

work with Congress as we began our work on the appropriations process. Unfortunately, most other government programs are going to be temporarily funded at last year's levels until March 6, 2009, because we did not receive the kind of bipartisan cooperation required to complete work on all 13 appropriations bills. As the unemployment rate continues to rise and American families are struggling, this administration refuses to recognize that increased funding for programs such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, unemployment insurance and employment service operations, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, among others, is desperately needed.

Next year, Congress will have the opportunity to work with a new administration that I imagine will be more favorable to these programs, but until then I am pleased to see that some of these important programs will receive a much-needed increase. For example, this continuing resolution increases funding for student financial assistance programs by \$2.5 billion, with \$16.8 billion devoted exclusively to Pell grants. With the troubles in the financial markets, this funding is critical for students who rely on aid to finance their education. I strongly believe that higher education is the key to turning our economy around, especially in Michigan, and the fear of student aid being cut is a distraction our students and their families do not need. The increase in the Pell Grant Program will help those that need it the most, at a time when they need the help the most.

I am particularly pleased that this legislation will set an annual funding level of \$110 million for State unemployment insurance and employment service operations at the Department of Labor. As the State with the highest unemployment rate of 8.9 percent, families in Michigan know all too well the difficulty unemployed workers are having not only in finding a new job, but also receiving the critical training or assistance they need. Since this President took office Michigan has lost over 400,000 jobs. In the last 6 months alone, Michigan has lost an average of 3,820 jobs per month. Without further funding for unemployment insurance we cannot turn this trend around. We all can agree that finding a job during an economic downturn is extremely difficult. Therefore it is critical that families have the help they need to buy their groceries, pay their mortgages, and fill their gas tank until that next employer is found. I hope that as Congress turns to the economic stimulus package we can go a step further and extend unemployment benefits for States that need it the most.

This legislation also included a critical increase for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, CSFP, and the Nutrition for Women, Infants and Children, or the WIC program. Without the increase of \$23.5 million for this program, 70,000 low-income women, infants, children, and elderly citizens, would risk losing access to food. With over 70,000 citizens relying on CSFP in Michigan, this increase is critical. This is also true of the WIC program which assists over 200,000 families in Michigan each year. This legislation would increase funding for this program by \$1 billion, which will greatly help mothers and their children buy the groceries they need at a time when food prices continue to sky rocket. When the price of a gallon of milk is the same price as a gal-

lon of gas, we need to ensure that our families are not forced to choose between the two.

While Michigan families are being forced to pay more for many goods and services, one of the most painful increases has come from rising energy costs. Fortunately, this legislation includes \$5.1 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is \$2.5 billion more than 2008 levels and will assist 2 million additional households. LIHEAP, a critical but thinly stretched program, serves nearly 560,000 homes in Michigan. This funding will help the State of Michigan in its efforts to provide as many homes as possible with home energy assistance. The need for this funding is clear. The winter months bring with them rising utility costs, and the State of Michigan has seen an additional 30,000 LIHEAP applicants between June 2007 and June 2008. In addition, this bill provides \$250 million for weatherization assistance. Around 3,000 homes in Michigan are served by projects that increase their home energy efficiency. The increased funding will allow for weatherization of approximately 100,000 homes, saving low-income families \$400 in energy costs.

One thing that is not included in this bill is an extension of the decades-old moratorium on offshore drilling. This means for the next 5 months drilling is allowed up to 3 miles off the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts and parts of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. The citizens of Michigan's 15th Congressional District are no strangers to high gas prices; in fact, average gas prices in Michigan are among the highest in the Nation. Despite the claims of the Bush administration and its Republican Congressional allies that drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf is some sort of panacea, allowing the moratorium to expire will have little effect on rising prices at the pump. I would remind my colleagues across the aisle that the Energy Information Administration reported in 2007 that, "access to the Pacific, Atlantic, and eastern Gulf regions would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030." Earlier this year, Republicans obstructed legislation that would require oil companies to start drilling on the 68 million acres of Federal oil reserves which they are warehousing or lose the ability to obtain new leases. If the Republicans were really concerned with bringing down gas prices, they would have voted for a bill that would have taken action now to increase oil production.

