

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 19, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 3043, the Federal Year 2008 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill. By passing this legislation today the House of Representatives is taking a significant step forward toward investing in our Nation's long-term future. This \$152 billion investment marks a \$10 billion increase over President Bush's 2008 request and a \$7 billion increase over the Federal Year 2007 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill. The increases in the appropriation's legislation before us today, will translate into more help for those in need of Low-Income Home Energy Assistance, more affordable higher education, and health care for the uninsured.

Home heating costs have skyrocketed over the last few years. Many people are finding themselves unable to keep up. We in Congress believe that no American should be forced to choose between whether to eat or heat your home. This is why we are increasing Low-Income Home Energy Assistance to \$501 million in 2008, an increase that will ensure 1.3 million families are not left out in the cold this winter.

We have also used this appropriation to demonstrate the Democratic Party's commitment to reining in the sharp rise in college costs that continue to be a barrier to so many students. By increasing the Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$4,700, an increase which will benefit more than 5.5 million low- and middle-income students, we have taken another major step in the 110th Congress toward making higher education more accessible.

Finally, it is a disgrace that there are 46.6 million Americans without health insurance; in this year's Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill we have taken major steps to expand access to health care for the uninsured. For example, the bill provides a \$200 million increase in funds allocated to community health center initiatives—enabling these centers to serve an additional 1 million uninsured Americans. Furthermore, the bill provides \$75 million for a new initiative to state health access grants—providing start-up grants to states that are ready with plans to expand health care coverage to targeted groups. Finally, H.R. 304 also includes \$50 million for an initiative to assist states in providing high-risk insurance pools to support affordable insurance for almost 200,000 people who are medically high-risk.

This is finally a Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill

with the right priorities, one that puts working Americans first.

HONORING ROBLEY REX

**HON. RON LEWIS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2007*

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robley Rex, a remarkable man with a long history of service to his country and to Kentucky. Mr. Rex recently celebrated his 106th birthday.

Mr. Rex was born on May 2, 1901 in Hopkinsville, KY. He enlisted in the U.S. Army upon his 18th birthday, serving with the 5th Infantry from 1919 to 1922. During an assignment in Germany, Mr. Rex witnessed firsthand the terrible aftermath of death and destruction caused by World War I. A gifted athlete, he was also an amateur boxer during his tenure in the Army.

Upon his return to Kentucky, Mr. Rex met Ms. Grace Bivens. The couple married April 3, 1926. Mr. Rex held jobs in a local tool factory and a rubber manufacturer before beginning a career as a railroad mail clerk for the U.S. Postal Department.

During his 106 years, Robley Rex has personally lived through many of the historical events that have shaped our country and the world including two World Wars, women's suffrage, the Great Depression, and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

It is my great privilege to honor Mr. Robley Rex today, before the entire U.S. House of Representatives, for his long life and service to our country. May his days continue to be filled with enriching experiences, the company of friends, and love for family and country.

TRIBUTE TO SAMANTHA MELVIN

**HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2007*

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Samantha Melvin, a teacher at Hunters Creek Elementary School in the Seventh Congressional District of Houston, Texas, who has received a 2006-07 Outstanding Teaching Award from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Humanities Texas issues these awards annually to Texas teachers to recognize exemplary contributions in teaching, curriculum development and extracurricular programming.

Ms. Melvin's art curriculum sparks students' imaginations while also reinforcing lessons learned in other subject areas. In one of her major assignments, students develop elaborate, three-dimensional cityscapes that draw upon their training in art, social studies, math and science.

Stefanie Roach, Principal at Hunters Creek Elementary says of Ms. Melvin: "She is an outstanding educator whose passion for art and empowering children are evident in the lessons she creates and presents. She challenges children to see the 'big picture' in life and to use art as the means in which they can

influence the world. She is a shining star to the profession. Energetic, committed, brilliant."

Karen Yates, Assistant Principal at Hunters Creek Elementary says, "Samantha Melvin is a passionate educator, always looking for ways to promote the interest of learning in her students. Because of her nurturing personality and art instruction, the young artists at Hunters Creek Elementary take risks and use their own creativity to produce a variety of pieces."

Teresa Henshaw, language arts school improvement specialist at Hunters Creek Elementary says, "She not only lives a 'Renaissance' life, but inspires it in others. Samantha Melvin encourages children to see the world as a whole, that everything is connected to everything else."

Humanities Texas Executive Director Michael L. Gillette says, "We are pleased to recognize such an accomplished teacher. Ms. Melvin instills the joy of learning in her students and motivates them to achieve at high levels."

Madam Speaker, again, I applaud Ms. Melvin for inspiring the children at Hunters Creek Elementary and congratulate her on her award.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
TIAHRT AMENDMENT VOTE

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2007*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to respond to the Appropriations Committee vote on amending the Tiahrt Amendment.

Sadly, last week the House Appropriations Committee voted 26 to 40 on an amendment offered by Congressman PATRICK KENNEDY that would have addressed the current restrictions on the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms with sharing gun trace data. The limitation, known as the Tiahrt Amendment, which prohibits the effective tracing of the ownership of weapons, puts handcuffs on illegal gun investigators all over the country. This vote was extremely disappointing. It was a rebuff to all Americans, who desperately want guns out of the hands of criminals. Once again law abiding Americans were victimized by the political pressure of National Rifle Association lobbyists.

Proponents of the Tiahrt Amendment argue that removing the restriction is a challenge to the Second Amendment. This is just not true; the Second Amendment right to bear arms is not affected by a more effective means of identifying illegal guns. I support removing the restriction and I also support the rights of legal gun ownership; the key word being legal.

Tiahrt Amendment supporters stress that there are privacy issues involved. That is absolutely true. The privacy of illegal gun dealers is being protected. This means they can continue to sell weapons to criminals and Americans will continue to be hurt and killed every single day as Congress sits back and watches.