

was when he first arrived, young teenager alone, wearing jeans, not maroon robes. Looking for his birth family, an education and his American self. He found his dear wife—they understood too well both tragedy and exile. They courageously trusted each other, shared love and pain and family, and the struggle for human rights in Tibet.

It was the spring of 1999 when I met Wangchuk. He was impressive, knowledgeable. We were just a group of people interested in Tibet who gathered to share ideas. We formed an alliance, the Boston Tibet Network (BTN) to share information and be able to act on it. Present were Tibetan Buddhists, folks from Amnesty, a scholar archivist of Tibetan Buddhist texts, a Harvard professor, those interested in Tibet, in Buddhism, in social justice. All concerned about the well being of Tibetans in Tibet and those in exile, about human rights and non-violent action. The network still exists, we now know each other well and continue to work toward the same goals.

A few months after our first meetings, Wangchuk went to Tibet. He went in August to investigate, see what was happening to the nomads in Amdo at the hands of the Chinese. He was outstandingly brave to do this. He knew there was danger. The Tibetan movement had learned that the World Bank, contrary to their own mandate, had financed Chinese population resettlement. Tibet supporters worldwide protested loudly with marches and more. Bowing to international pressure, the Chinese government said all were welcome to visit and explore their nomad resettlement project which they claimed was beneficial; yet the pattern was set—the Chinese were perpetually hard about all things Tibetan. Wangchuk was one of those who decided to take them at their word and go and see their project.

Once there Wangchuk was quickly captured by the Chinese, questioned and tortured. Despairing of ever being released, he jumped from a window trying to escape. He was seriously injured and held in a nearby hospital by the Chinese.

For BTN our first group action was to announce the terrible news that Wangchuk was imprisoned. We begged the Chinese government to release him and lobbied our own government to assist in freeing him. The Chinese made his release difficult, so Wangchuk's wife Phuntsok and their friend, Carl, went to China to get him. A harrowing experience but finally they returned to the states and he was admitted to Brigham and Womens' Hospital for a long stay.

August of 1999, Wangchuk's imprisonment, his subsequent injuries and release, world protests—all this was a pivotal moment for the Tibetan movement. The World Bank relented to demands and stopped the funding to the Chinese for nomad resettlement in Amdo. The Tibetan movement was energized and Tibet supporters became a strongly united grass roots movement that has continued to grow powerful all these years since.

Wangchuk was heroic to go to Amdo. He was brave when he endured the endless surgeries needed to rebuild his shattered feet. He was generous to write his autobiography "Comes the Peace" and share his personal life, thoughts and feelings. He was happy with his wife and their boutique "Karma" where they shared workdays and he told stories to friends and shoppers, and enjoyed his Newton Center community.

Yes, it hurts that he is not with us anymore, and that he chose to leave us. But I am

so grateful to have known Wangchuk, he was a hero. Such an honest man, he took my breath away. He is remembered well.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JOHN LEWIS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 29, 2010*

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, on July 28, 2010 I was unable to cast rollcall votes 476 through 482. Had I been here I would have cast the following votes: on rollcall No. 476, I would have voted "yes"; on rollcall No. 477, I would have voted "yes"; on rollcall No. 478, I would have voted "yes"; on rollcall No. 479, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 480, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 481, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 482, I would have voted "yes."

## TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2011

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 29, 2010*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5850) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 5850, the "Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2011." This bill includes important funding and necessary investments in our transportation, housing and other critical aspects of this country's infrastructure. This bill also provides assistance to the most vulnerable Americans, including the homeless, disabled, low-income and elderly. Additionally, this bill provides support for our veterans who serve this nation so valiantly and who have earned a right to adequate housing.

Mr. Chair, this bill includes funding for critical transportation projects that will improve mobility and stimulate economic activity in communities across the country. What I am particularly proud of is the funding for two light rail lines in Houston, Texas—the North and Southeast lines. These projects have successfully gone through the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts review process, and I am looking forward to passage of this bill and funding of these projects. As the fourth largest city in the country, we are anxiously awaiting construction of an integrated rail network that will create jobs, provide mobility and spur economic development. Funding for these projects will be a significant step towards achieving our goals.

