

Madam Speaker, just a year ago, the Non-Foreign Area Retirement Equity Assurance Act (NAREAA) was signed into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 or Public Law 111–84. In essence, COLA would be phased out and locality pay would be phased in over 3 years for all current and future Federal employees, regardless of whether or not they received COLA payments.

Before last year, American Samoa was the only non-foreign area in which Federal employees did not receive COLA. Notwithstanding that by law, Federal employees in the U.S. Territory of American Samoa were eligible to receive COLA payments, OPM decided not to create a separate non-foreign COLA-designated area for American Samoa.

This was especially frustrating given that American Samoa faces many of the same issues, driving higher prices for goods, services, and travel that face other territories in similar situations, and its seemed discriminatory that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has chosen not to provide COLA to Federal employees in American Samoa.

These were the concerns that I continued to raise with OPM over the years but to no avail until last year and I want to thank my good friend from Hawaii, Senator DANIEL AKAKA for his leadership and efforts on this issue. As a result of NAREAA, GS and white-collar Federal employees in American Samoa are now receiving locality-pay.

Madam Speaker, the enactment of Public Law 111–84 has made more glaring the discrepancy that continue to exist for USPS workers in American Samoa that were not receiving territorial cost of living adjustments (TCOLA) rates.

Only Postal Inspectors and employees of the Postal Service Office Inspector General in non-foreign areas are receiving locality pay like other federal employees in the non-foreign areas. The rest of the USPS employees would continue to receive TCOLA payments.

Unfortunately, USPS workers in American Samoa did not receive any adjustments called for under Public Law 111–84 as OPM has never designated American Samoa to receive TCOLA rates. Despite the fact that American Samoa by statute is eligible to receive TCOLA payments, OPM continues to deny American Samoa COLA-designation.

Now that COLA is being phased out and we are now in the 10th pay period since locality pay kicked in and COLA rates have been frozen, it is highly unlikely OPM would ever establish American Samoa as a COLA area because there is not more COLA per se and other GS and white-collar Federal employees in American Samoa are now receiving locality pay.

Therefore, the intent of my amendment is to give the USPS employees in American Samoa the same TCOLA treatment accorded to USPS employees in Guam.

Madam Speaker, as I have been saying throughout all these years, it seems unreasonable that OPM asserts that the cost of living in American Samoa is not high enough to justify payment of COLA when no survey has even been conducted in American Samoa. Especially, American Samoa is about 8,000 miles away from Washington, DC with unique economic challenges and issues.

Madam Speaker, while my amendment was not accepted by the U.S. House Committee on Rules, nevertheless, I will continue to pursue

a solution to this critical issue for the people of American Samoa. the people of American Samoa.

NETWORKS SHOULD HOLD ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR OIL SPILL RESPONSE

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, the television news networks failed to hold the Obama administration accountable for its response to the Gulf Coast oil spill crisis, according to an analysis by the Media Research Center.

Out of 157 news stories during the 4 weeks after the disaster, 148—95 percent—featured no criticism of the administration whatsoever.

Just nine had some scrutiny of the administration.

And just two of the stories—about 1 percent—focused on the administration's handling of the crisis.

The national media gave no such leeway to former President George W. Bush's handling of crises during his administration.

The networks should hold the Obama administration accountable, not give them a free pass.

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH J. HOFFMAN SR., BELOVED GLOUCESTER COUNTY CLERK

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Joseph J. Hoffman Sr. of Franklinville, who died from pancreatic cancer in his home on May 13, 2010 at the age of 87. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Wanda, two sons, and six grandchildren. Mr. Hoffman's life made a lasting mark on the Gloucester County community.

Mr. Hoffman was a graduate of Clayton High School, where he was an avid member of the baseball team. His skills as third baseman for Clayton High School were recognized with his early induction into the Gloucester County Sports Hall of Fame. After high school, he had the opportunity to attend training camp for the Philadelphia Athletics minor league team, but turned it down to work on his family's three farms in Franklinville. He remained involved with community sports, playing for many semi-pro South Jersey baseball teams, and later becoming President of the Franklin Township Babe Ruth League.

