

party to another and back to the original party, the people of Taiwan have proven their democracy is flourishing.

Today, Taiwan is a vibrant democracy with a strong market economy thanks to its strong ties with the United States. Under the new Ma administration, Taiwan will only seek to fortify these ties and continue to prosper as a nation.

Mr. Speaker, I would also be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to push for the 111th Congress to pass a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan. Taiwan is the United States' ninth largest trading partner, with trade flows between the two totaling \$64.6 billion last year. A Free Trade Agreement would expand trade and improve economic growth, provide enhanced opportunities for U.S. businesses and support an important democratic ally in a strategic region. It is time we put our differences aside and passed this legislation which is long overdue.

#### A TRIBUTE TO YUCAIPA, CALIFORNIA, CITY MANAGER JOHN TOOKER

#### HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, September 28, 2008*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John Tooker, a fine public servant who has dedicated the past 17 years to making the city of Yucaipa, California, a better place to live. After serving as city manager for all but 2 years of Yucaipa's cityhood, Mr. Tooker has announced his retirement.

A native Californian, John Tooker was bitten by the public service bug early in his life, graduating from California State University at Long Beach with a specialty in public administration. He has worked in city and county government continuously since then and, through his hard work, has helped improve many communities in California.

John Tooker came to my congressional district in 1991 as the city manager for Yucaipa, California. Since his arrival, the city of Yucaipa has always passed a balanced budget. In addition to his good fiscal housekeeping, Mr. Tooker has been instrumental in building up the parks and community recreation areas during his tenure. He negotiated the purchase of 32.5 acres for a community park site in 1996 and, in the years following, oversaw the construction of a Community Park, Community Center, City Hall and Fire Station No.3.

In addition, the Teen Center and Senior Center have been enlarged and remodeled and numerous city parks have been renovated. With the local community college, the city purchased an Olympic size swimming pool which will be placed in a beautiful new facility for the entire community. The residents of Yucaipa and their families have these great places to relax in no small part due to John's leadership.

Mr. Speaker, John Tooker and his wife are the proud grandparents of a baby grandson, Luke Jonathan Tooker, who was born last month. He will now be able to spend a lot more time with Luke. Please join me in wishing John Tooker health and happiness in his retirement and thank him for his many years of dedicated service.

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

SPEECH OF

#### HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 2008*

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Congressman BUD CRAMER on his many years of service to our Nation and to the people of Alabama's Fifth District.

Since I first came to Congress in 1997, BUD has been a respected colleague, a good friend, and a personal mentor. Over the years, I often have looked to him for guidance on different issues before Congress, and he has always given me wise and thoughtful advice. BUD's work on the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee has served as a model for me. I have seen firsthand his ability to work across the aisle to advance good policy to the benefit of our national defense efforts, our military community, and the American people.

As a founding member of the Blue Dog Coalition, BUD has dedicated his time in Congress to being a good steward of taxpayer dollars and creating a more fiscally responsible government. The Blue Dogs have been able to grow and continue our message of fiscal responsibility because of the groundwork that BUD and other founding members laid over 13 years ago.

BUD, as your friend and colleague, I will truly miss your leadership in Congress. I wish you the best of luck in all of your future endeavors and hope you enjoy your much deserved retirement.

#### EARMARK DECLARATION

#### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, September 28, 2008*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I submit the following:

Requesting Member: Rep. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH.

Bill Number: H.R. 2638.

Account: Military Construction, Navy Account.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle.

Address of Requesting Entity: Colts Neck, New Jersey.

Description of Request: This project will upgrade the Main Gate located at Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle. These upgrades will provide the proper Anti-terrorism Force Protection (AT/FP) measures required for current security and terrorist threats. Construction will consist of the following: gate access realignment; reinforced ornamental fencing along the public highway; new security fencing surrounding guardhouse area; removal of existing guard house; and removal of existing parking areas; hardened guard house, intrusion detection system (IDS), local area network (LAN), and base wide alarm duress system; site light-

ing with connections tied into existing generator; raised median; rejection area for privately owned vehicles (POVs); permanent vehicle inspection shelter with CCTV, for one truck and two POVs side by side; undercarriage video surveillance equipment; permanent passive barriers from fence and gate to active vehicle barriers; two active (pop-up) vehicle barriers; elevated fighting position; hardening of existing generator; sidewalks on both the inbound and outbound sides; relocate entrances to parking for Family/Housing Services and to Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD); construct new connector road to EOD; demolish existing pass and identification office; construct new pass/i.d., within new inspection facility and provide 54 parking spaces.

