

leave incentive, though they were cognizant of the possible consequences. Report language accompanying the new statute indicate that Congress believed that "without an incentive to save sick leave, the use of sick leave may increase substantially."

The "FERS Sick Leave Equity Act" will reverse the growing trend of using sick leave by providing the same benefit to FERS retirees that CSRS retirees currently receive. Under the proposal, all FERS-eligible employees will add their accrued sick leave to the years of service that employee has worked in the Federal Government. These years of service are part of the FERS retirement benefits calculation, providing a real incentive to accrue as much sick leave as possible.

The proposal has gained widespread endorsement by Federal employees who know the problem firsthand: the managers who experience the problem every day and the organizations that know the negative effect of the "use-it or lose-it" policy. The supporting organizations include the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), FAA Managers Association (FAAMA), Federal Managers Association (FMA), Federally Employed Women (FEW), Government Managers Coalition (GMC), Senior Executives Association (SEA), National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA), Professional Managers Association (PMA), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS), National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA), and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU). I am proud and grateful to have this support for the proposal.

Madam Speaker, we need to incentivize the accrual of sick leave, not to keep a policy in place that encourages people to call in sick in the weeks leading up to retirement. It will save the Federal Government millions while providing sick leave parity for FERS employees and their CSRS counterparts. I look forward to working with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the full House of Representatives on this pressing issue.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS AND WATERFALLS NETWORK REAUTHORIZATION

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network (CBGN), a program that connects those who live in the Bay watershed to the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Bay and thereby encourages individual stewardship of these resources.

The legislation I am introducing today is identical to the bill that passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of 321 to 86 during the 110th Congress. Unfortunately, we were not able to

get the bill to the President's desk but I am hopeful that we will complete our work on this legislation during the 111th Congress.

Since 2000, Gateways has grown to include more than 150 sites and over 1500 miles of established and developing water trails in six states and the District of Columbia. Through grants to parks, volunteer groups, wildlife refuges, historic sites, museums, and water trails, the Network ties these sites together to provide meaningful experiences and foster citizen stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

Madam Speaker, for a very modest investment, the Gateways program helps foster the citizen stewardship that will be necessary to advance Bay cleanup and maintain the gains we hope to make in the coming years. By reauthorizing the Gateways program and providing access to the beautiful sites that make up the network, we can help develop the next generation of environmental stewards, which is one of the best ways to truly "Save the Bay." I hope that my colleagues will support this legislation so the Park Service can continue to play a key role in the Bay cleanup effort.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE AUTONOMY ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, last week, I introduced the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act. Today, I am introducing its fraternal twin, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act of 2009, to end discriminatory and unnecessary congressional review of District of Columbia legislation. I introduce these bills in sequence because Congress makes a mockery of self-government when it denies the citizens of the nation's capital the right to enact a local budget, as well as civil and criminal laws, free from interference.

In 2007, this bill was passed by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Budget Autonomy bill was cleared by the subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia that year as well. However, I decided to delay taking these bills to the floor because of threatened debilitating amendments and possible difficulties getting President Bush to sign these bills.

The legislative autonomy bill would eliminate the 30 day and 60 day congressional review period for civil and criminal bills, respectively. Because the period of Congressional review involves only days when Congress is in session, not ordinary calendar days, bills signed by the mayor laws typically do not become law for months. A required hold on all D.C. bills forces the D.C. City Council to pass most legislation using a cumbersome and complicated process in which bills are passed concurrently on an emergency, temporary, and permanent basis to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted. Because of the complications and timeframes involved, some bills do not become law at all. The Legislative Autonomy Act would eliminate the need for the D.C. City Council to engage in this Byzantine process.

The current law is an obsolete, demeaning, and cumbersome mechanism, which Congress

no longer uses, and seldom used in the past. Yet, the D.C. City Council continues to be bound by Section 602 of the Home Rule Act, and therefore continues to abide by its awkward and debilitating rules. Our bill would do no more than align D.C. City Council and congressional practices. Instead of the cumbersome formal filing of disapproval resolutions that require processing in the House and the Senate, the Congress has preferred to use appropriations attachments. It is particularly unfair to require the D.C. City Council to engage in the tortuous process prescribed by the Home Rule Act that Congress itself has discarded. My bill would eliminate the formal review system that long ago died of old age and disuse. Congress has walked away from the layover review and should allow the city to do the same.

Today's bill, of course, does not prevent review of District laws by Congress. Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the House and the Senate could scrutinize every piece of legislation passed by the D.C. City Council, if desired, and could change or strike such legislation under its plenary constitutional authority over the District. However, since the Home Rule Act became effective in 1974, of the more than 2,000 legislative acts that have been passed by the D.C. City Council and signed into law by the Mayor, only three resolutions to disapprove of a D.C. bill have been enacted, and two of these involved a distinct federal interest. Placing a hold on our 2,000 D.C. bills has not only proved unnecessary, but has meant untold wasted costs in terms of money, staff and time to the District and the Congress. Although 36 years of Home Rule Act history shows that congressional review is unnecessary, this bill merely eliminates the automatic hold placed on local legislation and the need for the D.C. City Council to use a phantom process passed for the convenience of Congress, but one that Congress has eliminated in all but law.

Congress continually urges the District government to pursue efficiency and savings. It is time for Congress to do its part to promote greater efficiency, both here and in the District, by streamlining its own redundant and discarded review processes. Eliminating the hold on D.C. legislation would not only save scarce D.C. taxpayer revenue, but would benefit the city's bond rating, which is affected by the shadow of congressional review that delays the finality of District legislation. At the same time, Congress would not give up any of its plenary power because the Congress may intervene into any District matter at any time under the Constitution.