After nine years as Township Clerk for Franklin Township, he was elected Gloucester County clerk in 1962. Mr. Hoffman served for a record forty-four years as Gloucester County Clerk. He was then successfully re-elected for seven consecutive five year terms, ending with his retirement in 1997. Not only was Mr. Hoffman involved with the local government, he also served 43 years on the board of Newfield National Bank, volunteered with the

Franklinville Fire Department, and served as General Chairman of fundraising for Underwood Memorial Hospital in Woodbury. In 1995, his achievements were recognized by the Boy Scouts of America when he received the Southern New Jersey Council Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Citizens Award. He also was rewarded the Public Service Award by the NAACP.

Madam Speaker, Joseph J. Hoffman Sr.'s commitment to Gloucester County and its citizens should not go unrecognized. I express my deepest condolences to his family for their loss and pay tribute to the memory of this outstanding individual.

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF GARY S. ADAMS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Gary S. Adams as he is named by the Cleveland-Marshall Law School Association a 2010 Alumnus of the Year in recognition of his continued entrepreneurship, hard work and business achievement.

Mr. Adams grew up in the Cleveland area. As a graduate of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, he has consistently utilized his legal expertise to help support, promote and grow the auto industry throughout Greater Cleveland. In addition, he has maintained a special focus on locally owned dealerships, employees and customers.

For many years, Mr. Adams served as the President of the Greater Cleveland Auto Dealerships' Association and is now the President of the annual Cleveland Auto Show which draws tens of thousands of visitors every year. Mr. Adams is an expert in his field. He has an unparalleled knowledge of many aspects of the auto industry, including government policy, public relations and consumer rights. Moreover, Mr. Adams is known as man whose kindness, integrity and generosity match his competitive spirit.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognition of Gary S. Adams upon being named as a 2010 Alumnus of the Year by his alma mater, the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Adams' leadership, expertise, integrity and dedication to supporting the economic base of our community have made it a better place to live.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Chair, I rise in strong support of the amendment by Representative MURPHY to repeal the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy.

The Don't Ask Don't Tell policy is discriminatory and it harms U.S. military readiness. Over the last 17 years, our nation has paid a heavy price for pursuing this policy. Since 1993, more than 13,000 qualified, well trained men and women have been dismissed from the military simply because of their sexual orientation. These are men and women we could ill afford to lose, especially at a time when our armed forces are engaged in two major military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is why so many of this country's highest current and retired military leaders favor repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen. Admiral Mullen recently wrote, "No matter how I look at this issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens." Retired General Colin Powell and the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili also have urged repeal.

The argument has been made that repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell would negatively affect military unit cohesion. The evidence simply does not support this. Many other countries—including Britain, Canada and Israel—successfully allow gays and lesbians to serve openly. In any case, the Murphy amendment specifically states that repeal will take place only after the President and our nation's military leaders certify that the Department of Defense has prepared the necessary policies and regulations to implement repeal and that these policies are consistent with military standards for readiness, effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting and retention.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Chair, I rise today to clarify why I was unable to vote on Thursday, May 27 and Friday, May 28 in favor of the so-called Murphy Amendment and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, respectively. I would also like to reaffirm in the strongest possible terms my support for repealing the law known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," which prohibits gay and lesbian service members from serving openly, as soon as possible.

As you know, Congressman PATRICK MURPHY's amendment, which passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 234–194, provides for a process to be set in place to implement the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell as soon as the Pentagon completes its review of

the issue and President Obama, Defense Secretary Gates, and Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, certify that repeal implementation will not negatively affect our military.

During the Rules Committee's meeting on Wednesday to consider amendments to the Defense Authorization bill, I openly declared my support for the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and for Congressman MURPHY's amendment.

