makes reductions to the Airborne Laser program and funding for the 3rd BMD Site which the Administration has proposed building in Eastern Europe.

Importantly, the bill provides for an independent study to examine the political, technical, operational, force structure, and budgetary aspects of the proposed European missile defense deployment; an independent study to examine the future roles and missions of the Missile Defense Agency; a 2 year extension of the requirement for GAO to annually assess the missile defense program; and assurance that the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation has access to all MDA operational test evaluation information.

In my view, the bill strikes the right balance with regard to missile defense. I did not support the amendment by Rep. FRANKS (R-AZ) to increase missile defense funds because I believe the Committee takes a better approach in its bill. Likewise, I did not support

the amendment offered by Rep. TIERNEY (D-MA) to decrease missile defense funds because I thought it went too far in the other direction. There are emerging and real, near-term threats facing the Nation, the warfighter, and our allies that we need to be able to counter, so I think it would be irresponsible to terminate the longer-term missile defense programs, as Rep. TIERNEY's amendment proposed to do.

Finally but no less importantly, the bill requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a detailed report on the implementation of the Joint Campaign Plan for Iraq, on national reconciliation efforts on the part of the Iraqi government, and on metrics to measure American efforts in Iraq, based on assessments by Gen. David Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker. The bill also requires the Secretary to produce a report outlining the direction of U.S. activities in Afghanistan along with indicators of progress, and the bill establishes a Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

Mr. Chairman, the bill we are considering today does an excellent job of balancing the need to sustain our current warfighting abilities with the need to prepare for the next threat to our national security. It is critical that we are able to meet the operational demands of today even as we continue to prepare our men and women in uniform to be the best trained and equipped force in the world.

This is a good bill, a carefully drafted and bipartisan bill, and I urge its passage.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CREATE-21

HON. JOHN BARROW

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Mr. BARROW. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce CREATE-21, a measure aimed at "Creating Research, Extension, and Teaching Excellence for the 21st Century."

America has arrived at a critical juncture with respect to the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences. Ahead of us are two paths. The first is the path of the status quo. It is not a bad path—after all, it has provided the Nation and the world with bountiful and affordable food and numerous other benefits. No, this path is not bad; it's just not as good as it should be.

The other path—the CREATE-21 path—recognizes that the status quo, when it comes to the Federal-State Partnership in the Food and Agricultural Sciences (as that term is broadly defined by statute), is no longer sustainable and thus no longer acceptable. This Nation and the whole planet face both daunting challenges and tremendous opportunities that will require structural and funding improvements. Here are some examples:

Challenges such as the effects of changing climate on farms and forests cannot be solved with an inadequate USDA science organization and woefully inadequate funding.

Opportunities for replacing a substantial portion of U.S. petroleum consumption through increased production of renewable fuels (without raising grain and livestock prices unduly) cannot be attained without a major increase in funding for basic research and applied research and "integrated" efforts (where research is combined with education and technology transfer through extension agents).