NWS Earle has been fortunate to not experience serious assaults or threats; however, continued operations without major security improvements could result in exposing NWS Earle's valuable assets and personnel to terrorist activity.

Detailed Financial Plan:

The majority of the funding (approximately \$6.5 M) will be used for Electronic and Mechanical Utilities and Site Improvements, including: Area Lighting; Water Distribution; Sanitary Sewer System; Paving and Site Improvements; Storm Water Management; and Demolition.

The rest will fund Special Construction Features, which total \$1,515,766 M and include:

Active vehicle barrier—\$91,036.00.

Passive vehicle barriers—\$270,213.00.

Security fencing—\$208,801.00.

Automatic traffic controls/devices—\$245,648.00.

Inspection enclosure (truck/car)—\$85,977.00.

#### ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

#### HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 2008*

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support this relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax, AMT. If Congress does not pass this legislation, over 25 million middle-class tax payers would find themselves subject to this tax.

It is important that we provide this relief to millions of American families who want a better life for their families. The current structure of the AMT leaves middle-class households vulnerable to a significant unexpected tax bill while many very wealthy households pay no AMT. In these economic times, enacting AMT relief can put more money in their pockets rather than subject them to taxes that were not intended to apply to middle-class families.

I have long supported and advocated for responsible reform of the Alternative Minimum Tax, which would be offset by other changes that target loopholes and abuses in the tax code. A responsible paid-for fix would also protect future generations of Americans from tax increases by not adding to our national debt. The Federal Government deficit will reach over \$400 billion this fiscal year and it is projected to reach \$500 billion in the next fiscal year.

Today, we see the consequences of excessive debt in our economy. I am greatly concerned with the legacy of debt that we are leaving to our children as our national debt reaches over \$10 trillion. That amount translates to a debt of over \$30,000 for each of our children. We must pay interest on the debt and each day the average interest payment adds more than \$1 billion to the tab we leave behind.

While I believe that huge, persistent debt has a significant cost for the economy, I also practically realize that both the President and my colleagues across the aisle refuse to pay for this package of tax relief. They rejected the fiscally responsible bill, H.R. 6275, that I voted for in the Ways and Means Committee and on this floor when the House approved the bill on June 25, 2008. The other legislative body has only passed an AMT patch without an offset, rejecting paying for this tax relief just last week once again.

Weighing the economic stress middle-class families face today, I will cast my vote for the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act today so that this tax does not fall on families struggling to meet increasing prices with wages that have not kept pace with inflation over the last 8 years. I do so in the hope that Congress will work next year with a new administration to advance commonsense tax reform that includes paid for AMT relief. We must reverse years of failed Republican policies that have mortgaged our grandchildren's future with debt.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHICAGOANS  
HELPING THEIR NEIGHBORS  
FOLLOWING THIS MONTH'S  
FLOODING

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, September 28, 2008*

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the firefighters, police officers, sanitation workers, and other Chicagoans who pitched in to help their neighbors in the Albany Park neighborhood and other areas affected by record flooding earlier this month.

When I toured the Albany Park area Sunday before last—after 3 straight days of hard rain and a rising river—I saw streets, parks, sidewalks, and backyards underneath the floodwaters. Chicago bungalows line these streets, and no amount of sandbags could prevent the floodwaters that submerged streets, sidewalks and parks from pouring in.

But rather than chaos, I saw neighbors helping neighbors, and a coordinated response from Chicago's city workers and the Army Corps of Engineers. The city of Chicago coordinated emergency services to be accessible with a telephone call to 311, and Aldermen and other elected officials were on the front lines ensuring residents' safety and organizing the clean-up and rebuilding efforts.

Now that the flood waters have receded, I am working across party lines with my colleagues from all over Cook County and all over Illinois to make sure that our State has the emergency assistance we need and resources to continue the clean-up and rebuilding process. This week, the entire Illinois dele-

gation sent a letter to the President supporting Illinois' request for a major disaster declaration and emergency Federal assistance. We will continue to work together to help our home state just as our constituents have helped one another.