This bill also invests in National Infrastructure to Support Jobs. It includes funding for:

### *Highway infrastructure*

There is \$45.2 billion in the bill to improve and repair our nation's aging highway infrastructure. It is estimated that this increased investment will support more than 142,000 additional jobs across all sectors of the economy, according to the job model developed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). According to the DOT's 2008 Conditions and Performance Report, an average annual investment of \$105.6 billion from all levels of government is needed just to sustain the current conditions of our highways and bridges, and \$174.6 billion is needed to improve our current system. In addition, the report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission issued in December 2007 recommended investing \$225 billion annually over the next 50 years to maintain, upgrade, and expand our transportation networks.

### *Public Transportation Investments*

There is also \$11.3 billion to support bus and rail projects, including capital expenditures. The increase from last year will support an estimated 20,000 additional jobs for transit workers around the country. The Federal Transit Administration estimates that our nation's public transportation system has a state-of-good-repair backlog of nearly \$78 billion.

### *Public Housing Capital Fund*

Additionally, the bill includes \$2.5 billion to help Public Housing Authorities make critical repairs and improvements to public housing units and improve living conditions for residents, including green and sustainable rehabilitation. Every dollar invested in the Capital Fund produces \$2.12 in economic return for local economies.

### *HOPE VI*

The bill also includes \$200 million for grants to rehabilitate distressed public housing neighborhoods by transforming them into sustainable mixed-income communities. This transformation will help create jobs in the hard-hit construction industry and will revitalize distressed neighborhoods.

### *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)*

In addition, the bill provides for \$4.35 billion to spur local construction and development. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG helps local governments tackle serious challenges facing their communities and makes a difference in the lives of millions of people across the nation.

### *Passenger Rail Grant Program*

Also included in the bill is \$1.4 billion to expand and improve intercity passenger rail and develop a robust national high speed rail system, which will create jobs and reinvigorate our manufacturing base. Additionally, this investment will help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and decrease congestion between cities across the country.

by providing a transportation alternative for congested highways and air space.

#### *Amtrak*

There is \$1.77 billion in the bill to make capital investments, including improvements to Amtrak's fleet and upgrades to Amtrak stations to ensure they are accessible for the disabled. This increase above FY 2010 will save or create an additional 1,130 jobs.

#### **VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

This bill includes vital support for vulnerable populations who need our help in a difficult economic environment. Included are the following:

#### *Foreclosure Mitigation and Housing Counseling Funds*

The bill includes \$113 million to support foreclosure counseling for families through NeighborWorks America and \$88 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's housing counseling assistance program to provide help for low and moderate income families before they purchase a home.

#### *Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers*

I am very pleased to know that we are taking care of our veterans by including \$75 million for housing vouchers for homeless veterans, coordinated with supportive services from the VA Medical Centers. This funding will support 10,000 new vouchers and supports the effort to end veteran homelessness.

#### *Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration*

This bill also includes \$85 million for a new demonstration coordinated between HUD and HHS to couple housing vouchers and mainstream health services for 10,000 homeless persons and individuals. Homeless individuals need both housing and services to build self-sufficiency, and integrating the programs of HUD and HHS in a seamless manner for these families and individuals will provide comprehensive support for long-term housing stability.

#### *Public Housing Operating Fund*

Also included is \$4.849 billion to support public housing units' maintenance and energy costs. The public housing inventory consists of more than 1.1 million units of housing to support low-income persons, whose average income level is \$13,346.

#### *Section 8 Tenant Based Rental Assistance*

This bill also includes \$19.4 billion to renew all vouchers currently in use and allow more than 2 million low income families to stay in their homes. Included in this total is \$113 million to renew housing vouchers for persons with disabilities and \$60 million to support the Family Self-Sufficiency program, which helps families increase income and move out of assisted housing.

