

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, May 6, 2010.

Hon. GEORGE MILLER,

Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER: Thank you for your May 5, 2010 letter regarding H.R. 5116, the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010. Your support for this legislation and your assistance in ensuring its timely consideration are greatly appreciated.

I agree that provisions in the bill are within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Education and Labor. I acknowledge that by waiving rights to further consideration of H.R. 5116, your Committee is not relinquishing its jurisdiction and I will fully support your request to be represented in a House-Senate conference on those provisions over which the Committee on Education and Labor has jurisdiction in H.R. 5116, or similar legislation. A copy of our letters will be placed in the legislative report and the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

I value your cooperation and look forward to working with you as we move ahead with this important legislation.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON,
Chairman.

TRIBUTE TO TIM RUSSELL, BALDWIN COUNTY, ALABAMA PROBATE JUDGE

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a distinguished public servant from my home state, a man who has who has served as Mayor of the City of Foley, Revenue Commissioner for the State of Alabama and now, has returned to his beloved home county to assume the responsibilities as Baldwin County's new Probate Judge, the Honorable Tim Russell.

On April 16, Governor Bob Riley appointed Commissioner Russell to be the next Probate Judge of Baldwin County. Tim's selection was an outstanding choice.

As an Army Captain during the Vietnam War, Tim demonstrated leadership and loyalty to his country—vital qualities he still possesses. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for his military service.

As a businessman, Tim led Baldwin Mutual Insurance Company as president, while also taking the mantle of public service in his home town. He was elected mayor of Foley in 1996 and was re-elected twice, serving until 2006.

On March 3, 2008, Governor Bob Riley appointed Tim Russell as Alabama Revenue Commissioner. In this statewide position, Tim was responsible for the operation and management of the state's revenue collections, which exceed \$8 billion annually. And as a key member of Governor Riley's cabinet, Tim used his experience in both business and public life to help advance the governor's agenda of always putting Alabama first. Throughout his 8 years in office, Governor Riley has always prided himself on assembling a truly world-class Cabinet and Tim Russell is one of the reasons why this statement was so true.

Tim's able stewardship of this major state agency made him the logical choice to replace

former Baldwin County Probate Judge Adrian Jones, who recently retired to spend more time with his family. Tim officially took office on May 3, 2010.

Madam Speaker, Judge Russell has held numerous posts in many community organizations, including the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, the South Baldwin United Way, the Foley Rotary Club, and the Foley Library Board, to name just a few.

Tim has been the epitome of a servant leader and he and his wife, Sandy, are great friends, as well, to Janee and me. With this latest responsibility, I am confident that Judge Russell will continue to make his family, his friends and all of South Alabama extremely proud.

I congratulate Tim on his appointment and wish him and his family continued success and much happiness.

COBRA HEALTH BENEFITS EXTENSION ACT OF 2010

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of those relying on COBRA benefits for health coverage.

Millions of Americans have lost their jobs since the recession began in 2007. Unfortunately, when you lose your job, you generally lose your health insurance. For those with a preexisting condition or ongoing health problem, this common scenario can leave them with no health insurance and often no way to get coverage.

Section 113 of the House version of the health care reform bill gave unemployed Americans the option of staying on their COBRA insurance beyond the typical 18-month eligibility period. The provision was designed as a stopgap measure to prevent more people from becoming uninsured.

The Senate bill did not include similar provisions extending COBRA. With California's high unemployment rates, my office has received calls from San Diegans on the verge of losing their COBRA benefits with nowhere to turn for health insurance.

We know that COBRA coverage is not perfect. Premiums are generally higher because employers are no longer paying a portion of the cost. However, especially for those with significant health care costs, COBRA coverage is extremely valuable.

In fact, the average medical expenses for a patient with diabetes cost \$13,000 per year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC. The average cost of treating breast cancer rose to nearly \$21,000 and prostate cancer to over \$41,000 in 2008, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Can you imagine facing these types of health care costs without any type of insurance? Because of the high unemployment rates, I fear many Americans are close to losing their COBRA eligibility.