As the saying goes, the colder the weather, the warmer the hearts. Chicagoans have experience braving freezing winters, but in times of need, they have the warmest hearts. I commend the men and women who volunteered to help their neighbors. With families rebuilding homes and lives after these floods, that goodwill and those good works will go a long way to rebuilding neighborhoods like Albany Park, and I am committed to making sure that Chicago has the tools and funds we need to complete the job.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MAJOR  
JOHNNIE ROBINSON

**HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, September 28, 2008*

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I wish to call the attention of the House to a remarkable citizen, Sergeant Major Johnnie Robinson, of Rock Hill, SC. Johnnie Robinson served for 27 years in the Army, including tours in Korea and Vietnam, and rose to the rank of Command Sergeant Major. When he retired from the Army, he kept on serving. For 22 years he was Quartermaster and Commander of VFW Post 2889 in Rock Hill, SC, and also State Commander of the VFW. Under his leadership, Post 2889 became one of the largest posts in the State, and by everyone's estimation, one of the best. Among his proudest accomplishments: handsome new quarters, a building 11,000 square feet large.

Johnnie Robinson has passed the torch to a new generation, and stepped down as commander, but to commemorate all that he has done for veterans, the VFW, and Post 2889 in particular, the post today is naming its ballroom for him.

Madam Speaker, I ask permission to enter into the RECORD the following account from the Rock Hill Herald of Johnnie Robinson's service to community and country, and not least, to veterans and the VFW.

[From the Herald of Rock Hill, SC]

VFW LEGEND PAVED THE WAY FOR LOCAL  
VETS

Few places are known to a city by one face like Rock Hill's Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2889 is known by Johnnie Robinson.

For most of the past 22 years, Robinson has been commander of the almost 500-member post, among the largest in the state. The few other years, he was quartermaster in charge of raising and accounting for the post's money.

Robinson has spoken about service and community to throngs at the local football stadium and to small groups of students. He has helped raise and give tens of thousands of dollars for veterans, widows and the children of veterans.

He helped start and organize an honor guard that still serves at military funerals and other functions.

He has been the state VFW commander and held national posts in the organization of more than 1.6 million members nationwide.

He has bent the ears of local, state and federal politicians to make sure veterans get

better treatment and raised a stink if he didn't like the answers he got.

Robinson helped the post move from an old building on Main Street into what is now an 11,000-square-foot building down the block. He brought the first black member into the post decades ago, walking in with an arm on the guy's shoulders saying, "Meet one of us."

But now it is over. Robinson, 77, has given up his commander's hat. He didn't run in the recent yearly post elections.

"It was time for somebody else to lead," he said.

That somebody else is Ray Bentley, elected the new commander, but even Bentley said following Robinson isn't easy.

"The man is a legend," Bentley said. "Leadership is what Johnnie was always about."

The post is having a banquet September 27 to honor Robinson, and to name the ballroom in his honor. Politicians, combat veterans and dignitaries will toast what this guy has meant to the little guys who fought in wars. One of those speakers will be Pat Nivens, veterans affairs officer of York County, whose job it is to help veterans get benefits. Robinson is respected and well-known around the country in veterans' circles as a veterans' rights advocate, Nivens said.

To outsiders, the VFW might look like a smoky barroom where old vets drink cold beer and tell war stories. That it is at times, and few places are as tough as at the bar rail of the VFW if somebody is a boaster who can't back up claims about heroism or combat.

But the VFW is a lot more, offering veterans advocacy and assistance and helping with community functions ranging from scholarships to flower sales for deceased veterans' children. Robinson is not to be found at the bar.

But he has been found where soldiers are since joining the post more than 30 years ago. When a group of area National Guardsmen went to Iraq and then Afghanistan, Robinson led the drive for the post to adopt the whole unit so money could be raised for families.

Robinson then worked to enlist those men from 178th Combat Engineers in the VFW when those men came home: More than 60 of those newest vets joined.

"This is their VFW, not mine," Robinson said. "We serve combat veterans, and we serve the community. I only hope I serve both."

Robinson himself—not a representative—attends every local military send-off, every welcome home. Why? Maybe it's two wars and 27 years in the Army ending up as a command sergeant major—the highest enlisted rank there is.

He joined as a teenage kid straight off the cotton-chopping fields of rural Lancaster County. He was in the Nevada desert for atomic bomb tests, the cold killings of Korea, the hot killings of Vietnam. He doesn't have to read about Agent Orange—he lived through it, and he has lived through cancer because of it.

"I came home from Korea to California on a ship, then took a bus across the country to Columbia," Robinson said. "I had to take another bus to Lancaster. I couldn't say I was coming home because we had no phone in those days."

"I came home alone, and nobody knew I was coming until I got there. People need to be there at these ceremonies to show these guys what they do matters."

Robinson's membership at the post continues, and he will be around to help. He'll pull in driving his red pickup truck, with an old South Carolina license plate from 1990 on the front bumper.