

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PAMELA
CLANCY

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Pamela Clancy who is receiving the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award.

Pamela has over 20 years experience in the nursing profession and presently serves as director of all Spring Valley Medical/Surgery Nursing Units. In addition to her professional competence, Pamela is a very caring individual and goes above and beyond to help patients feel at home. She is most known around the hospital for helping a couple put on a wedding when the groom became ill and had no way of rescheduling the ceremony. Pamela was also instrumental in the opening of the Joint and Spine Center and has received the service excellence award where she was the star champion employee of the month.

In addition to her professional successes, Pamela is also very active in a number of philanthropic and charitable organizations. She volunteers at her church, Walk for a Cure, March of Dimes, the Spring Valley Hospital Health Fair, and the MDA yard sale as well as health screenings.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Pamela Clancy. Her professional expertise and caring nature have greatly enriched the lives of those in the Las Vegas community. I commend her efforts and commitment and congratulate her on receiving the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award and applaud her efforts.

IMPROVING HEAD START ACT OF
2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1429) to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes:

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1429, The Improving Head Start Act of 2007. As a key initiative in President Johnson's "Great Society," Head Start has been one of our Nation's most important educational programs. Since its creation in 1965, Head Start has served more than 20 million children and has focused and redefined its approach to assisting disadvantaged children in their social, physical and educational growth.

As one of two remaining Members of the House who helped pass the original Head Start bill, I am pleased that after 4 years of deadlock between the House and Senate this program finally will be reauthorized. Democrats are once again showing the American public that Congress is back at work addressing our Nation's critical domestic needs.

Americans know what a huge difference early childhood education can make in a

child's development; they understand that early childhood education needs to be a national priority. Evidence of this can be seen in the congressionally-mandated Impact Study that found that after less than one school year, Head Start narrowed the achievement gap by 45 percent in pre-reading and by 28 percent in pre-writing. The long-term impact of these programs is also clearly demonstrated in the high percentage of low-income children who participated in Head Start and were subsequently more likely to be developmentally on par with their peers in kindergarten, to behave well in class, succeed in school and ultimately to graduate.

By passing H.R. 1429 today, we will also increase classroom and teacher quality and make use of the latest science to strengthen Head Start. The new teacher qualifications in the Improving Head Start Act require that 50 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or a related field by 2013. It also directs the majority of new funds in the bill to program improvement activities, including significant new funds to increase teacher salaries. Furthermore, this reauthorization will require that all Head Start programs use research-based practices to support the growth of children's pre-literacy and vocabulary skills and improve professional development and classroom practices to better support children's cognitive, social and emotional development.

Our Nation has long recognized that education should be a universal right to all, regardless of race, religion or socioeconomic status. I am pleased to stand with Chairman MILLER, Subcommittee Chairman KILDEE and Subcommittee Ranking Member CASTLE in improving America's education system by voting for H.R. 1429.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam Speaker, I missed rollcall votes 273, 274 and 275 taken on May 2, 2007. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted "nay" on these measures.

REGARDING CONGRESSIONAL
BLACK CAUCUS PRIORITIES AD-
DRESSED IN H.R. 1591 "U.S.
TROOP READINESS, VETERANS'
HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNT-
ABILITY ACT"

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I rise to express my profound disappointment that the President lacked the vision, wisdom, and respect for the will of the American people to sign H.R. 1591, the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act." This legislation, which was crafted under the combined leader-

ship of the Speaker and Democratic Caucus, Appropriations Committee Chairman OBEY and Defense Subcommittee Chairman MURTHA, with substantial input from the Congressional Black Caucus, provided a glide path to the day when our troops can return home where we can "care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan." But it did more than that. It also would help to repair the damage to America's international reputation and prestige and bring long overdue oversight, accountability, and transparency to defense and reconstruction contracting and procurement.

Madam Speaker, the American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to finance the misadventure in Iraq. I stand with the 3,222 fallen heroes who stand even taller in death because they gave the last full measure of devotion to their country. And I am reminded that while it is the armed forces which do the fighting, it is a Nation that goes to war. And it is the costs to the Nation that I wish to speak about today.

Madam Speaker, it must be noted that the cost of the war in Iraq to the United States has also been high regarding the new and neglected needs of the American people. Americans have been exceedingly tolerant and patient with this Administration's handling of the situation in Iraq. We have postponed, foregone, or neglected needed investments in education, infrastructure, housing, homeland security.

That is why it is right and good and just that the new Democratic majority included in the supplemental appropriations bill for Iraq and Afghanistan \$4.3 billion for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster recovery grants, including \$910 million to cover the cost of waiving the matching fund requirements in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 174 (Public Law 93-288) (Stafford Act) for state and local government meaning the Federal government will finance 100% of the grants.

Waiving the Stafford Act's matching fund requirement is critically important to the Gulf Coast states devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Based on my multiple listening trips to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region, and my numerous meetings and discussions with government officials at all levels in the affected states and with survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many of whom now are relocated to my Houston congressional district, the most important lesson I have learned is that the Stafford Act is in its present form is simply inadequate to address the scale of devastation and human suffering wrought by a disaster the magnitude of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I thank Mr. OBEY and Mr. MURTHA for responding to concerns I expressed to President Bush about the need to modernize the Stafford Act so that it remains relevant to the 21st Century.

I believe the Stafford Act must be amended to grant the Federal Government explicit authority and flexibility to provide long-term recovery assistance to communities devastated by disasters of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. Such authority currently does not exist and the Stafford Act's emphasis on temporary assistance to affected individuals and communities is simply inadequate to address the scope of human suffering we witnessed last August and which is still with us

today. I will continue my efforts to modernize the Stafford Act. But I very much approve of the nearly \$1 billion included in the bill to waive the matching fund requirements for hard-pressed State and local governments coping with emergencies of the scale of Hurricane Katrina.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding has been extended to September 30, 2010. SSBG funding provides critically needed social services, including programs for mental health, child welfare, and the treatment of addictive disorders.

Also allocated is \$1.3 billion dollars for east and west bank levee protection and coastal restoration systems in New Orleans and surrounding parishes.

There is included \$25 million for Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans and

\$80 million for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) tenant-based rental assistance. The supplemental also adds \$400 million to restore partial cuts to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This funding will bring much needed relief to many States that are running out of LIHEAP funds just as many utility shut-off moratoriums are set to expire.

The supplemental adds \$750 million to the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to ensure continued healthcare coverage for children in 14 states that face a budget shortfall in the program. By taking prompt action now, these States will not be forced to stop enrolling new beneficiaries or begin curtailing benefits.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the supplemental provided \$30 million for K-12 education re-

cruitment assistance; \$30 million for higher education assistance; and \$40 million in security assistance for Liberia. It also includes an additional \$1 billion to purchase vaccines needed to protect Americans from a global pandemic. Development of production capacity for a pandemic vaccine must be accelerated so that manufacturers can quickly produce enough quantities to protect the population.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, let me say that although the bill may not be the best I might have hoped for, it was the best that can be achieved at this time, this moment in history. I applaud the leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus for its critical role in helping craft legislation that represents a change of course and a new direction in our policy on Iraq and that is responsive to the unmet and pressing needs of the American people.