

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).

Efforts to boost the U.S. specialty crops and organic food industries will not come to fruition in a timely manner—thereby threatening America's world leadership positions—if part of the responsibility for research continues to lie within one USDA agency and part in another, with inadequate coordination between the two!

Problems such as the twin (and related) epidemics of obesity and diabetes cannot be overcome with Federal research, education, and extension efforts divided among two USDA agencies (and some 105 land-grant universities) unless the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics has under his immediate supervision a national program staff that can provide overarching vision, guidance, and leadership for those two agencies.

Madam Speaker, these are only four examples—among dozens that I could have chosen—but they make the case for the comprehensive approach embodied in CREATE-21. They demonstrate that the opportunities and challenges we face demand both an improved organizational structure and enhanced funding.

When the House Committee on Agriculture sits down in the next few weeks to develop the 2007 Farm Bill, I am hopeful that the foundational precepts and specific provisions embodied in the legislation I introduce today will form the basis for the Committee's Research Title. Therefore, I want to take a few minutes to highlight three key provisions:

CREATE-21 will increase planning and implementation across intramural (e.g., ARS and ERS) and extramural (e.g., land-grant) facilities through a single national program staff working directly for the USDA Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics.

CREATE-21 will also establish a new National Institutes for Food and Agriculture (replacing the current Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service) to provide continuing and expanded support to America's land-grant and other universities and related institutions.

Finally, CREATE-21 will double authorized funding for the food, agriculture, and natural resource research, teaching, and extension programs currently administered by Cooperative State Research, Education, and Economics Service in order to address the enormous opportunities and daunting challenges that face the country and the greater global community.

Besides these distinctive elements, CREATE-21 has three other unique attributes:

CREATE-21 will strengthen the land-grant system with its integrated, National network of State Agricultural Experiment Stations, more than 3,000 Cooperative Extension offices, and universities in all 50 states, DC, and the U.S. territories.

CREATE-21 will augment "integrated" USDA funding programs so that many more grants which integrate research with extension and/or education are awarded through competitive, peer-reviewed procedures.

Lastly, CREATE-21 will bolster university capacity, especially for the historically black (1890), tribal (1994), insular area, and small 1862 land-grant universities and members of the American Association of State Colleges of Agriculture and Renewable Resources (AASCARR).

In addition to these provisions, the legislation I am introducing today contains many

other amendments to USDA research, extension, and teaching statutes, reflecting the best thinking of a broad cross-section of America's land grant community. These provisions include critical updates that will enhance, among other things, the basic programs providing sustenance for the 1890 land-grant institutions and critical food, health, and nutritional information to low-income families and youth through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. In fact, this legislation addresses ALL of the Farm Bill priorities outlined by the Presidents of the 1890 colleges.

While I support the key tenets of this legislation and am pleased to introduce it in the House, we all recognize that difficult problems require consensus-based solutions and I remain open to suggestions. I look forward to working closely with my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee as we develop a Research Title for the 2007 Farm Bill that truly has at its core mission: "Creating Research, Extension, and Teaching Excellence for the 21st Century."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, on Monday and Tuesday, May 14 and 15, 2007, I was attending to personal family matters in the District. Consequently, I missed Rollcall Votes No. 342, "To extend the District of Columbia College Access Act;" No. 343, "Supporting the Goals and Ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims;" No. 344, "Recognizing National Americorps Week;" No. 345, "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin;" No. 346, "Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act of 2007;" No. 347, "John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007;" No. 348, "COPS Improvement Act of 2007;" and No. 349, "Safe American Roads Act of 2007."

If present, I would have voted "aye" on all matters.

THE AFFORDABLE GAS PRICE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Affordable Gas Price Act. This legislation reduces gas prices by reforming government policies that artificially inflate the price of gas. As I need not remind my colleagues, the American people are being hard hit by skyrocketing gas prices. In some parts of the country, gas prices have risen to as much as \$4 per gallon.

This increase in the price of gas threatens our already fragile economy and diminishes the quality of life for all Americans. One industry that is particularly hard hit is the trucking industry. The effects of high gas prices on the trucking industry will be reflected in increased costs for numerous consumer goods, thus further harming American consumers.

Unfortunately, many proposals to address the problem of higher energy prices involve increasing government interference in the market through policies such as price controls. These big government solutions will, at best, prove ineffective and, at worst, bring back the fuel shortages and gas lines of the seventies.

Instead of expanding government, Congress should repeal federal laws and policies that raise the price of gas, either directly through taxes or indirectly through regulations that discourage the development of new fuel sources. This is why my legislation repeals the federal moratorium on offshore drilling and allows oil exploration in the ANWR reserve in Alaska. My bill also ensures that the National Environmental Policy Act's environmental impact statement requirement will no longer be used as a tool to force refiners to waste valuable time and capital on nuisance litigation. The Affordable Gas Price Act also provides tax incentives to encourage investment in new refineries.

Federal fuel taxes are a major part of gasoline's cost. The Affordable Gas Price Act suspends the federal gasoline tax any time the average gas prices exceeds \$3.00 per gallon. During the suspension, the federal government will have a legal responsibility to ensure the federal highway trust fund remains funded. My bill also raises the amount of mileage reimbursement not subject to taxes, and, during times of high oil prices, provides the same mileage reimbursement benefit to charity and medical organizations as provided to businesses.

Misguided and outdated trade policies are also artificially raising the price of gas. For instance, even though Russia and Kazakhstan allow their citizens the right and opportunity to emigrate, they are still subject to Jackson-Vanik sanctions, even though Jackson-Vanik was a reaction to the Soviet Union's highly restrictive emigration policy. Eliminating Jackson-Vanik's threat of trade-restricting sanctions would increase the United States' access to oil supplies from non-Arab countries. Thus, my bill terminates the application of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to Russia and Kazakhstan, allowing Americans to enjoy the benefits of free trade with these oil-producing nations.

Finally, the Affordable Gas Price Act creates a federal study on how the abandonment of the gold standard and the adoption of freely floating currencies are affecting the price of oil. It is no coincidence that oil prices first became an issue shortly after President Nixon unilaterally severed the dollar's last connection to gold. The system of fiat money makes consumers vulnerable to inflation and to constant fluctuations in the prices of essential goods such as oil.

In conclusion Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Affordable Gas Price Act and end government policies that increase the cost of gasoline.

JAY EAGEN'S RETIREMENT

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jay Eagen on the occasion of