

signifies the beginning of real progress, and I plan to work with my colleagues to develop a unified approach to address the challenges we face in Iraq.

Our soldiers in Iraq continue to do tremendous work and it is critical that we provide them with the resources they need to improve security. Unfortunately, the bill before us today would delay important troop-protection and equipment funds requested by the Pentagon. According to Department officials, delaying these funds would also force the Pentagon to begin borrowing from its regular defense budget, which in turn could impact important operating funds for troops and military bases.

Additionally, I am concerned that this legislation would condition troop funding on the initiation of an immediate redeployment from Iraq. Although I strongly support a responsible strategy for bringing U.S. troops home, these decisions should not be mandated by Members of Congress without close consultation with our military and foreign policy leaders in the field. Furthermore, the U.S. commander in Iraq, GEN David Petraeus, has already set forth a plan to bring home a full combat brigade this month and at least five brigades by July of next year. Congress should perform strong oversight with respect to the redeployment process, but placing restrictions on our military commanders is not helpful in their efforts to achieve stability and bring troops home.

Still, I support language in the bill that would improve accountability and increase transparency by requiring regular reports on the status of the military's redeployment plans. In the same way, I support sections of the bill that would ensure military units are properly trained and prepared for deployments. Embracing a comprehensive regional security plan and prohibiting torture are also key provisions which I continue to support. In fact, I recently cosponsored legislation identical to the anti-torture provisions included in H.R. 4156.

The leaders of the U.S. Senate have already made clear that this legislation does not have the votes necessary for passage and therefore many of these important provisions will be left on the table. Therefore, I call on my colleagues to embrace the substantive areas of this bill where we can find agreement, and join me in committing to a bipartisan approach for achieving stability.

Mr. Speaker, the Bipartisan Compact on Iraq Debate, of which I am an original author, identifies the areas where Democrats and Republicans have found agreement. Let us embrace these points of agreement and move forward in supporting our troops serving in combat.

H.R. 4183, TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, last night I introduced H.R. 4183, a bill to authorize the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System.

The National Urban Search and Rescue Response System is an important part of our Na-

tion's all-hazards preparedness and response efforts. FEMA established the Urban Search and Rescue Response System in 1989 so that local emergency services personnel could act as integrated disaster response task forces. However, the system has never been fully authorized by Congress. As a result the Taskforces have suffered funding shortfalls, and the Taskforce personnel have been deployed without the appropriate Federal worker's compensation and employment protections.

Currently the Urban Search and Rescue Response System is made up of 28 Taskforces that are sponsored by local or State agencies. Most Taskforces consist of 70 personnel that are ready to deploy within 6 hours of activation, for 10-day deployments with 24-hour operations. The Taskforces deploy with all the equipment they need and they are self-sufficient for 72 hours.

In the event of a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, an accident, or another emergency involving structural collapse, FEMA can deploy any or all of the Taskforces to help with the emergency response. Taskforces have been deployed to respond to a variety of emergencies including earthquakes, hurricanes, and terrorism events like the Oklahoma City bombing. In 2001, 25 out of the 28 Taskforces were deployed to respond to 9/11. In 2005, all 28 Taskforces were deployed to respond to Hurricane Katrina. During that deployment the Taskforces searched thousands of collapsed structures in Mississippi and flooded structures in New Orleans, resulting in the rescue of 6,587 victims in New Orleans alone.

In my district the Orange County Fire Authority sponsors the fifth California Urban Search and Rescue Taskforce. The Orange County Fire Authority and the other sponsoring agencies make significant commitments to their Taskforces by absorbing Federal funding shortfalls, maintaining the necessary equipment, and supporting their personnel's participation in training, exercises, prestaging and deployments.

It is time for Congress to provide greater protections to the agencies that sponsor Urban Search and Rescue Taskforces and the individuals that serve on the Taskforces. H.R. 4183 will authorize \$52 million annually to ensure that sponsoring agencies are not forced to absorb a Federal funding shortfall. This legislation will also provide Taskforce personnel or their families with Federal injury, illness, disability, and death benefits if the Taskforce member is injured during a Federal deployment. In addition, this bill provides employment protections so that Taskforce members will not lose their jobs because they have been deployed by FEMA.

