

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, June 21, 2007, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 536. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye” on agreeing to the McGovern of Massachusetts Amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 553, H. Amdt. 367 offered by Representative LOWEY to H.R. 2764, the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and unable to vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted “no.”

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the McGovern-Lewis amendment. It is time to close the School of the Americas, or WHINSEC. After so many decades of human rights abuses and threats to democracy, the U.S. should not be giving a privileged position to Latin American militaries by maintaining a special school in the United States just for them. Nearly every month in Latin America, a perpetrator of human rights crimes, corruption, or drug-trafficking is found to have attended the School of the Americas. There's a reason that the SOA has been called the “School of the Atrocities.”

WHINSEC, as well as current U.S. foreign policies, are making the United States lose ground with the people of Latin America. Our relations with Latin America are at their lowest ebb in several decades. The Abu Ghraib scandal, the doctrine of preemptive war, secret prisons and the debate over detentions in Guantanamo Bay are reported widely and critically in Latin American media. I have traveled to Latin America and seen for myself that the WHINSEC, as the direct heir of the School of the Americas, is viewed throughout Latin America as a symbol of the U.S. priority of strengthening brutal military regimes instead of encouraging development.

Suspending part of the aid to the WHINSEC would show that the United States wants to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. Such a move would be a significant and positive step forward in repairing our damaged image and credibility. It would also be a blow to those who have strengthened themselves politically by accusing the United States of hypocrisy on human rights and democracy. A more cooperative, less unilateral foreign policy, including the suspension of funding for WHINSEC, will clearly demonstrate our respect for international human rights standards and would help the United States regain influence and build connections in Latin America.

The United States should work with Latin American nations on common solutions to common problems, and our programs should invest in helping Latin American communities help themselves. Instead of providing funds to train human rights abusers, we should provide assistance for clean water, vaccinations for children, micro-credit, technical assistance for small farmers and small business, shelter for refugees and generous disaster relief to build goodwill with our neighbors.

Just last month Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Oscar Arias, President of Costa Rica, announced that Costa Rica would no longer send its police to the WHINSEC for training. We should join Costa Rica (and other Latin American countries who have withdrawn their police from training at WHINSEC) in changing course by withdrawing funding from this criminal training ground.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL ROGER P. LEMPKE

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise in honor of Major General Roger P. Lempke, the Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard since December of 2000. Earlier this morning, General Lempke announced his retirement. I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with General Lempke for a number of years. He is a true Nebraskan and the very definition of a great American.

A graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, General Lempke became a pilot and flew more than 1600 flying hours primarily as an instructor pilot. He has earned the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, and the Nebraska National Guard National Defense Service Medal among many other awards and decorations throughout his years of service to our country.

General Lempke served all of Nebraska and the people of the United States as Commandant of the State's military forces, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and as President of the Adjutants General Association of the United States.

Time and time again, our State has needed his leadership when faced with a natural disaster and time and time again, General Lempke has risen to the occasion. He has served his country with dedication and honor during a time of war. The Nebraska National Guard and the United States Armed Forces

have been made better through the tireless efforts of General Lempke, and I thank him for his service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, June 21, 2007, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 535. Had I been present, I would have voted “no” on agreeing to the Boustany of Louisiana amendment.

SBA WOMEN'S BUSINESS PROGRAMS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2397, to reauthorize the women's entrepreneurial development programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

I would first begin by applauding my esteemed colleague from Oklahoma, Congresswoman MARY FALLIN, for her work on, and undertaking of this important piece of legislation. The SBA Women's Business Programs Act of 2007 will help to restore the goal of the Federal Government to award grants to Women's Business Centers, originally operating as a non-profit organizations in conjunction with institutions of higher learning. This bill will also restore the balance of funding between new and existing Women's Business Centers, originally envisioned at the start of the program.

Women Business Centers (WBCs) are community-based projects that are funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration through grants that require matching funds. They provide long-term business skills training, counseling, and mentoring to benefit emerging and existing small businesses that are owned and controlled by women, especially those who are socially or economically disadvantaged. Its goal is to continually ensure that those WBCs that are indeed serving an unmet need in their underserved communities remain sustained. They also work to provide valuable technical assistance to women entrepreneurs.

The SBA's Women's Business Programs Act of 2007 authorizes the National Women's Business Council to conduct annual studies on problems hindering the success of women entrepreneurs and to submit reports to the President and the House and Senate Small Business committees. By offering a three-tiered system of funding and lower caps on spending for older business centers, SBA hopes to make certain that a balanced percentage of the funding is used to support both new and existing business centers. This system will offer assistance to newly established centers, while slowly reducing the older centers dependency on federal grant funds.

Grants awarded to these business centers in their first 5 years were awarded with the intention that after this 5-year period had ended,

the center would be financially self-sustaining. These grants were not intended to be a source of permanent funding. With that said, one of the main objectives of the SBA has been to provide direction and resources to those desiring to start and expand their small business firms.