#### *Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance*

Additionally, this bill includes \$9.4 billion to support the 1.3 million units of housing assisted. The average annual income of a resident of this form of housing is \$11,217, and

more than 57 percent are either elderly or disabled.

#### *Housing for the Elderly*

Funding in the amount of \$825 million is included in the bill to support affordable housing for the elderly by constructing approximately 3,200 new units and keeping over 50,000 elderly Americans in their homes.

#### *Housing for the Disabled*

The bill also includes \$300 million to support affordable housing for the disabled by constructing approximately 1,400 new units and keeping over 13,000 Americans with disabilities in their homes.

#### *Indian Housing*

A very important measure in this bill includes \$700 million to support and construct affordable housing for American Indians. These funds will assist over 540 tribes, provide rental assistance to over 57,000 families, and add approximately 8,000 housing units to the over 26,000 housing units constructed and 54,000 housing units rehabilitated by this program since 1998.

#### *Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)*

Additionally, the bill includes \$350 million to prevent homelessness among persons with AIDS. Up to 70 percent of all people living with HIV or AIDS report a lifetime experience of homelessness or housing instability and the HIV/AIDS death rate is seven to nine times higher for homeless adults than for the general population. This funding will provide housing assistance for over 60,000 households nationwide.

#### *Homeless Assistance Grants*

The bill also provides \$2.2 billion for permanent and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals. It is important to note that this is the first year of implementation of the HEARTH Act, which will support both the prevention of, and rapid resolution of, homelessness in America.

#### *Reverse Mortgages*

Also included is \$150 million to support elderly homeowners and assist them in keeping their homes rather than forcing them to move to expensive assisted living facilities. This funding level is important because it will keep the program running in 2011 at expected volume levels.

#### **ENSURING SAFE TRANSPORTATION**

#### *Aviation Safety Programs*

The bill provides \$1.3 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration's, FAA, safety enforcement efforts including \$17 million to hire 122 additional safety inspectors to assist with NextGen development and the oversight of foreign repair stations. This additional funding will help meet the safety goals established in the FAA's Administrator's Call to Action in the aftermath of the tragic Colgan air crash.

#### *Highway Safety Programs*

Also included in the bill is \$891.2 million for the programs of the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration to make America's roads safer by encouraging safety belt use, preventing drinking and driving, improving child safety, enhancing motorcyclist safety, and other initiatives.

#### *Railroad Safety Technology Program*

There is also \$75 million to provide grants to help deploy positive train control, PTC, systems, which perform a critical safety function on rail lines with mixed freight and passenger traffic. These funds will help train operators with the estimated \$5.5 billion necessary for initial PTC system acquisition and implementation, which is required on all lines that jointly operate passenger and freight traffic by December 15, 2015.

Mr. Chair, this bill includes crucial support for our transportation, housing and infrastructure that will create jobs for Americans all across this country. It also includes vital support for veterans and vulnerable populations such as the elderly, low-income, and homeless who need a lifeline in the midst of this economic storm. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

### **PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

#### **HON. W. TODD AKIN**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 30, 2010*

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, on July 29, 2010, I was absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, and 499.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 491, "yes" on rollcall No. 492, "yes" on rollcall No. 493, "yes" on rollcall No. 494, "yes" on rollcall No. 495, "yes" on rollcall No. 496, "yes" on rollcall No. 497, "yes" on rollcall No. 498, and "no" on rollcall No. 499.

### **RECOGNIZING THE SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

#### **HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 30, 2010*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Salem United Church of Christ in Alhambra, Illinois for their 150th Anniversary of ministry.

The origins of the church date back to 1860 when German immigrants settled in and around Alhambra and formed a congregation with a small church that was without a tower or steeple. In 1877, the congregation decided to build a new Gothic style church. The congregation has since added a parish hall for a gathering place for young and old alike for many activities. Since they built their first church with timbers cut in a steam-powered mill, the members of the Salem United Church