

other outdoor recreational activities are strong traditions for many families in Minnesota and across America. Thanks to the foresight and hard work from the members of Pheasants Forever, these traditions can be passed down for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Pheasants Forever on its first 25 years of grassroots advocacy.

CONGRATULATING LIBERTY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Liberty Christian School in Argyle, Texas for winning the TAPP Division II State Championship in football.

This season's title was the program's third state title in six tries, and capped a season in which the Warriors went 12–2 and were the No. 1 ranked team in the Dallas Morning News' Large Private School poll the entire season. Liberty Christian's season was certainly a magical one. After beginning the season 1–2, the Warriors won 11 games in a row. They held opponents to two touchdowns or less in nine of those games while scoring 40 or more points in eight games during that stretch.

The Athletic Director of Liberty Christian, Coach Darren Chrane, attributed the success of this season's team after their rough start to the resolve of their senior class. "They decided that they weren't going to be denied a win and went out there and dominated against a good football team." Coach Chrane stated.

This year's team was eighth out of all private schools in offense with an average of 384 yards per game. Defensively, the Warriors were 11th overall with 246 yards against per game.

These student athletes exemplify the type of leadership and work ethic we all strive to possess. I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Liberty Christian football team, Athletic Director Darren Chrane, Head Coach Mark Bowles and the entire coaching staff, and all of those involved in the successful 2007 season. I wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. It is my honor to represent a group that exhibits such talent, hard work, and dedication.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RE-
LATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008 (CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008)

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 Appropriations Bill which is part of the larger omnibus spending package, Amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2764. Specifically, I want

to note that the Democrats have done a better job at funding key homeland security programs, but as always, more needs to be done.

As the first Democratic chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am happy to note that the appropriated dollars will go a long way to implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission which are codified in a bill I had the distinct honor of developing and steering toward passage—the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110–53. I am also glad that the fiscal year 2008 appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security are fairly consistent with my eight-point plan—the “Real Deal on Homeland Security.” This 8-point plan is what I have used to develop key legislative and oversight initiatives aimed at ensuring that ours is a Nation that can flourish free from fear. In particular, the fiscal year 2008 appropriations reflect the Real Deal in the following way:

1. IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONALITY, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 appropriations bill provides \$28.49 million for the Chief Procurement Officer which is \$11.5 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. This increase funding can help the office attract and retain experienced staff to manage procurements. The bill also provides a \$108.7 million for the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security, \$6 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. It is also notable that the bill's Joint Explanatory Statement makes clear that Congress favors contracts awarded by full and open competition. The bill also acknowledges the operation of the Small Business Act and therefore does not adversely affect the award of contracts to small, minority and disadvantaged businesses. In addition, the bill requires the Inspector General to review contracts awarded by means other than full and open competition to determine compliance with the law. Finally, I am very pleased that the bill provides no funding for MAX–HR but rather provides \$10 million for the Department of Homeland Security to address the issues revealed in the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey. The bill further requires the Secretary to submit an expenditure plan for the \$10 million prior to the obligation of the funds.

However, I must point out that the Committee on Homeland Security was disappointed with the decision not to fund the relocation of the headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security at the St. Elizabeths site in Washington, DC.

2. ENHANCING SECURITY FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

I applaud the bill which provides over \$4.5 billion to enhance aviation security. That funding makes the bill consistent with meeting aviation security mandates in P.L. 110–53. For example, the bill fully funds the Aviation Security Capitol Fund at \$250 million. Furthermore, this bill provides \$15 million for a pilot program to screen 100 percent of airport workers.

Although the bill does not provide sufficient resources to implement the authorization levels in P.L. 110–53, the Appropriations Committee has provided the foundation to reach that goal. For example, the bill provides \$400 million in Public Transportation and Railroad Security Grants. This includes not less than \$25 million for Amtrak, \$11.5 million over the

road bus security grants, and \$16 million for trucking security grants. This is in contrast to the authorized amount in P.L. 110–53 which called for \$650 million for public transit, \$300 million for rail, and \$150 million for Amtrak.

I also support the bill's provision of \$523.5 million for information technology and intelligence for transportation security and the increased funding for Red Teams at \$6.26 million—a 50 percent increase over the enacted level of fiscal year 2007. Finally, the bill provides \$46 million for surface transportation security, an increase from the \$41.4 million enacted in fiscal year 2007. Of the proposed amount for fiscal year 2008, \$24.5 million is for staffing and operations, \$22.1 million is for inspectors and canines, and another \$30 million is provided for security training program, transportation risk assessment, and the development of regulation for name-based immigration screening for public transportation and rail workers.

