

best interest. The provision undermines the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

I do not make the decision to oppose the full legislation lightly. It has important provisions. The additional resources authorized by this bill are necessary to make up for a history of drastic underfunding and inattention to diplomacy. This bill highlights our commitment to a new diplomatic strategy as our nation strives to heal the wounds between our country and the world.

It authorizes additional funding to train and deploy 1,500 additional Foreign Service Officers. It commits \$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2010, as well as the necessary funds in 2011 to fulfill our assessed contributions to international organizations such as the United Nations. The bill will create an additional 25 positions at the Department of State for arms control and nonproliferation. Creation of the Rotation Program will help to strengthen inter-agency cooperation toward nuclear abolition.

The bill requires that the State Department investigate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the atrocities associated with an occupation that compromises the health and dignity of the Palestinian people. I am hopeful that the report will allow the U.S. to credibly claim a commitment to engage in a more even handed and diplomacy oriented foreign policy.

I do not agree with inclusion of Section 822 of the bill, which reduces the number of Congressional notifications about arms transfers between the U.S. government and the governments of other nations. For example, a Congressional notification is currently required for the transfer of major defense equipment sales valued at \$14 million or more. With enactment of this section, the threshold will be raised to \$25 million or greater. As such, the trigger for Congressional review will happen less often.

Furthermore, I oppose the increased funding levels for the Merida Initiative and expansion of this flawed program to the Caribbean countries. Time and again, research has demonstrated that illicit drug production in developing countries stems from pervasive rural poverty and lack of sustainable sources of income. More money for guns and other tools of destruction will do nothing to ease the suffering of those struggling with addiction or alleviate the social problems that compel people to produce and/or traffic drugs.

This body must take measurable actions to replace policies of aggression with policies of dialogue, adherence to international law and an unwavering dedication to the protection of human rights. By including the provision that paves the way for preemptive war against Iran, this bill continues the failed policies of the previous administration. Therefore, I could not vote for it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall #335 on the final passage of H.R. 1234, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

HIGH POTENCY MARIJUANA SENTENCING ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, popular culture often romanticizes casual marijuana use, and those who warn that marijuana is a "gateway drug" that can lead to use of other, harder drugs are ridiculed as being out of the mainstream. The reality is that marijuana today is vastly different than the marijuana that was prevalent in the '60s. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, the average THC content of seized marijuana was less than 4 percent in the early 1990s. By 2007 that level rose to nearly 10 percent.

Local police in my district are now reporting a new threat from "Kush," street slang for a strain of highly potent marijuana with a THC content of at least 20 percent. The rise of Kush mirrors the increasing trend of high-THC marijuana, which has become more accessible with the rise of hydroponics. Drug growers are able to strictly control light, temperature and humidity and can cross-breed to maximize THC content. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, Kush has been known to sell for as high as \$600 per ounce—creating the same profit potential as crack cocaine.

Today I am introducing legislation to bring federal penalties for trafficking high-potency marijuana in line with penalties for cocaine, heroin, and hashish, all of which have similar retail prices on the street. The gangs and cartels trafficking Kush are the same trafficking cocaine and heroin, and the profits they realize represent an equal danger to the public. In my view, the penalties for trafficking this dangerous drug should also be equalized.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2346, SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I voted against the motion. One of my concerns about the Supplemental as passed by the Senate is the fact that it contains funding for the International Monetary Fund without language designed to ensure that the IMF provide no assistance to countries that support terrorism, raise proliferation concerns, or are major human rights abusers, most notably Iran. Proponents of the motion mentioned their objections to the IMF funding; some raised similar concerns that the IMF could assist some of the worst regimes. However, a close reading of the motion reveals that conferees could implement the instructions without any cut to IMF funding and without adding any preconditions that the IMF would have to meet before obtaining \$109 billion. Given the political realities, I believe that this is the direction the conferees would take to implement these instructions in the event they did not ignore them altogether. Thus this motion does not instruct

conferees to do anything at all to IMF funding and, if implemented will lead to cuts to worthy domestic and international accounts. For these reasons, I could not support the motion.

HONORING SANDY REMPE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly rise today to recognize Sandy Rempe of the Missouri Department of Public Safety. Her direction of the Juvenile Justice Program and the dedication and compassion she has for today's youth is to be commended. Due to her exemplary leadership, she has earned the prestigious Tony Gobar Award, an honor that recognizes excellence in the field of juvenile justice.

