

during the War on Terror we must uphold our commitment to veterans upon their return home.

Earlier in the year, the new Majority agreed they would continue the trend of significant increases in veterans funding begun by the Republican Congress. We ask you to honor that agreement and see that the commitment we made to our veterans is upheld.

We must never forget the sacrifice of our veterans. As members of Congress, we have a solemn obligation to fulfill our promises to them. We ask you to look past the heightened partisanship of our times and unite us on this issue by making it a first priority to bring a stand-alone veterans appropriations bill through conference so the Congress may present the President with a bill no later than October 12, 2007.

Sincerely,

Steve Pearce, Tim Walberg, Jean Schmidt, Darrell Issa, Jim Saxton, Don Young, Scott Garrett, Jeff Miller, Trent Franks, Duncan Hunter, Jo Ann Davis, Pete Sessions.

Phil Gingrey, Phil English, Thelma Drake, Jeb Hensarling, Ginny Brown-Waite, Peter Roskam, Vito Fossella, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, John Carter, Dan Burton, K. Michael Conaway, John Kuhl.

Tom Feeney, Tom Price, James Sensenbrenner, Gus Bilirakis, Wally Herger, Doug Lamborn, Greg Walden, Gary Miller, Michele Bachmann, John Kline, Tom Tancredo, Geoff Davis.

Adrian Smith, Paul Ryan, John Doolittle, John Peterson, Rick Renzi, Mark Souder, Louie Gohmert, Michael McCaul, Randy Neugebauer, Wayne Gilchrest, Jim Gerlach.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, September 17, 2007.

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER,
U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.

MADAM SPEAKER: We write to urge you in the strongest possible terms to reach a prompt agreement on the conference report on the FY2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act (H.R. 2642). Few issues are more important than adequate funding for our nation's veterans. The leadership in the House cannot allow this critically important funding to fall victim to the usual partisan wrangling which occurs all too often in Washington.

Veterans should not be used as tools for political bargaining and gamesmanship. Both the House and Senate passed the FY08 MilCon-Veterans appropriations with overwhelming majorities because our commitment to veterans rises above partisan squabbling. Tragedies such as the recent revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center must never be repeated. The findings of insufficient care at Walter Reed and other facilities should be seen by Congress as a mandate to finish the work and live up to the promises we have made to our veterans.

After decades of flat funding, total VA budget rose from \$48 billion in FY 2001 to approximately \$70 billion in FY 2006, a 46 percent increase. This year, the House voted to increase funding by \$6 billion dollars over FY07, one of the largest in the 77 year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Both the Senate and House versions received overwhelming majority support passing by a vote of 409-2 in the House and 92-1 in the Senate.

Earlier in the year, the new Majority agreed they would continue the trend of significant increases in veterans funding begun by the Republican Congress. We ask you to honor that agreement and see that the commitment we made to our veterans is honored.

We must never forget the sacrifice of our veterans. As members of Congress, we have a

solemn obligation to fulfill our promises to them. We ask for you to look past the heightened partisanship of our times and unite us on this issue by making it a first priority to quickly bring a stand alone Veterans appropriations bill through conference so the Congress may present the President with a bill by October 1, 2007.

We stand ready to assist you in reaching this goal.

Sincerely,

Steve Pearce, Gus Bilirakis, Thelma Drake, Pete Sessions, Louie Gohmert, Jean Schmidt, Jim Saxton, Dana Rohrabacher, Mario Diaz-Balart, Sue Myrick, Tom Feeney.

Jon Porter, Rick Renzi, Marilyn Musgrave, Michael Burgess, Michael Conaway, Mark Souder, Tim Walberg, Steve King, Ron Lewis, Jeff Miller, Tom Tancredo.

Steve Buyer, Peter Roskam, John Mica, John Kline, Paul Ryan, Greg Walden, Tom Price, Mary Fallin, Randy Forbes, Mary Bono, Spencer Bachus.

Dean Heller, Barbara Cubin, John Shimkus, Jim Gerlach, Jeb Hensarling, Geoff Davis, Scott Garrett, Adrian Smith, Mike Ferguson, Don Young, Ginny Brown-Waite.

SMITHSONIAN MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2007

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, the Smithsonian Institution is a unique and irreplaceable cultural, historical, educational and artistic complex without any public or private counterpart in the world. Since its founding, the Smithsonian has become an extraordinary array of world class museums, galleries, educational showplaces and unique research centers including 19 museums and galleries, 9 research facilities, the National Zoo, and a National Museum of African American History and Culture, approved by Congress, now seeking funding from the private sector for construction. The Smithsonian has grown with trust funds, donations from American culture and life, and other financial contributions.