Fortunately, under the current plan, leasing in these off-shore areas will not begin until 2012. This most certainly means that the next President and the next Congress will steer the course of our national drilling policy. If I have anything to do with it, this policy will include a framework for leasing and development that complies with environmental laws and insists on proper direction and use of revenues gained from drilling.

This legislation provides funding for critical programs and ensures our government will continue to operate until March 6, 2009. While it is disappointing that partisanship and election year politics stopped us from completing our work on all 13 regular appropriations bills this year, I am hopeful that we will quickly finish our work next March when we have better leadership from the White House and a larger majority to work with. I once again thank Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, and Chairman OBEY for their hard work on this im-

portant bill, and urge my colleagues to support it.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I regret that due to unforeseen circumstances I was unable to participate in one vote on the floor of the House of Representatives on September 24, 2008.

The vote was on H.R. 7005, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide alternative minimum tax, AMT, relief for individuals for 2008. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on that question. AMT relief is certainly necessary, and providing it for more than 25 million families in 2008 is projected to cost more than \$60 billion over 10 years. In addition, because the AMT fix in this bill is not paid for under pay-as-you-go rules, the fix can be expected to add tens of billions more in interest costs. In contrast, the fiscally responsible version of AMT relief that the House passed earlier this year with my support would have been revenue neutral, including through the elimination of a tax subsidy that continues to be provided to major oil companies during this time of record profits for the industry. I cannot support H.R. 7005, which would add many tens of billions more to the out-of-control national debt that is approaching \$10 trillion, when a fiscally responsible and fair alternative is available.

DUNCAN HUNTER NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT-

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

We've all read the stories about wounded troops being forced to repay enlistment or reenlistment bonuses. Chairman SKELTON is to be commended for including a provision that ensures that any servicemember who is retired or separated for a combat-related disability will not be required to repay any portion of a bonus or other benefit. The same provision ensures that the survivor of a member who dies on active duty will likewise not have to repay any bonus or benefit their deceased loved one was entitled to. I am also pleased this bill authorizes a much needed and well deserved 3.9 percent pay raise for our troops.

Today we are also ensuring that active duty families, military retirees, and their dependents are not socked with higher TRICARE fees or co-pays by extending the prohibition on such increase. The bill also encourages beneficiaries to use preventive health services by waiving copayments for preventive services.

We've all been troubled and saddened by the increased rates of suicide among

servicemembers and veterans. To address this crisis, the bill establishes a Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces to bring together experts from both within and outside of the military to assess current service suicide prevention programs and policies and to examine the risk factors that can lead to suicide. The Secretary of Defense is required to develop a plan to improve suicide prevention based upon the recommendations of the task force. I urge Secretary Gates to convene this task force immediately and for the task force to complete its work as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, as is always the case in bills crafted by Chairman SKELTON, this bill also authorizes additional necessary funds for key systems designed to help protect our troops. Two programs are of particular note. For example, the bill authorizes \$1.7 billion to procure, sustain, transport, and field Mine Resistant Ambush Protected, MRAP, vehicles for our troops overseas. Additionally, the bill authorizes \$2.2 billion for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, JIEDDO, and urges that \$10 million be used for Marine Corps and Army development of specialized counter IED dog teams. The bill also requires that the Director of the JIEDDO to develop a science and technology investment strategy for countering the threat of IEDs.

Additionally, I'm pleased this bill requires the Defense Department to take additional steps to reduce its energy consumption, consistent with mission and operational requirements. The bill establishes the position of Director for Operational Energy Plans and Programs and creates senior operational energy officials within each service. It also authorizes \$90 million for energy conservation programs on military installations.

I regret that a number of provisions that were in the House version of the bill were not included in the bill before us, including provisions dealing with the use of private security contractors and detainee interrogation-related activities. I am especially disappointed that the current bill does not include the detainee videorecording provision I authored and that was included in the House version of this bill. I look forward to working with Chairman SKELTON in the next Congress to correct this deficiency.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill; I will vote for it, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

**RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE
BUD CRAMER AND THE HONORABLE
TERRY EVERETT ON
THEIR RETIREMENT FROM CONGRESS**

SPEECH OF

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend TERRY EVERETT, whom I have had the distinct pleasure of serving with in this House for nearly 2 decades. After 16 years of diligently representing the people of the second district of Alabama, he will be retiring when the 110th Congress adjourns. I want to take this opportunity to wish him well and thank him for his

friendship and dedication to the American people.