Ms. Rempe has worked as the manager of the Department of Public Safety's Juvenile Justice Program for twelve years. Under her leadership, the program distributes federal grants that provide funding to sixty state and local agencies in Missouri to help support juvenile justice and delinquency prevention initiatives. Additionally, grant funds are utilized for training on juvenile justice, system improvements, and intervention programs. Ms. Rempe also serves on many groups, committees and commissions including the Mental Health Transformation Leadership Work Group and the Drug Court Commission.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Sandy Rempe for this prestigious accomplishment with the Missouri Department of Public Safety and for her tireless efforts in helping Missouri's youth.

IN HONOR OF ELLEN PSENICKA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Ellen Psenicka, whose forty-year tenure as reporter, editor and publisher of the award-winning Neighborhood News, continues to enlighten, entertain and unite Cleveland's southeast community every Wednesday, highlighting current events along our city streets—from the neighborhoods of Slavic Village, to the streets of Garfield Heights, to the steps of Cleveland City Hall.

Ellen grew up in Sandusky, Ohio and went on to attend Ohio University, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Journalism. Shortly following graduation, in June, 1969, Ellen was hired as a reporter by Jim Psenicka, publisher of the Neighborhood News. A few years later, Jim and Ellen were married, and they worked in dedication to each other, to the newspaper and to the community until Jim's passing in 2001. At that time, Ellen accepted the torch of leadership passed to her by Jim, and she continues to carry on his legacy of excellence in journalism, and his commitment to the Greater Cleveland Community.

Ellen's spirit of volunteerism and focus on the betterment of the community is evident

throughout Southeast Cleveland and its suburbs. Her kind and humble nature draws people to her, and she has garnered the admiration and respect of everyone she knows. She is a longtime member of the Garfield Heights Historical Society and serves as a board member for Cleveland Central Catholic High School. She is currently serving her second term as President of the Kiwanis of Southeast Cleveland. As a member and leader in Kiwanis, Ellen has been instrumental in leading several fundraising efforts aimed at local student scholarship awards, and recently, a fundraiser and recognition dinner honoring Dr. Javier Lopez which raised greatly-needed funds for his medical missions to Central America. Ellen has always reached out with a generous heart wherever and whenever needed. Her efforts in volunteerism also include her tireless dedication in her efforts to save St. Michael's hospital.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Ellen Psenicka, as she celebrates her 40th Anniversary with the Neighborhood News. The Neighborhood News is read by tens of thousands of people weekly, and continues to inform and unite us all. Ellen's commitment to bringing us the news of the neighborhood and her generosity as a community leader and volunteer serves to brighten and strengthen our entire community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANTHONY APPLEWHITE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Anthony Applewhite of Boy Scout Troop 1577 on being promoted to the rank of Eagle Scout. Fewer than 2% of all scouts have mastered the skills necessary to achieve this honor. Anthony's achievement of this rank is even more extraordinary because, at the age of just 13, he is one of the youngest Eagle Scouts ever in the 100 year history of Boy Scouts of America.

For his Eagle Scout Service Project, Anthony designed, planned and managed the construction of a picnic area at The Kings Chapel in Clifton, Va. This picnic area was completed efficiently and now is enjoyed by community members as well as the children who attend the The Kings Chapel pre-school. This is just a recent example of Anthony's scouting achievements. Anthony also was recognized for his leadership and service in his Boy Scout Troop with membership in the Order of the Arrow, the National Honor Society of Scouting.

In addition to his success within the Boy Scouts, Anthony is an Honor Roll Student at Rocky Run Middle School. He excels in science, math and technology and would like to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Anthony plans a dual career of game designer and neurosurgeon where he can utilize many of his impressive abilities. Anthony's scholastic abilities were highlighted when he captained his Odyssey of the Mind teams for the creative problem solving competitions. He also enjoys travel soccer as well as the violin.

Anthony has set many short- and long-term goals for himself ranging from continuing his involvement in the Scouts where he hopes to be selected to attend the 2010 National Jamboree and the 2012 World Jamboree to a career in the medical and technological fields.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Anthony on being one of the youngest Eagle Scouts in scouting history and in wishing him the very best in what promises to be a very bright future. I would also like to ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our thanks to Anthony's family, friends and troop leaders for the support that they have given Anthony which has allowed and encouraged his development as a fine young citizen.

BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, during the period May 22–31, 2009, I led a bipartisan House delegation to NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) meetings in Oslo, Norway and to additional bi-lateral meetings in Helsinki, Finland and Stockholm, Sweden. The co-chair of the NATO PA delegation is the Hon. JOHN SHIMKUS. The delegation also included Representatives JO ANN EMERSON, DENNIS MOORE, JOHN BOOZMAN, MIKE ROSS, DAVID SCOTT, KENDRICK MEEK, JEFF MILLER, BEN CHANDLER, MIKE TURNER and staff. The NATO PA delegation had a highly successful trip in which a wide range of political, economic and security issues on NATO's agenda, as well as issues involving the U.S.–Finland and U.S.–Sweden bi-lateral relationships, were examined. Accompanying the delegation on the visits to Finland and Sweden was Mr. David Hobbs, Secretary General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, who provided invaluable assistance with respect to Finland and Sweden's participation in the NATO PA and issues related to their cooperation with NATO in numerous Alliance operations.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly consists of parliamentarians from all 28 NATO member states. The NATO PA provides a unique forum for elected officials to analyze and debate issues that the NATO leadership discusses in Brussels. In addition to the 28 member parliaments, parliamentarians from countries such as Russia, Georgia, Afghanistan, and others also participate in the sessions as associate states or observers. Through these sessions, delegates have the opportunity to learn firsthand the views and concerns that other countries have over the key security issues of the day. An invaluable aspect of the meetings is the chance to meet and come to know members of parliaments who play important roles in their own countries in shaping the security agenda that their governments pursue at NATO. These contacts can endure through a career, and can provide an invaluable private avenue for insights into each ally's particular views on an issue.

In early April, NATO celebrated its 60th anniversary at a summit in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany. The key issues on the

agenda of the Alliance included the broader issue of the future of NATO and more specific issues including relations with Russia, energy security, missile defense, the conflict in Afghanistan, and emerging challenges such as piracy and cyber security. Each of these issues was also on the NATO PA agenda in Oslo and many were vigorously debated by the parliamentarians. Relations with Russia and the new strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan were two of the issues that dominated the session. Many members of the Alliance questioned whether Russia has begun to implement an increasingly assertive security policy including efforts to intimidate neighboring states, through the threat of force. There was also concern expressed that Russia would continue to use its energy supplies as a political lever to influence European policy. It was clear from our meetings that not only the United States and NATO, but the European Union as well, are concerned about Moscow's posture on a variety of issues. And, while there were differences of opinion over how to structure future relations between NATO and Russia and the NATO PA and the Russian delegates to the Assembly, most felt that dialogue between NATO, the NATO PA, and Russia was important and should continue. Many delegates welcomed the U.S. commitment to a new, constructive relationship with Moscow and expressed hope that through those promising relations, Russia's attitude toward NATO could become more positive. On Afghanistan, there was continued support for the ISAF mission among the allies and a willingness to provide the additional civilian and financial support necessary for the reconstruction effort there. However, we did detect an undercurrent of concern among some allies that through the commitment of 21,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan and the replacement of U.S./ISAF Commander, General McKiernan, the process of the "Americanization" of the war was underway and that NATO could be pushed aside by the United States. Our delegation was clear that this is not the case and that NATO's role in Afghanistan continues to be a critical one that needs to be carried out in an effective and efficient manner.

Before the opening sessions of the Assembly's plenary the U.S. delegation received a detailed briefing from the new U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, who had been in his new role for four days. He prepared us for the nuances involved in some of the issues that would be debated during the NATO PA sessions, particularly regarding Russia and NATO's on-going role in Afghanistan. In addition to the briefing by Ambassador Daalder, we also had the opportunity to meet with the new Deputy Chief of Mission to NATO, Mr. John Heffern who represented the United States at the joint NATO PA/North Atlantic Council (NAC) session at the conclusion of the plenary. Another highlight was a private meeting our delegation held with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who was attending his last NATO Parliamentary Assembly session as Secretary General. He gave an overview of the most critical challenges confronting the alliance and thanked the U.S. delegation for its continued support for NATO. Later he addressed the NATO PA's plenary session. The Foreign Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg also addressed the plenary and spoke about the continued importance of the