The National Urban Search and Rescue Taskforces are a valuable resource and an excellent example of how local, State and Federal Governments can cooperate to effectively prepare and respond to all-hazard emergencies. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting our Nation's Urban Search and Rescue Taskforces, and cosponsoring H.R. 4183.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF AMERICAN WORLD WAR II VETERANS WHO FOUGHT IN GREECE

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Andrew Mousalimas, Spiro Cappony, Greg Pahules, Charles Antinopoulos, Gus Kraras, Nicholas Pappas, Peter Photis, Angelus Lygizos, Theodore Russell, Spiros Taflambas, and Vic Miller. All of these distinguished gentlemen are American veterans of United States commando units, who served behind enemy lines and fought alongside Hellenic Armed Forces in occupied Greece during World War II.

World War II involved the first U.S. experience with clandestine commando warfare. Under a classified plan developed by the Office of Strategic Services, OSS, precursor of the CIA, small Operational Groups, OGs, of specially trained U.S. Army infantrymen of various ethnic backgrounds—Greek, Yugoslav, Italian, French, and Norwegian—were infiltrated into occupied Europe to assist local partisan groups in resisting the Nazis. Among these OGs were more than 200 bilingual American soldiers. Their mission was to work with the andartes, the Greek partisans, to make the Nazi withdrawal from Greece in 1944 as costly as possible.

At the time, the OGs' brand of warfare was unique in the history of American arms. They learned special commando tactics at the OSS's secret training center on the grounds of the Congressional Country Club in Chevy Chase, MD, and received demolition training at another clandestine facility in Hagerstown, MD. Beginning in April 1944, they were inserted by night into Greece from Italy, either by boat or air drop. They then walked through the mountains to their operational bases. Once in place, they could not expect reinforcements, tactical support, or medical aid. They had no withdrawal route and were expected to remain in Greece indefinitely, living off the land and moving around on foot.

They punched far above their numbers and succeeded far beyond expectations, making 76 deadly strikes against the withdrawing Germans, on average about once every 3 days, killing or wounding over 1,800 enemy soldiers and blowing up miles of roads, track, and bridges. Their effectiveness can be judged by the severity of the German response. Even though the OGs deployed in uniform, an illegal Wehrmacht order directed that they be slaughtered to the last man if captured. The OGs' presence was a great morale booster for the andartes. OGs were the close-assault troops in operations by Greek partisans and contributed greatly to their success against occupation forces.

With their mission completed, they were withdrawn from Greece at the end of 1944 and officially disbanded a year later. Records of their actions were sealed for 40 years. Having operated autonomously and formally under Allied command, their war record was not fully recognized, with U.S. Army separation papers often not mentioning ground combat in Greece. Some never learned that they had been awarded a Presidential unit citation.

Madam Speaker, I commend and honor these American heroes—recognition of their bravery will be forever memorialized in the U.S. Congress with these remarks. Their dedication to the cause of freedom and democracy shall never be forgotten.

CONGRATULATING FLOWER
MOUND HIGH SCHOOL DRUMLINE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Flower Mound High School Drumline in Flower Mound, Texas. The Flower Mound High School Drumline has been named "Best Drumline in the Nation" by the Percussive Arts Society International Marching Festival competition in Columbus, Ohio, and for the first time, was awarded the nationally acknowledged Fred Sanford Award.

The Flower Mound High School Drumline's show, entitled "Primary Focus," is centered on the idea that music is the main part of the number. Along with the "Best Drumline" award, individual students at Flower Mound High School also received awards for Best Snare Pit, Best Tenor Line and Best Ensemble. The forty-two member drumline competes annually in indoor and outdoor competitions, as well as marching in the half time shows during the football season.