I'm proud to introduce the COBRA Health Benefits Extension Act of 2010 with Chairman GEORGE MILLER, Congressman ROBERT ANDREWS, and Congressman JOE COURTNEY to help Americans keep their health insurance. Those on COBRA can stay with their cov-

erage beyond standard eligibility periods until they find a new job providing insurance or until health insurance exchanges are available in 2014. They can also drop their COBRA coverage and enter a government-sponsored high-risk pool if they so choose. This legislation provides a bridge to those at risk of losing their health coverage so they do not have to go without insurance.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for your efforts to make health coverage accessible and affordable.

THE DEEPWATER HORIZON TRAGEDY

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, nearly 1 month after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill began on April 20, oil continues to flow from the well, poisoning the Gulf and destroying the environment. The Deepwater Horizon Rig activities were considered by all to be a low risk drilling exploration. Such a classification sends chills up my spine given the countless riskier drilling ventures occurring along the coasts of this great Nation.

While millions of Americans tune into the news to watch the destruction of the Gulf Coast, the environment, and the economy of that area, I think of the thoughtless, baseless, and cavalier Republican energy chants "Drill Baby Drill." It echoes in the ears of the American public and anybody who cares about the Gulf Coast. Drill Baby Drill—what a farfetched plan given that the U.S. contains 2.2 percent of world oil reserves and consumes 25.9 percent of the world's oil consumption. You do not have to be a math scholar or a Nobel Prize economist to see the flaws of this strategy.

We need to find alternative forms of energy. We must use America's great resource and brainpower to harness the sun and to harness the wind. We must find new ways to help us with our problems of energy which will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, protect our environment, and safeguard the flora and fauna.

We will never be able to drill our way to energy independence. Rather than invoking our brawn, we must utilize our brains and innovate, as Americans have done for generations. Rather than throwing our limited Federal dollars at the feet of oil giants, let's invest in American ingenuity and create an American clean energy economy. Rather than sucking out every last drop of oil and coal beneath the earth's surface destroying the air we breathe and water we drink, let's utilize renewable energy sources like solar and wind that enhance our environment.

The choice is clear—we can drill our way further into environmental destruction and oil dependence, or we can create a new energy economy that creates millions of jobs and protects the environment for future generations.

Recently I introduced legislation that will do just that—the 10 Million Solar Roofs and 10 Million Gallons of Solar Water Heating Act. This legislation will create an estimated 1.35 million direct and indirect jobs, lower energy costs, strengthen the economy, and put America on the path to energy independence.

Madam Speaker, we have to find a new direction and be like America has been in the past, innovative and creative.

A TRIBUTE TO BEVERLY LOWRY
FOR HER FOUR DECADES OF
PUBLIC SERVICE TO CALIFOR-
NIA'S MOJAVE DESERT COMMU-
NITIES

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Beverly Lowry, a dear friend and dedicated public servant who has helped guide the city of Barstow and other High Desert communities for nearly 40 years.

A native of Emporia, Kansas, Mrs. Lowry has lived in California since 1947, and moved with her husband Al in 1966 to the Mojave Desert outpost of Barstow. Although she is a veteran traveler, she has called the desert her home ever since, raising two sons and watching two grandsons grow up there.

Friends of Bev Lowry know she is not one to sit on the sidelines, and just a few years after arriving in the desert she was elected to the Barstow Heights Community Services District board, which provided city-like services in an unincorporated area. During her 26-year service on that board, she oversaw the paving of nearly 33 miles of residential streets and the creation of a new off-ramp from Interstate 15 to serve the community.

Bev Lowry's involvement in public policy grew beyond local elected boards when she joined the staff of California State Sen. Walter Stiern in 1974. For the next 20 years, she served the constituents of legislators and county supervisors as a staff member, becoming a recognized expert at solving problems and resolving disagreements with county, State, and even Federal officials. Needless to say, since these were also my constituents as a member of Congress, I came to know Bev well and respect her greatly.

As both a staffer and a local representative, Bev Lowry was one of the leaders in securing State funding to build Silver Valley High School and the Newberry Springs Senior Center, as well as for the improvement of State Highway 58, an important cross-desert link.

Perhaps her most significant contributions to her community came through Bev Lowry's service as a board member of the Mojave Water Agency and her tremendous accomplishment as chairwoman of the committee to bring a State Veteran's Home to Barstow.

