

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

the Ship *Cheonan* without provocation. The *Cheonan* lost 46 of its 104 sailors in the attack, and the people of South Korea still mourn their loss.

The Republic of South Korea has been a steadfast ally to the United States for over 50 years, providing a vital foothold for security and stability in Asia; moreover, the United States is bound to South Korea through a shared belief in the values of democracy and the rule of law. We must not stand idly by while our allies overseas are attacked. Foreign aggression is a threat to international stability, and as such also threatens the security of the United States and its people. Secretary of State Clinton has already called out to the rest of the world, showing unwavering conviction that "we cannot allow this attack on South Korea to go unanswered by the international community." Nor can we in the U.S. Congress remain silent.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to reaffirm the United States' commitment to our alliance with the Republic of South Korea. We condemn in the strongest terms the actions of North Korea for their aggression, along with a commitment to never again violate the terms of the Korean War Armistice Agreement. The United States must coordinate with our allies to take appropriate action in response to the hostility of the North Korean Government. We also strongly urge the international community to faithfully implement all United Nations Security Council Resolutions pertaining to security on the Korean Peninsula.

I support this resolution not only out of sympathy for our South Korean allies, but also because of the message it sends to potential aggressors abroad. It says we understand that stability around the world is necessary for security at home; it says that we will not remain silent in the face of violations of international treaties; it says that hostility towards peaceful democratic nations will not go unanswered. The safety of the people of the United States depends on our ability to work with the international community to stand by our allies and respond to aggressors.

CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF ATATURK

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, As co-chair of the Turkish Study Group in the House, I was invited to a celebration of the birthday of Ataturk, revered as the father of modern Turkey. At the event 16 year old Selin Odabas-Geldiay was asked to speak about the occasion. This very poised young woman gave extremely articulate and pertinent remarks which I felt were worthy of being shared with a much larger audience and am including them here.

REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF ATATURK'S PROCLAMATION OF YOUTH AND SPORTS DAY IN TURKEY TO MEMORIALIZE THE START OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, SELIN ODABAS-GELDIAY, MAY 20, 2010, HOME OF MIRAT AND HUDAI YAVALAR

It is a great honor for me to be here tonight and to speak about our great leader

Ataturk and the importance of May 19th. Ninety-one years ago yesterday, Ataturk took a very dangerous trip from Istanbul to Samsun, a city on the Black Sea. There he assumed command of the 9th Ottoman Army. This was a turning point for Turks as it represented the beginning of the Independence War. Because of the significance and the importance of that day, Ataturk dedicated this day to the Turkish youth as he had great confidence and trust in the ability of the Turkish youth to protect and continue the Turkish Republic he founded. I am one of those Turkish youth. When Ataturk spoke of the youth, he was not only referring to those young in age but also to those with open minds, ready to embrace and conquer new challenges.

For as long as I can remember, I have taken great pride in my Turkish heritage. Whenever I meet someone new, I always make a point of telling them that even though I was born in the United States, which I love, my roots are from Turkey. Even in my high school, if someone doesn't know me personally, he or she will still know me as "the Turkish girl." I have taken on this identity as a result of my upbringing and how my parents installed this pride in me by example. Ever since I was little, I have watched my parents say with joy, "I live in the United States, but I'm originally from Turkey." This phrase soon became my own as I met new people. As I was growing up, I remember attending many birthday celebrations for Ataturk at the home of our hosts Mirat and Hudai Yavalar (since May 19th is also considered Ataturk's birthday) and I thank them for also being good role models in teaching young people about Ataturk. Those are the only birthday parties I attended where the person whose birthday we are celebrating is missing in person. But I realize that Ataturk continues to live in our hearts and minds. How many leaders do you know who evoke such strong feelings of love and devotion in people's hearts 72 years after they are gone? Not too many, I assure you.

As a child I attended Turkish school every Sunday. We would learn grammar, history, and music, but most of all we would be learning about Ataturk. His leadership and bravery as a military genius were always highlighted. His achievements as a statesman are unmatched. I do not know of any other nation that has gone through and embraced the kinds of reforms Ataturk introduced in Turkey. Creating a secular republic, giving women the right to vote and be elected, changing the alphabet to Latin letters almost overnight, changing the way people dress are just a few of the incredible reforms he promoted and established in Turkey.

As I mentioned earlier, May 19th is dedicated to young people, not only to those who are young in age, but also those who are young in mind, meaning open to learning new ideas and new things. I am happy to be celebrating this important day with all of you.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF CLEVELAND MAYOR FRANK JACKSON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of Mayor Frank Jackson as he is

named by the Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association as a 2010 Alumnus of the Year for his work and leadership on behalf of those who live and work in the City of Cleveland.

Mayor Jackson has lived in Cleveland his entire life, and today resides in the same neighborhood in which he grew up. He began his formal schooling in the Cleveland Public Schools. He moved on to Cuyahoga Community College, where he earned an associate's degree. Subsequently, he earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Cleveland State University and later earned a law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Mayor Jackson was elected to the Cleveland City Council in 1989, where he led the charge to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Mayor Jackson is also a United States Veteran, having served our country in Vietnam with honor.

Mayor Jackson continues to work on issues such as jobs, the foreclosure crisis and affordable housing. He remains a public advocate for the homeless members of our society and he is the first Mayor to attend the annual Homeless Memorial Day event and other events organized by homeless citizens.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Mayor Frank Jackson as he is being recognized by the Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association for his tireless efforts on behalf of the people of Cleveland.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

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. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Chair, when the President announced his decision to repeal the current policy, known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," earlier this year, the military service chiefs and the Secretary of Defense requested the opportunity to carry out the President's directive in an orderly manner that would assure the maintenance of discipline and morale in the Armed Forces. It was agreed to at that time, including by the President, that a survey would be sent to all the troops so that their input would be taken into account regarding how best to implement the new policy, and that a report with such recommendations as to how to best implement the new policy would be issued this December, before any legislative action was taken. I believe that process, which was agreed to by the President pursuant to the request of the service chiefs and the Secretary of Defense, should be followed.

Breaking the agreement now by having this vote is most unfortunate, and I strongly disagree with the decision of the President, the Speaker, and the majority leadership to break that agreement today.