3. RESPONSE, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY IN THE WAKE OF A NATIONAL CATASTROPHE

I am pleased that key programs to assist first responders and State, local, and tribal governments have been funded above the President's request. Specifically, the State Homeland Security Grant Program which provides grants to first responders in all 50 States and U.S. Territories to help them prevent, prepare for, and respond to an act of terrorism or other emergency is funded at \$950 million. The Urban Area Security Initiative, which addresses the unique planning, operations, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas, is funded at \$820 million—a \$50 million increase in funding over FY 2007 levels.

The bill also provides \$41 million for the Metropolitan Medical Response System, MMRS; \$300 million for Emergency Management Performance Grant, EMPG, program; \$560 million for FIRE grants; \$190 million for the SAFER Act program; and \$32.5 million for the Urban Search and Rescue System, USAR, a \$7.5 million increase over the enacted level in fiscal year 2007.

I also support the bill for directing FEMA to assist communities by ensuring disaster preparedness and response education materials are developed and distributed to children. The bill also supports the Office of the Disabilities Coordinator and directs the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General to investigate FEMA's policies and processes regarding formaldehyde in trailers purchased by the agency to house disaster victims in the office created by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.

I will note, however, that it is unfortunate that the splintered oversight jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security has resulted in the inclusion of section 541 of the bill which states that “none of the funds provided by this or previous appropriations Acts shall be used to fund any position designated as a Principal Federal Official, PFO, for any Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act declared disasters or emergencies.” I am very concerned that this language micromanages Federal emergency response through the appropriation process, interferes with the writing of the National Response Framework which aims to clarify the role of the PFO and does not recognize the situations where the appointment of PFO would be necessary, public health emergencies, cyber attacks, etc. Simply stated, this

language unnecessarily reopens a policy question that was settled in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.

4. SHIELDING THE NATION'S CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FROM FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM

I commend the \$50 million appropriated for chemical security. The bill also includes pre-emption language that supports States that have stronger law as it relates to the security of chemical facilities. In addition, the bill directs the Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection to provide semi-annual briefings to the Appropriations Committee on implementing the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. I, too, look forward to being included in such briefing. The bill also provides \$10 million for the Office of Bombing Prevention, a legislative initiative from the Committee on Homeland Security, H.R. 4749, with the requirement that the office will develop a national strategy on bombing prevention.

5. SECURING THE HOMELAND AND PRESERVING CIVIL LIBERTIES IN TIMES OF TERROR

I believe strongly that civil liberties guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution need not be compromised to make the Nation more secure. One particular area of concern was the Department of Homeland Security's attempt to skirt congressional oversight by developing and implementing a spy satellite program. After I demanded answers about the program's reach, the Department modified its spy satellite plans. Going forward, the Committees on Homeland Security, Budget, and Appropriations should closely examine the Department's authority to ensure transparency and accountability.

6. CONNECTING THE DOTS: INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION SHARING AND INTEROPERABILITY

I am very pleased that the bill includes \$50 million to fund the Interoperability Emergency Communications Grant Program which was enacted in P.L. 110-53 and provides for improved emergency communications capabilities for first responders. Also, the bill includes \$35.7 million for the Office of Emergency Communications, an \$18.7 million increase over the enacted fiscal year 2007. The office, which was established in April 2007, pursuant to the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, is the focal point within the Federal Government to improve national interoperable communication capabilities.

7. IMPLEMENTING COMMONSENSE BORDER AND PORT SECURITY

I believe that border and port security must reflect the Nation's commitment to facilitating the flow of commerce and demanding accountability from our Government. That is why we cannot allow fear to drive the discussion of building fences that may wind up disrupting commerce or poor governmental planning that leads to Government waste. I commend the appropriators for providing \$2 million reimbursement to the Defense Acquisition University for a review of Secure Border Initiative procurement; \$60 million for reimbursement of State and local law enforcement agencies in U.S.-Mexico border communities; and \$225 million for the extension of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. We must remember that border security is fundamentally a Federal responsibility and that we should not pass unfunded mandates to State and local governments that will be burdened by bad public policy.

I am especially pleased that the appropriations bill provides \$475 million for U.S.-VISIT

along with report language that makes clear that at least \$13 million is to be used to develop an exit system. The provision also requires a schedule for implementing the exit program. Under my chairmanship, the Committee on Homeland Security has held several hearings examining the exit aspect of the US-VISIT. In fact, on September 5, 2007, I called on Secretary Chertoff to implement the US-VISIT air exit by the end of the calendar year 2008. Simply put, it is folly to speak of security if we rely on a process that tells us who comes into the country but cannot verify if or when individuals leave the country.