However, most of its funding continues to come from federal appropriations. Despite receiving 70 percent of its support from the federal government, the Smithsonian has long had serious and mounting unmet infrastructure and other financial needs. Infrastructure needs have increased to \$2.5 billion, and continuing deterioration threatens exhibits and restricts access. Congress must help the Smithsonian Institution strengthen its ability to build resources beyond what taxpayers are able to provide. The most important step that Congress could take today is to finally rescue the Smithsonian from the 19th century governance structure that keeps it from accessing needed available private resources and limits close and critical internal oversight similar to what public and private facilities receive today. This bill provides a structure befitting an agency of the unique complexity of the Smithsonian's, without which these goals cannot be reached.

In no small part, the difficulty the Smithsonian has faced results from limitations inherent to its antiquated governance structure. The existing structure may have fit the Smithsonian 160 years ago, but today, the structure has proven to be a relic that has disserved the Institution. The present governance places im-

mense responsibility on dedicated but over-extended members of the House and Senate, the Vice President of the United States and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, fully half of the board, who must perform their fiduciary duties as board members while giving first priority to their sworn responsibilities as important Federal officials.

The need for new revenue streams and for a modern governance structure has been clear for years but can no longer be avoided following unprecedented controversies and irresponsible risks taken by Smithsonian management. The Smithsonian's first full-blown scandal in its 160 year history, replete with embarrassing coverage, has damaged the Smithsonian's reputation and perhaps the confidence of potential contributors. The poor judgment and overreaching of Smithsonian personnel require new and concentrated oversight by citizens from whom the Smithsonian can command priority attention. The Regents, of course, have taken some important action on their own. After irregularities were uncovered by the media, the Regents responded to the controversies by creating a Governance Committee, chaired by Patty Stonesifer, a Regent who is chief executive officer of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with a mandate to comprehensively review the policies and practices of the Smithsonian and how the Board conducts its oversight of the Institution. The Board also established an Independent Review Committee (IRC), chaired by Charles A. Bowsher, former Comptroller General of the United States, to review the issues arising from the Inspector General's reports, the Regents' response, and related Smithsonian practices.

The Independent Review was forthright in its investigation and recommendations. The IRC stated explicitly in its report that the root cause of the current problems at the Smithsonian was an antiquated governance structure that led to failures in governance and management. According to the IRC, the Board of Regents for the Smithsonian must recognize a fiduciary responsibility that carries a "major commitment of time and effort, a reputational risk and potentially, financial liability." The IRC further found that the Smithsonian, with a budget of over \$1 billion a year, must have a Board of Regents who "act as true fiduciaries and who have both the time and the experience to assume the responsibilities of setting strategy and providing oversight. Time is a major factor." The IRC cited lack of clarity of the roles of the Vice President and Chief Justice on the Board, and said that "it is not feasible to expect the Chief Justice to devote the hours necessary to serve as a fiduciary agent." The same might be said of members of the House and Senate who serve. The IRC recommends expanding the level of expertise and number of board members and ensuring that Regents who are appointed have sufficient time and attention to dedicate to the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian's own Governance Committee identified several board weaknesses and concluded that the Regents did not receive or demand the reports necessary for competent decision making, that staff whom the Regents depended upon for oversight inquiries, did not have direct access or the relationships necessary to bring forward important

issues, and that the inability of staff to communicate red flag issues “crippled” internal compliance and oversight mechanisms.

**STOP TUBERCULOSIS (TB) NOW
ACT OF 2007**

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 5, 2007

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation. There is a great need, at home and abroad, for increased resources against the fight of Tuberculosis. Worldwide, nearly 2 million people died from TB in 2006. Adding to the problem, the TB germ is changing and new, drug-resistant strains have been found in 28 countries on 6 continents, including the U.S. The Stop Tuberculosis Now Act of 2007 requires the President to make TB prevention, treatment and elimination a priority. This act authorizes the President to increase aid to the World Health Organization through USAID specifically for TB strategies against these drug-resistant strains and to support affected countries, also increasing appropriations for CDCP and TB programs.

