

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 20, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 31, 2007*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend your work on the Continuing Resolution. Republicans set up a colossal budget failure and created the worst budget mess since the government shut down in 1996. I know you had no choice but to attempt to make lemonade out of the lemons that were left for us.

With this behind us, we will be able to work together to really meet America's needs. While I am happy that this legislation included increases in the maximum Pell grant, veterans' health care, funding for Community Health Centers, and the NIH, there are some areas that remain in critical need of additional funding. Much has been neglected over the last few years by the Republicans and will require further attention this Congress. In fact, I could stand here all night discussing the specifics. Don't worry, Mr. Speaker, instead I will focus on one area in particular, teacher incentive grants.

Chicago Public Schools, in collaboration with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), were awarded a 5-year grant under the Teacher Incentive Fund in FY 2006. Chicago Public Schools were one of 16 grantees awarded funding under the new TIF program to develop a program for performance-based teacher pay, specifically targeting high-need schools. This particular grant award totals \$27,336,693 over 5 years.

The first year of funding for the Chicago award totals \$131,273. The second year continuation grant is proposed at \$4,055,600. This funding is scheduled to be awarded in the fall of 2007 and I would like to make certain that Chicago's schools receive this funding. I am sure that we will be able to work together in the coming months to ensure that this is the case.

TRIBUTE TO DENVER EAST HIGH SCHOOL

**HON. DIANA DeGETTE**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Denver's East High School for winning the "We the People" state competition on December 13, 2006. These students will represent Colorado in the national finals, held in Washington, DC on April 28–30, 2007.

This fantastic program seeks to develop the civic understanding of our nation's elementary, middle, and high school students. Each year competitions are held across the country, with students demonstrating their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

After months of preparation, the students of East will represent the State of Colorado at the national competition, "testify" before a panel of judges, and display their knowledge of American government and history.

I am so proud to have these students representing the First Congressional District and the entire state of Colorado. I wish them luck in the national finals, and look forward to welcoming them to Washington.

I want to personally recognize the participating students, including Caitlin Bell, Tucker Larson, Tessa Caudle, Sean McCarthy, Mats Engdahl, Manon Scales, Dan Aschkinasi, Matt Valeta, Catie Gliwa, Brian McQuinn, Katrina Sondermann, Tyler Castle, Davis Wert, Kaitlyn Randol, Mackenzie Gilchrist, Carlo Davis, Morgan Hall, Tim Hambidge, Emery Donovan, Rachel Banks, Rye Finegan, Charlie Fine, Michelle Murphy, Taylor Jones, Alexa Morrill, Max Viski-Hanka, Sam Keene, and Marissa Latta. Additionally, I would like to congratulate Kathy Callum, the principal of East, teacher Susan McHugh, and Loyal Darr, who coordinates the "We the People" program in Denver and is a tireless advocate for civic education.

HIRE A VETERAN WEEK

SPEECH OF

**HON. SILVESTRE REYES**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2007*

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 5, expressing Congressional support for "Hire-A-Veteran Week," and encouraging the President to issue a proclamation calling upon employers to increase employment of men and women who have served honorably in the U.S. Armed Services.

As a U.S. Army veteran and a longtime member of the House Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees, I know of the challenges awaiting our service members when transitioning from military service to the civilian workforce. While this resolution will not solve the problems of unemployment within the veterans community, it is a strong message that we as members of Congress should send to anyone in a position to hire qualified veterans.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, younger veterans have a significantly higher unemployment rate than those of the general population in the same age range. Madam Speaker, I find this situation unacceptable and I believe most Americans would agree that our country should do more to assist these veterans in transitioning from active duty to the civilian workforce.

Furthermore, as a strong advocate of hiring qualified veterans, I practice what I preach. Having hired military veterans in both my El Paso, Texas and Washington, D.C. offices, I know of the exceptional training the Armed Forces provides our service members, and wholeheartedly encourage any employer to consider hiring those veterans who have served our country.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in supporting our Nation's veterans by voting in favor of H. Con. Res. 5.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 58, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 59, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 60, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 61, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 62, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 63, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 64, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 65, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 66, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 67, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 68, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 69, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 70, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 71, I would have voted "yes." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 72, I would have voted "no." Had I been present on Rollcall Vote No. 73, I would have voted "yes."