Other commonsense border security measures in the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill include the language that amend current law by requiring consultation with the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, States, local land owners, and tribes; authorizing programs to study the modernization of ports-of-entry. I also commend the bill's inclusion of \$36 million for the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorization program—a provision that I promoted in P.L. 110-53. One particular area that reflects sound policy is language that provides "law enforcement officer", LEO, status and retirement benefits to Customs and Border Protection officers in order to enhance recruitment and retention. I was pleased to advocate the LEO status during the Committee of Homeland Security's consideration of H.R. 1684, the "Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008." We must do all that we can to retain our trained staff who are the eyes and ears along this Nation's vast borders.

I also note that the bill prohibits the use of funds for the planning, testing, piloting, or development of a national ID card and directs CBP to brief the Appropriations committees no later than Jan. 31, 2008 on how it is using the Workload Staffing Model to allocated staffing resources.

With regard to port security, I commend the appropriators for requiring improved oversight of the Deepwater Program which is funded at \$783 million. Under my chairmanship, the Committee on Homeland Security has closely examined and demanded accountability over Deepwater, particularly in H.R. 2830, the U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization Act and the SAFE Port Act, P.L. 109-347. Other notable funding is the \$2 million for LNG and dangerous cargo suitability assessments; the \$3.1 million to develop and finalize SAFE Port Act rulemakings; and the \$60 million for Interagency Operational Centers for Port Security, a requirement from the SAFE Port Act; and \$400 million for port security grants.

I note that the appropriation's bill requires the Transportation Security Administration, TSA and Coast Guard to work closely with terminal operators, local port police, and other law enforcement agencies to develop the operational procedures to ensure the effective implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Card, TWIC program. I am concerned, however, that while the bill directs TSA to work with the appropriate officials of Florida and other port authorities to resolve differences between TWIC and the State's transportation facility access control programs, the requirement maybe interpreted as indicating that the Federal TWIC program does not pre-empt the Florida program. This is very troubling and counterproductive.

Finally, the bill appropriates \$13 million for the CBP's Global Trade Exchange, GTX. CBP

recently announced the Request for Quotations for the Global Trade Exchange 1 despite significant criticism from industry concerning the lack of transparency with this new initiative. I am concerned that the Department has not fully developed this initiative and that it is premature to fund it until the Department has provided the Committee of Homeland Security and industry with a more in-depth analysis of this new pilot.

8. INSPIRING MINDS AND DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY—THE FUTURE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

I am very concerned about the emerging threats of a chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological attack. As chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I will continue to conduct oversight into this area to ensure that there is improved coordination between the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services and State, local, and Tribal governments. I recognize that the appropriation's bill does not provide a large amount of funding for pandemic flu due to the fact that the Department of Health and Human Services has \$1.2 billion in unobligated funds from fiscal year 2007.

I am pleased that the bill provides \$116.5 million to the Office of Health Affairs and includes a provision that would allow agricultural inspectors to stay at CBP and the Transportation Security Lab to recoup fees for testing. With regard to the threat of a cyber security attack, the bill provides \$125 million for the Chief Information Officer to improve information technology security at the Department of Homeland Security—a much needed act.

I am also glad that the appropriators support the development of technology and the future minds in the field homeland security. For example, the bill provides that the Science and Technology Directorate will be appropriated at \$830 million and funds the Third Generation Bio Watch at \$5.8 million. The bill also provides \$325 million for research and development. With regard to university programs, the bill provides \$49.3 million for fiscal year 2008. This amount includes \$4 million for the Transportation Security Center of Excellence. While that is far shy of the \$18 million authorized in P.L. 110-53, the Committee on Homeland Security remains optimistic that appropriators will support the Centers of Excellence as they are the training grounds for future homeland security experts.

The \$455 million appropriated to the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, DNDO, and \$90 million for the Radiation Portal Monitor program is critical to tracking loose nuclear weapons. However, I am very concerned, like the appropriators, that there has not yet been certification by the DHS Secretary of Advanced Spectroscopic Portal, ASP, radiation monitors. We must push out the boundaries of technology if we are going to have 21st century security.

In closing, I would like to thank the appropriators for funding the vital programs that are critical to securing the Nation. As chairman of the authorizing committee, I will vigilantly monitor the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that it is drawing on the diverse talents of its experts to ensure that it is providing the American people security, accountability, and freedom from fear.