TERRY is a man who knows the meaning of hard work. His father was a sharecropper and worked on the railroad, instilling a strong work ethic with TERRY and his siblings at an early age. TERRY never forgot those lessons, and served his country with honor as an Air Force intelligence specialist in Europe before returning home to Dothan, Alabama, in 1959. He joined the staff of the Dothan Eagle as a beat reporter, and for 30 years climbed the corporate ladder with determination, working his way up to editor and publisher, and finally as the owner of his own newspaper chain. He has brought the same dedication and workhorse attitude to the House of Representatives.

In his service in the House, TERRY has devoted himself to ensuring that the United States remains safe and secure for our children and grandchildren from the growing threat of international terrorists and rogue states. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, he has led the way for the United States to be on the cutting edge of military technology by pressing for advances in our Missile Defense System and in space technology, which is vital not only to our security at home, but also for our brave soldiers serving on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. His efforts have helped keep our Nation safe and strong in a time when threats to our security are quickly changing and adapting.

Madam Speaker, it has been an honor to have served with TERRY EVERETT in this great body. I want to wish him and his family well as he embarks on the next chapter of his life. I know the people of Alabama, like me, are proud to know him.

**RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE
BUD CRAMER AND THE HONORABLE
TERRY EVERETT ON
THEIR RETIREMENT FROM CONGRESS**

SPEECH OF

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding career of my friend, the Honorable ROBERT "BUD" CRAMER, for his service to the people of Alabama and the United States House of Representatives. Congressman CRAMER has represented the 5th Congressional District of the State of Alabama for the past 17 years ably and with distinction.

Born and raised in Huntsville, Alabama, BUD earned a bachelor's degree and a Juris Doctor from the University of Alabama. BUD is also a military veteran, where he served our country as an Army tank officer at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Of all of his many achievements, BUD's work on behalf of abused children is perhaps his greatest legacy. Before his election to Congress, BUD served for 10 years as Madison County district attorney. It was during this time that BUD founded the National Children's Advocacy Center. The Center provides complete services and support for abused children, a fundamentally different approach to these types of cases, and now serves as the

national model for over 600 programs in 50 States and the District of Columbia.

Following his election to Congress, BUD continued to be a leading voice for children. He authored the landmark law, the National Children's Advocacy Program Act, which provided funds to expand and enhance the children's advocacy program into new communities. He is also a member of the Advisory Board for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee and the powerful Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, BUD has been an ardent supporter of NASA and missile defense. With Redstone arsenal and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center both located in the 5th District, BUD has led the fight for many of NASA's programs including the international space station. In 2002, BUD was awarded the National Space Club's Von Braun Memorial Award for Space Exploration.

BUD has also overseen defense and national security intelligence issues as a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He was recently appointed to the newly created Select Intelligence Oversight Panel of the Appropriations Committee.

In Congress, BUD is perhaps most known for his independence. He is a founding member of the Blue Dogs, a coalition of more than 40 conservative House Democrats.

BUD has also worked hard to bring jobs to north Alabama. In fact, he has played a key role in bringing thousands of jobs to Alabama's 5th District, most notably, International Truck & Engine, Skyhook, Target, HiSan, West Teleservices, and Toyota as well as helping persuade Boeing to build a \$450 million rocket booster plant in Decatur in the 1990s. BUD was instrumental in the decision to restart Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant Unit 1.

Make no mistake; his work has not gone unnoticed. He was named "one of America's best Congressmen," by Money Magazine.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a devoted leader and friend to many in this body. I know his family, his daughter, Hollan; his three grandchildren, Dylan, Mason, and Patricia; and his many colleagues and friends join me in commending his accomplishments and extending thanks for his service over the years on behalf of the State of Alabama and the United States of America.

BUD will surely enjoy the well deserved time he now has to spend with his family and his beloved constituents. I wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

**CONDEMNING SEXUAL VIOLENCE
IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO**

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1227. This resolution condemns sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and calls upon the United States Department of State and the international community to take immediate action to end this widespread crisis.