NATIONAL INTEREST ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION CORRIDOR CLARIFICATION ACT

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I am introducing legislation today to clarify provisions in Section 1221 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 regarding the designation of National Interest Energy Transmission Corridors (NIETC).

As the Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) begin implementation of Section 1221, concerns have arisen in my state and in other states about this section of the new law. Specifically, those concerns include how the designation of these corridors could work to usurp the state decisionmaking process, override merit-based decisions by state siting authorities, destroy protected lands, ignore alternative energy solutions, and fail to provide compensation for landowners adjacent to new transmission lines. My legislation attempts to clarify Section 1221 to ensure that the necessity of building interstate energy transmission lines is balanced with other important national interests.

Building transmission lines that use 200-foot rights-of-way and rise up to 270 feet into the air have a tremendous and permanent impact on the surrounding landscape and property values. Patterning the electric transmission line process after current gas line siting regulations does not take into consideration the far reaching visual impact of power lines. Above ground facilities for gas lines are generally a maximum of eight feet high, therefore the viewshed affected is minimal. But power lines

towering over 100 feet can be seen for miles around. It is traditionally understood that local and state governments are best equipped to properly consider and evaluate land use needs for local communities. Federal siting processes for transmission lines must be carefully tailored to allow greater protections to both local landowners and to the state decisionmaking process.

Currently, Section 1221 provides that state regulatory authorities can have their jurisdiction to approve or disapprove an application for new transmission lines in the state usurped by the federal government after one year in the application process. Additionally, the FERC can simply override disapproval by the state regardless of how sound the rationale for disapproval might have been. This is unacceptable.

Under my legislation, if the state entity denies an application, any subsequent application to FERC would first have to prove that the state decision was arbitrary and capricious. Furthermore, if the state goes beyond a year to act, the applicant must show that the state had no valid reason for delaying action.

Additionally, in order to ensure that lands that have been protected by the federal or state governments through conservation easements, ownership and similar preservation initiatives will not be impacted, the legislation prohibits these lands from being included in a NIETC and requires that the Department of Energy consider the national interests in protecting these resources.

I fully support investment in alternative energy sources and conservation, yet current law requires no assessment of alternative energy solutions before action is taken to designate a NIETC. My legislation would require the Department of Energy to consider all energy use alternatives to building new transmission lines before designating a NIETC. Furthermore, the Department of Energy will be required to solicit public comments on the analysis.

Finally, under current law landowners are compensated only for the portion of their property actually taken for a NIETC right-of-way. There is no compensation for any reduction in the value of the remainder of a landowner's property or for adjacent landowners whose property is devalued. This legislation would allow all landowners who are able to prove a 10 percent diminution in property value because of the construction of the transmission lines a cause of action to recover those damages from the energy company. The fact is that transmission lines that tower 270 feet into the air have an impact far beyond the footprint required for construction and maintenance and this must be acknowledged.

Madam Speaker, I invite our colleagues to join with me in support of this legislation.

REHABILITATED, NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS NEED A SECOND CHANCE

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring to your attention the devastating impact of imprisonment on the lives of rehabilitated ex-offenders and to enter into the

RECORD an opinion editorial in the New York Times entitled, "Closing the Revolving Door."

Last week I introduced the Second Chance Act which would provide for the expungement of criminal records of certain non-violent offenders who have paid their debts to society. This "second chance" would only apply to individuals who have clearly demonstrated their commitment to turning themselves into industrious members of our communities.