This legislation addresses the need abroad, but we also still need more interest here in the states. That is why I introduced The Comprehensive TB Elimination Act (H.R. 1532) earlier this year to confront that exact problem. In 2005, more than 14,000 people had TB in the U.S., including over 1500 cases in Texas. There also is an estimated 10 to 15 million people in the U.S. with latent TB, approximately 10 percent of which will go on to develop active TB. In the face of this problem, the standard method for diagnosis is more than 100 years and isn’t adequately effective in testing children or those also infected with HIV/AIDS. The newest class of anti-TB drugs is 40 years old. The current drug-resistant strains that we know of are nearly untreatable with the drugs available today.

These facts highlight the obvious need for TB research and development of active attempts not only to control the problem, but decrease the threat and hopefully eradicate it completely. The Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act (H.R. 1532) will do that at home and The Stop Tuberculosis Now Act of 2007 (H.R. 1567) will do that abroad. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. VISCOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. VISCOSKY. Madam Speaker, on Monday, November 5, 2007, I was absent from the House due to a family illness and therefore missed rollcall votes 1034 through 1036.

Had I been present for rollcall 1034, H.R. 3222, on closing portions of the conference for a measure making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, I would have voted “yea.”

Had I been present for rollcall 1035, H.R. 513, on a motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended the National Heroes Credit Protection Act, I would have voted “yea.”

Had I been present for rollcall 1036, H. Res. 744, on a motion to suspend the rules and agree to a measure recognizing the contributions of Native American veterans and calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to observe a day in honor of Native American veterans, I would have voted “yea.”

HONORING NANCY KEEFER, RECIPIENT OF BONITA SPRINGS 2007 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

HON. CONNIE MACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Nancy Keefer, Bonita Springs 2007 Citizen of the Year, for her years of dedicated service to southwest Florida. Nancy exemplifies the ideals that we in southwest Florida hold dear.

Over the last decade, Nancy’s energy and dedication for Bonita Springs has led to great service and leadership in our community. In addition to serving as the president of the Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce since 1997, she is a member of the Bonita Springs Rotary Club, on the Bonita Springs YMCA board of directors and is a member of the International College President’s Council. Nancy is also a member of the Southwest Florida Transportation Initiative.

We all owe a tremendous amount of appreciation to Nancy for showing our community what leadership and service truly means.

I’m honored to represent such a remarkable individual, and I would like to thank citizens like her for making southwest Florida a great place to live, work and visit.

HONORING FORMER OHIO STATE MARCHING BAND ARRANGER RICHARD W. HEINE

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Richard W. Heine, arranger for The Ohio State University Marching Band, and to express my appreciation for the lifetime he spent creating the unmistakable sound of The Ohio State University Marching Band. For more than 60 years, Mr. Heine contributed his talents to the students of Ohio State, and for this, I offer him my utmost congratulations and thanks for his efforts.

After graduating from Greenville High School in 1934, Mr. Heine began his association with The Ohio State University as a student and member of the marching band. More than any other person, he was responsible for the unique sound of this brass marching band. In addition to many original compositions, Mr. Heine arranged most of the Ohio State school songs including Buckeye Battle Cry, I Want To Go Back To Ohio State, Chimes & Carmen

Ohio and Beautiful Ohio. There are very few non band members who have had the rare honor of dotting the “i” during the famous Script Ohio formation; however, Mr. Heine is one of the select few to be so honored by the Ohio State Marching Band.

Madam Speaker, I’ve seen the Ohio State Marching Band and Script Ohio formation many times and there is little doubt that the band referred to as “The Best Damn Band in the Land” is exactly that, and Mr. Heine played no small part in that legacy.

It was with sadness that I learned that Mr. Heine passed away October 11, 2007 at the age of 91. Richard’s memory will live on in the lives of those he touched, and every Saturday in the fall as the sounds he created echo in the hearts of football fans across the country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 1034, 1035, and 1036 I was not present because I was delayed returning from Iraq on official travel.

Had I been present, I would have voted “yes” on each of these rollcall votes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted:

1. “Yes” on Rollcall 1034, H.R. 3222, Making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

2. “Yes” on Rollcall 1035, H.R. 513, National Heroes Credit Protection Act.

3. “Yes” on Rollcall 1036, H. Res. 744, Recognizing the contributions of Native American veterans and calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to observe a day in honor of Native American veterans.

RECOGNIZING ZACH KINNE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Zach Kinne of Eagleville, Missouri. Zach is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of leadership by being elected to serve as 2007–2008 National Future Farmers of America President.

Zach was among six individuals selected from a field of 40 to hold a national office. He was later chosen and presented as President at the 80th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. As president, this position will