The limited legislative autonomy granted in this bill would allow the District to realize the greater measure of meaningful self-government and Home Rule it deserves and has more than earned in the 36 years since the Home Rule Act became effective. I urge my colleagues to pass this important measure.

HONORING ALISHA YOUNG, YOUTHBUILD LEADER

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize a dedicated and committed

young woman in West Virginia, Alisha Young. Ms. Young, a native of Montgomery, West Virginia, has overcome steep odds to gain an education and has tirelessly dedicated herself to the betterment of southern West Virginia and her neighbors.

Despite hardship early on, Ms. Young worked part-time in her local community to help her mother provide for their family and got herself through high school and into college. After a series of unfortunate choices, Alisha found herself back at home and joined YouthBuild, a youth and community development program which addresses low-income community challenges, including housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development.

Ms. Young speaks passionately about her work with YouthBuild. In a recent editorial in *The Charleston Gazette*, she highlighted the opportunity that participants have to obtain their GEDs or high school diplomas while learning career- and leadership-skills and earning money to build affordable homes for homeless and underprivileged families.

Now a self-proclaimed YouthBuild leader, Alisha has persevered and hopes to return to her education in the near future. She is currently serving in the AmeriCorps VISTA program and working with the YouthBuild USA Young Leaders Council.

It is from Alisha Young's example that I hope we can all learn. Her enthusiasm for her work and YouthBuild are a testament to the strong and compassionate spirit of volunteerism in West Virginia and America.

As citizens of this great Nation, it is our duty to help the less fortunate using our strengths and talents to help those in need, and to inspire those who are lost. Today, I am proud to recognize her hard work and determination and congratulate Ms. Young for her commitment to personifying the change she hopes to see in the world through her work.

THE BELLS OF BALANGIGA: IT IS TIME TO GO HOME

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I recently introduced my bill, H. Con. Res. 30, which urges the President to authorize the transfer of ownership to the Philippines of the bells taken in 1901 from the town of Balangiga in the Philippines. The bells are currently displayed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In the 108 years since the taking of the bells occurred, the citizens of the United States and the Philippines have shared many historic and political ties. The Philippines was a staunch ally of the United States during World War II. Brave Filipino soldiers were drafted into service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, fought side-by-side with American soldiers, and were instrumental in the successful outcome of World War II. Filipino soldiers also fought along side our soldiers on the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam.

Since the independence of the Philippines in 1946, the U.S.-Philippine relationship has been largely one of friendship and cooperation. The Philippines is a republic patterned basically on our own system of government. The Philippines is a valuable trading partner of the U.S. and an ally in the war against terrorism. Approximately 2.9 million Americans are of Filipino descent and close to 250,000 United States citizens reside in the Philippines. The acts of conflict that surrounded the taking of the bells of Balangiga are not consistent with the friendship that is currently an integral part of the relationship between our two nations.

The Republic of the Philippines has repeatedly requested the return of the bells. They are an important symbol to the Filipino people, who wish to have them re-installed in the belfry of the Balangiga Church. I believe that it is time to resolve this situation in order to solidify the bonds between our two nations. My resolution would honor and promote the positive relationship our counties enjoy.

As the years pass, I am confident that relations between our two nations will grow even stronger. To that end, the United States Government which has final disposition over the bells of Balangiga should transfer ownership of the bells to the people of the Philippines as a measure of good will and co-operation.

LET'S PROTECT MOBILE HOMES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I have re-introduced the Mobile Home Protection Act (H.R. 741). The purpose of this bill is to provide Section 8 assistance to low-income owners of mobile homes.

Owning one's home is a central part of the American Dream. For many low-income Americans, mobile homes provide the opportunity to achieve this goal of homeownership.

However, in many cases, while the family owns their home, they do not own the land on which the home sits. In some cases, the landlord will not accept section 8 vouchers for the land on which the mobile home sits.

I have introduced the Mobile Home Protection Act to correct this problem. This bill would provide this Section 8 assistance directly to the homeowners to apply towards their rent costs for the land on which their homes sit.

Many mobile home owners have invested their life savings into buying their mobile homes. As mobile home park rents increase these low-income homeowners are not able to keep up with this cost. This legislation will help keep these homeowners in their homes and maintain these established communities.

NO MORE NAVY BASES ON FAULT LINES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I recently introduced legislation, H.R. 740, intended to prevent the Department of Defense from building new bases and facilities along seismic fault lines.

In San Diego, California, the Department of the Navy is planning a mixed-use development along the downtown waterfront that will incorporate not only a new Navy headquarters, but also business, commercial, and housing elements. It has come to my attention that the land in question is within the Uniform Building Code (UBC) Seismic Zone 4.

My bill requires the lease for this development to be revoked unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that seismic activity would not have any significant impact on any portion of the proposed development. My bill would also extend this requirement to other leases on which no substantial construction has already begun.

In my view, it is only reasonable to require a scientific review of this issue before construction begins. We should not allow the Department of Defense to build new bases on fault lines.

HONORING SLAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to speak about a concurrent resolution that I have reintroduced that recognizes the service and sacrifice of our law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

My legislation would express the sense of Congress that a stamp, called the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Stamp, should be issued to honor law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

On average, a law enforcement officer is killed in America every other day. Since 1792, when recordkeeping started, more than 18,200 officers have lost their lives in service to their communities. In 2008, 140 officers were killed in the line of duty.

Too many police officers are killed or injured in the line of duty every day and this legislation is a way to thank those who put their lives in danger every time they put on their uniforms. I am proud to sponsor such a worthy legislation.

I invite my colleagues to join with me in commending our law enforcement officers. It is extremely important that we honor these everyday heroes! Please join me in supporting the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Stamp Act (H. Con. Res. 31).