It is my honor to represent a group that shows such talent, hard work, and dedication at such a young age. I extend my sincere congratulations to The Flower Mound High School Drumline.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for rollcalls 1090 and 1091 Wednesday, November 14. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 1090 on Agreeing to the Conference Report on H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act and "yea" on rollcall 1091 to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3845 PROTECT Our Children Act.

HONORING CORINNE WHITLATCH
AND CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE
EAST PEACE

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Corinne Whitlatch on the occasion of her retirement as Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace. During her twenty-one years of service, Corinne made a significant contribution to helping policymakers understand the churches' positions and roles in Middle East peacemaking. I appreciate and

admire her advocacy in support of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that allows two states—Israel and Palestine—to live in peace and security as neighbors.

Corinne Whitlatch's dedication to achieving peace in the Holy Land and commitment to ensuring a positive future for both the Israelis and Palestinians is admirable. I greatly value the efforts she has made to help both Members of Congress and church congregants approach these issues with compassion and empathy.

As I have worked in support of Israel, of the Palestinian people, and of achieving a two-state solution, I have been proud to stand side by side with Corinne and Churches for Middle East Peace's members, as well as Jewish-Americans and Arab-Americans. My Lutheran upbringing has given me the firm conviction of the important role faith communities have in communicating a message of peace. Under Corinne's leadership, Churches for Middle East Peace has been an important voice on Capitol Hill to communicate this same message.

Madam Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank Corinne for her service on behalf of peace. She will certainly be missed, but I am confident that the fine work of Churches for Middle East Peace will continue and will help see us through a time when the vision of two states is a reality.

EMPLOYMENT NON-
DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3685) to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation:

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Chairman, I rise today in opposition to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act because I believe it erodes our family values and the foundation of our Nation.

All people should live without fear of harassment. However, this legislation would create a newly protected class based on "perceived" sexual orientation. The term "perceived" and how it applies to the workplace will be subject to endless litigation and will ultimately be defined by the court system. It will open the door for anyone of any sexual orientation to claim to have been discriminated against on the basis of perceived sexual orientation. I am disappointed that this will become the latest example of unelected officials deciding an issue for the Legislative branch.

Meanwhile, faith-based institutions such as summer camps, Bible book stores or Christian schools will be the ones held hostage. The bill inappropriately excludes the hundreds or even thousands of religious schools that identify themselves as non-denominational. Unfortunately, the definition of a religious organization does not adequately cover religious schools that are not "controlled, managed, owned, or supported by a particular religion, religious corporation, association or society."

To attempt to meet exemptions, these faith-based institutions would be subject to highly

inappropriate federal intrusion into their religious activities to determine, in essence, if they are religious "enough." Meanwhile it puts schools that are not directly associated with a church at risk. In *Baltimore Lutheran High School Assn v. Employment Security Admin.*, 490A.2d 701 (Md. 1985), an unemployment case, the Maryland Court of Special Appeals ruled against the school declaring it was not "operated primarily for religious purposes." However, the school conducted mandatory chapel services and attempted to integrate a distinctly Christian worldview into all of its courses.

As this current bill would result in a fundamental departure from the longstanding framework of the Civil Rights Act, widespread litigation, a trampling of hiring protections for many faith-based institutions, and an undermining of state laws that define and protect marriage, I will vote to oppose it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on November 13, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall No. 1082.

Had I been present would have voted: rollcall No. 1082—"yea."

SHAW UNIVERSITY BEARS
FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Shaw University Bears football team for winning the 2007 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, CIAA, Championship, under the leadership of head coach Darrell Asberry. After a hard fought season, the Bears defeated Virginia Union University in a dazzling double overtime performance 31–24 at the Charlotte Memorial Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, on November 10, 2007.

Madam Speaker, Shaw University has contributed significantly to the growth and development of North Carolina and the enrichment of countless of its citizens. I am proud to have the honor of representing this outstanding institution. It is fitting that we take a moment today to honor these young athletes as shining stars for the university.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE
INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC.

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Independent Living, Inc., based in Newburgh, New York, as it celebrates the