The Mojave Water Agency was created to deal with the serious problem of over-drafting of the underground basins that provide nearly all of the water for tens of thousands of desert residents. The agency was tasked with providing State Water Project water to residents of both the Mojave Desert and the eastern desert area known as the Morongo Basin. It was my honor to work with Bev and the other members of the MWA board to provide funding for pipelines to deliver this water, which now serves more than 100,000 people. The district has also begun an ambitious water reclamation plan, and Bev was here in the House Chamber to observe Federal approval for that plan.

Thanks to Bev Lowry's leadership, State officials in the 1990s chose Barstow over 28 competing locations to build the first State Veteran's Home in more than 100 years. The home provides a sanctuary for 400 retired and ambulatory veterans from throughout the High Desert area.

Bev Lowry has been deservedly recognized for her contributions, chosen as Woman of the Year by the Barstow Chamber of Commerce—and then selected by the chamber as Woman of the Decade in 1987.

Madam Speaker, every community in America wishes it had leaders like Beverly Lowry, who can pull people together and get major things accomplished. This weekend, Bev will be paid a wonderful tribute by the Barstow Community College Foundation, which is creating a scholarship in her name. I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Lowry on her achievements, and thank her for her decades of public service.

CONGRESS CALLS FOR COM-
PREHENSIVE REVIEW OF LAND-
MINE POLICY

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today 68 members of the United States Senate sent a bipartisan letter to President Obama calling for a comprehensive review of the U.S. policy on anti-personnel landmines, urging the Administration to identify any obstacles to joining the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction. I am proud to say that 57 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives also sent a bipartisan letter to the President in support of their Senate colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992; it has not produced anti-personnel landmines since 1997; and it has not used anti-personnel landmines since 1991. During the past decade, the United States has become the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining and rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors. I firmly believe that it's time for the United States to formally join the 158 nations of the world who are parties to Convention banning anti-personnel landmines so that we can receive the credit for which our nation is long overdue and restore our leadership in shaping the Convention in the future.

I know that there are military questions that require review so that all sectors of our government are united in joining the Convention. I believe there are answers to these questions, answers that our NATO allies and other nations have confronted and overcome over the past decade as they complied with Convention's requirements. There is a wealth of experience and knowledge among our NATO allies, all of whom are parties to this Treaty, on adopting new military strategies and tactics, working with non-Treaty States, and identifying alternative weaponry as we abandon, once and for all, this indiscriminate, rogue weapon. I encourage our military leaders to reach out to our NATO partners and consult with their military counterparts on how they

adapted and complied with the Landmine Ban Treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen first-hand the results of anti-personnel landmines on civilians and soldiers in El Salvador and Colombia. I have talked with survivors from around the globe, including men and women who proudly wear the U.S. military uniform. I have met with landmine survivors, including children, who were only working their fields or walking to school when they stepped on a landmine. They are not victims, Mr. Speaker—they are survivors and leaders in a global movement to ban this weapon from all current and future arsenals. They are clear-eyed, sophisticated individuals who are determined that no one—in uniform or civilian—shall ever be harmed again by these weapons.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is in our best national and security interests to join the Convention. Clearly, the bipartisan letter by our Senate colleagues and the supporting House letter show that the time has come for the United States to once again take up its leadership on this international issue. I ask unanimous consent to enter the House and Senate letters and related materials into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, May 18, 2010.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to convey our strong support for the Administration's decision to conduct a comprehensive review of United States policy on landmines. The Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held last December in Cartagena, Colombia, makes this review particularly timely. It is also consistent with your commitment to reaffirm U.S. leadership in solving global problems and with your remarks in Oslo when you accepted the Nobel Peace Prize: "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't."

These indiscriminate weapons are triggered by the victim, and even those that are designed to self-destruct after a period of time (so-called "smart" mines) pose a risk of being triggered by U.S. forces or civilians, such as a farmer working in the fields or a young child. It is our understanding that the United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992, has not produced anti-personnel mines since 1997, and has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991. We are also proud that the United States is the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining and rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors.

In the ten years since the Convention came into force, 158 nations have signed including the United Kingdom and other ISAF partners, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan which, like Colombia, are parties to the Convention and have suffered thousands of mine casualties. The Convention has led to a dramatic decline in the use, production, and export of anti-personnel mines.

We note that our NATO allies have addressed their force protection needs in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. We are also mindful that anti-personnel mines pose grave dangers to civilians, and that avoiding civilian casualties and the anger and resentment that result has become a key priority in building public support for our mission in Afghanistan. Finally,