Unfortunately, I had an official trip in my capacity as Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission) that was scheduled prior to the vote. The consideration of amendments to the Defense Authorization bill on the House floor was such that I was unable to vote. Had I been present and not on official travel, I would have voted in favor of the Murphy amendment's inclusion, as well as in favor of the final Defense Authorization bill.

I commend my colleagues, Congressman MURPHY, Senator LIEBERMAN, and Senator LEVIN, for their leadership on this repeal effort. As I have said time and again, Don't Ask, Don't Tell threatens our national security and costs us millions of dollars each year to kick out dedicated and highly-skilled service members because of their sexual orientation and to retrain new ones.

I am also heartened to hear that our colleagues in the Senate Armed Services Committee voted 16–12 to bring Senator LIEBERMAN's companion amendment to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell to the Senate floor along with the Defense Authorization bill for consideration.

It is indeed a historic day for our military, the American people, and our nation. What should have happened 17 years ago is now closer than ever before. By passing the Murphy amendment along with the Defense Authorization bill, the House of Representatives has pledged to fulfill its promise of upholding the values for which the United States stands by allowing gay and lesbian Americans to serve openly in the military.

As we celebrate this victory, we are reminded of the long battle that has brought us to this point. I would be terribly remiss if I did not acknowledge the hard work and sacrifices of countless service members and veterans, many of whose lives have been negatively impacted by this bigoted law, as well as those military and policy leaders, advocacy organizations, and everyday Americans who have taken a stand against discrimination.

Madam Chair, I am eternally grateful to the brave men and women in our Armed Forces who protect this nation and the American people each and every single day and look forward to Don't Ask, Don't Tell being repealed once and for all.

ASSURING QUALITY CARE FOR VETERANS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5145, which will increase the reimbursement amount for Vet-

erans Administration, VA, health professionals who continue their professional education. It will also expand the VA's authority to offer education reimbursements by allowing all health professionals employed by the VA to qualify, including optometrists, nurses, chiropractors, and other vital health care providers who are currently ineligible. This important measure will ensure that the VA community has up-to-date training so that they can best treat our veterans who so selflessly serve our country.

I thank Chairman FILNER for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor. I would also like to thank the sponsor of this legislation, Congressman MCNERNEY, for his dedication to ensuring that we offer our veterans the highest quality health care.

Madam Speaker, our brave men and women in uniform have assumed the responsibility of protecting us and the values that we cherish as American citizens. We, then, have a solemn obligation to provide them with the resources and services that they need. This includes the best available medical treatment for our veterans who return home wounded or with disabilities. With a new generation of veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is as important as ever that the VA medical staff is fully equipped to treat traumatic brain injuries, post traumatic stress syndrome, and other health complications that are increasingly prevalent due to the new threats of 21st century warfare.

As the representative of a district that is home to over 24,000 veterans and the VA Medical Center of Long Beach, I am sensitive to the health care needs of our servicemen and servicewomen returning home from overseas. These young men and women in uniform risk their lives on our behalf and ask little in return. The least we can do to repay their sacrifice is ensure that they have access to the most modern and effective treatments and a comprehensive array of services. This bill will do just that.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5145.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO FAMILIES OF SOUTH KOREAN SEAMEN KILLED BY NORTH KOREA

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1382, expressing sympathy for the families of those killed by North Korea in the sinking of the Republic of Korea Ship *Cheonan*, and solidarity with the Republic of Korea in the aftermath of this tragic incident. I would like to thank Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA for introducing this resolution reaffirming our long-standing friendship with the people of South Korea.

Madam Speaker, South Korea has suffered a senseless and tragic loss due to a vicious attack from their northern neighbor. On May 20, 2010 a group of 74 experts, 50 from South Korea and 24 from the international community, published a report containing conclusive evidence that North Korea, in clear violation of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, sank