It is preposterous that many states have often been forced to choose between building new prisons or new schools, because of the federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Worse still, the country has created a growing felon caste, now more than 16 million strong and growing, of felons and ex-felons, who are often driven back to prison by policies that make it impossible for them to find jobs, housing or education.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission and the Department of Justice have both concluded that mandatory sentencing fails to deter crime. Furthermore, mandatory minimums have worsened racial and gender disparities and have contributed greatly toward prison overcrowding. Mandatory minimum sentencing is costly and unjust. Mandatory sentencing does not eliminate sentencing disparities; instead it shifts decision-making authority from judges to prosecutors, who operate without accountability. Mandatory minimums fail to punish high-level dealers. Finally, mandatory sentences are responsible for sending record numbers of women and people of color to prison.

I urge your support for H.R. 623, the "Second Chance for Ex-Offenders Act of 2007," which would provide for the expungement of criminal records of certain non-violent offenders who have paid their debts to society.

[From the New York Times]

CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR

The United States is paying a heavy price for the mandatory sentencing fad that swept the country 30 years ago. After a tenfold increase in the nation's prison population—and a corrections price tag that exceeds \$60 billion a year—the states have often been forced to choose between building new prisons or new schools. Worse still, the country has created a growing felon caste, now more than 16 million strong, of felons and ex-felons, who are often driven back to prison by policies that make it impossible for them to find jobs, housing or education.

Congress could begin to address this problem by passing the Second Chance Act, which would offer support services for people who are leaving prison. But it would take more than one new law to undo 30 years of damage:

Researchers have shown that inmates who earn college degrees tend to find jobs and stay out of jail once released. Congress needs to revoke laws that bar inmates from receiving Pell grants and that bar some students with drug convictions from getting other support. Following Washington's lead, the states have destroyed prison education programs that had long since proved their worth.

People who leave prison without jobs or places to live are unlikely to stay out of jail. Congress should repeal the lifetime ban on providing temporary welfare benefits to people with felony drug convictions. The federal government should strengthen tax credit and bonding programs that encourage employers to hire people with criminal records. States need to stop barring ex-offenders from jobs because of unrelated crimes—or arrests in

the distant past that never led to convictions.

Congress should deny a request from the F.B.I. to begin including juvenile arrests that never led to convictions (and offenses like drunkenness or vagrancy) in the millions of rap sheets sent to employers. That would transform single indiscretions into lifetime stigmas.

Curbing recidivism will also require doing a lot more to provide help and medication for the one out of every six inmates who suffer mental illness.

The only real way to reduce the inmate population—and the felon class—is to ensure that imprisonment is a method of last resort. That means abandoning the mandatory sentencing laws that have filled prisons to bursting with nonviolent offenders who are doomed to remain trapped at the very margins of society.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, due to a death in my family I was unable to travel to Washington, DC, and missed votes in the House of Representatives on January 29, 30, and 31. Had I been here, I would have voted "aye" on:

1. H.R. 521, 2. H.R. 49, 3. H.R. 335, 4. H. Res. 70, 5. H. Res. 82, 6. H. Res. 24, 7. H. Con. Res. 20, 8. H. Res. 59, 9. H. Con. Res. 34, 10. H. Con. Res. 5, 11. H. Res. 90, 12. H. Res. 24, 13. H. Res. 116, and 14. H.J. Res. 20.

MARITIME POLLUTION PREVENTION ACT OF 2007

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 5, 2007*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today, together with the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Mr. CUMMINGS, to introduce the "Maritime Pollution Prevention Act of 2007".

For many years, the International Maritime Organization, an entity of the United Nations, has been developing international standards to prevent pollution from ships that ply the world's oceans. The international convention they developed is called the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, The United States has implemented these environmental laws by enacting and amending the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS).

On May 19, 2005, Annex VI of that Convention came into force internationally. Annex VI limits the discharge of nitrogen oxides from large marine diesel engines, governs the sulfur content of marine diesel fuel, prohibits the emission of ozone-depleting substances, regulates the emission of volatile organic compounds during the transfer of cargoes between tankers and terminals, sets standards for shipboard incinerators and fuel oil quality, and establishes requirements for platforms and drilling rigs at sea.