As once stated by the House Small Business Committee Chairwoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ, “today’s small business owners are leading the way when it comes to job creation and economic development in communities nationwide. [H.R. 2397] will ensure that the needs of the drivers of our economy—small businesses—are met.” This legislation dedicates resources to strengthen centers and ensure stability in the program.

I rise today to support, as well as to encourage my other colleagues to join Representative FALLIN and myself in helping to increase the effectiveness of Women’s Business Centers nationwide by supporting the SBA Women’s Programs Act of 2007, H.R. 2397. I thank you once again, Representative FALLIN, for introducing this important piece of legislation. I am looking forward to witnessing the tremendous effects and positive results that this bill has to offer.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF NATIONAL CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 148 which declares June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month. I am honored to be a cosponsor of this bill because it recognizes the contributions of Caribbean Americans to the social, economic and cultural landscape to the United States of America. The West Indies represents a diverse melting pot with each island bringing its own unique enriching element to this country’s background. With approximately 34 million people and 16 independent nations sharing an African ethnic heritage, the Caribbean is a cosmopolitan region.

Some may wonder, what are we really celebrating during Caribbean Heritage Month? What makes these dynamic groups of people so distinct? Since the 17th century, West Indian slaves were shipped to the Americas. The Caribbean region continued to suffer slavery’s wrath long after its abolition. Colonialism continued to strangle the region’s independence, creating fragmented and dependent economies. However, in just over 40 years of independence, the region has established democratic governments and strengthened ties with the United States. Despite extenuating circumstances, these former colonies are now rising states which continue to infuse American mainstream culture.

According to the 2005 American Community Survey, some 2.2 million American residents have a West Indian background. Moreover, approximately 32 percent of the Caribbean-American population is currently enrolled in college or graduate school, and 33 percent of the West Indian population is employed in

educational, health care, and social services. In my home state of Florida, there is an estimated 649,000 Caribbean Americans. Approximately 30 percent of this population is currently enrolled in college or graduate school and 25 percent are employed in educational, health care, and social services.

Large, dynamic and remarkable communities with Caribbean ancestry exhibit this diversity in Florida’s 23rd Congressional District. I am so privileged to represent people of virtually every single Caribbean heritage. From Lauderhill to Miramar to West Palm Beach to Oakland Park, I am honored to work on behalf of all of these communities and many more. There are approximately 153,000 Caribbean Americans currently residing in Florida’s 23rd District. The Haitian community is one of the largest in the United States. In Broward County, Puerto Ricans comprise the largest Caribbean group at more than 50,000.

Furthermore, the second largest concentration of Cubans in the United States is in Broward County, with approximately 50,000 Cuban-American residents. Palm Beach County has the sixth largest concentration of Cuban-American residents in the United States, with more than 25,000 Cuban-American residents. Moreover, about 25,000 Palm Beach County residents are of Puerto Rican descent, and more than 7,500 are of Dominican descent.

Mr. Speaker, the National Caribbean American Heritage Month’s declaration attests to the United States’ reception to Caribbean influence in our country’s history and its present socio-economic structure. Undeniably, the educational, political, and artistic influences of Caribbean Americans continue to permeate several facets of our society. The American spirit is a tapestry that weaves cultures together, one in which people of all traditions and walks of life convene to better protect and educate one another. The Caribbean-American people are an invaluable part of this tapestry.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably delayed in arriving to the chamber for the series of five recorded votes taken during the evening of Tuesday, June 12, 2007, on amendments to H.R. 2638, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2008. I was therefore unable to cast my vote during the first vote in that series which was on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York, Mr. CROWLEY. Had I been able to record my vote on this amendment, rollcall No. 453, I would have voted “no”.

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HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, June 21, 2007, I was absent during

rollcall vote No. 537. Had I been present, I would have voted “no” on agreeing to the Jordan of Ohio Amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 22, 2007

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 554, H. Amdt. 368 offered by Representative SMITH to H.R. 2764, the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and unable to vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted “yes.”

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RE-
LATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIA-
TIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the realignment of funding for Colombia in the FY2008 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. I would like to begin by thanking Chairwoman LOWEY for her leadership on the issues facing Colombia and for crafting such a forward-thinking piece of legislation.

I visited Colombia a few years ago, and learned so much about that beautiful country. On that trip I heard chilling accounts of the tragedy that our policies have created. A lot has changed since my trip, but many of the fundamental problems still exist, and in some cases, have worsened.

I heartily support the new balance of aid in the FY2008 Foreign Operations bill. As outlined in the bill, now 55 percent of aid for Colombia will go toward military functions while 45 percent will go to rural development, social development, and strengthening the judicial system. This new approach is a dramatic change that will help remedy the problems that our policies have caused.

Just this month, the Office of National Drug Control Policy announced that more than 387,900 acres of coca were detected in Colombia in 2006, an increase of 32,120 acres from the previous year. The increase in coca production is a huge blow to the proponents of Plan Colombia, which was created in 2000 to reduce drug cultivation.

This Foreign Ops bill recognizes the failure of past policies—especially our counter-drug initiatives, and moves U.S. policy in the right direction. The funding in this bill will help families persecuted by paramilitaries, farmers struggling to grow crops other than coca,