

stood out as a community leader. In 1987 Mr. Cotton helped to build New Bethel M.B. Church. He established the Beat 4 Community Club and served as president for several years. Mr. Cotton has raised funds for different organizations. He is a strong supporter of the McAdams High School Football team.

Under the leadership of Mr. Jerry Lewis, President of the NAACP Attala County Chapter, Mr. Cotton is the leader in soliciting memberships for the chapter. Mr. Cotton has worked diligently in the political arena, helping his community stay abreast of political issues. He has served as a Trustee of New Bethel M.B. Church for the past 30 years, where he has helped to secure needed funds for the Church's many programs. Mr. Robert Cotton is a World War II Veteran and served 3 years and 8 months overseas. On November 10, 2010, Mr. Cotton celebrated his 91st birthday.

FEBRUARY IS JEWISH DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Jewish Disability Network, a coalition of over 20 Jewish organizations, for its advocacy on behalf of the rights of disabled Americans. This February marks the third Jewish Disability Awareness Month, organized to push for greater recognition of the needs and concerns of disabled Americans.

Jewish tradition recognizes the importance of inclusion and prizes the ability of every person to participate fully in their community. Today, over fifty million Americans are living with a disability. Tragically, too many of them face barriers that lock them out of employment, housing, education, or health care. They are denied the opportunity to be productive and our society is denied the benefits of their abilities.

Only 21 percent of people with disabilities are employed full or part-time. One in six people with disabilities has not completed high school, 28 percent live in poverty, 19 percent have gone without needed health care at least once during the past year, and 34 percent lack access to adequate transportation. We are making progress through legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and through continued investments in IDEA, job training, health care and technology assistance. Those commitments must continue and we should reject budget cuts that would reverse the gains we have already made.

We must strive for inclusion. A 2010 survey by the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability found people with disabilities are less likely to socialize with friends and family, to go to restaurants or to attend religious services on a regular basis. Jewish Disability Awareness Month seeks to focus on the barriers that create isolation and remove them. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, a leader of the Jewish Disability Network, puts it this way: "Stumbling blocks come in many forms, from less-than-accessible buildings, Shabbat services, prayer books and web pages to health care that is

harder to access or isn't sufficient for people with disabilities. We are obligated to remove these stumbling blocks."

Jewish Disability Awareness Month is an opportunity not just to highlight problems but to promote solutions. Doing so is not that difficult, nor does it need to be costly. One-third of disabled workers can be accommodated for no cost, and 80 percent of job accommodations cost less than \$500. The average added cost for homes built with accessibility features is between \$100 and \$600, while retrofitting a home can cost several thousand dollars. Enactment of legislation like my Inclusive Home Design Act can help bring and keep people with disabilities in our communities.

Today, the Jewish Disability Network will hold a Congressional briefing on ways to expand access to employment and education and protect the civil rights of the disabled. This month, congregations across the country will undertake activities to engage people with disabilities in their communities: taking disabled seniors to a meal or museum, providing lunch and learning sessions for parents of disabled children, or helping young disabled adults develop leadership skills in a social context. Throughout the year, the Jewish Disability Network works to put its principles of participation and inclusion into practice.

I am proud of those efforts, and I encourage my colleagues to learn more about them. Again, I want to congratulate Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, senior adviser for disability issues at the Religious Action Center; David Feinman, senior legislative associate of the Jewish Federation of North America; and the many others who are leaders in this critical initiative.

FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1) making appropriations for the Department of Defense and the other departments and agencies of the Government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011, and for other purposes:

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Chair, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Rep. HOLT, for serving as my designee, and offering Amendment No. 12 during consideration of the Commerce Justice Science title of H.R. 1. The amendment seeks to ensure that there is consistent funding included in the CR to implement the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, which became law in January 2008. In addition, I would like to thank Rep. DINGELL for his unfailing support for NICS and support for this amendment. He has been a long time NRA member, and a long time supporter of responsible gun laws.

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or "NICS", is a national database system that keeps track of individuals disqualified under current law from purchasing and possessing firearms. The NICS Improvement Amendments Act, signed into law in January 2008, requires all states to provide NICS

with the relevant records needed to conduct effective background checks.

The NICS Improvement Act provides grants to states and territories to update their records and transmit the records to the NICS database. Since the law was enacted, several states have benefitted from the grant program including Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas, Wisconsin and my home state of New York.

This law imposes no new restrictions on gun owners and does not infringe on the 2nd Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens. It simply makes improvements to a program that saves lives, and the bill was supported by the NRA.

In FY11, the law was authorized at \$375 million, and the appropriation level was \$20 million in FY10 and carried into FY11 through the current CR. While I believe that this program is a vital component in our fight against crime and should receive the fully authorized funding, I understand that tough decisions have to be made in this economic environment. That is why I am not seeking the fully authorized funding level, but instead am simply asking that we remain consistent and continue to fund the program at the FY10 level.

We need to give this program a chance to work and provide adequate funding to ensure that NICS has up to date records. Millions of criminal records are currently missing from the databases that make up NICS due to funding restrictions and technology issues at the state level. As a result, people who should not be obtaining guns, do.

This point is underscored by the circumstances surrounding the shootings at Virginia Tech. Under current law, the shooter in the Virginia Tech massacre should not have been able to purchase a firearm, but tragically he did. His information never made it into the national NICS system. He slipped through the cracks and he was able to purchase two handguns, and used them to brutally murder 32 individuals. Sadly, this same scenario happens every day.

The NICS Improvement Act has been effective. Since the NICS Improvement Act was signed into law, the number of state records of prohibited gun purchasers in the system has increased dramatically. According to Dept of Justice data, in Jan 2008 there were about 402,000 disqualifying mental illness records submitted from the states and territories to NICS. In August 2010, that number had more than doubled with 930,000 records submitted. The National Center for State Courts estimate that more than 2 million disqualifying mental illness records should be in the NICS, based on responses from only 42 of 56 U.S. states and territories.

Based on this data we are missing more than half of the records that should be in the NICS system. Clearly there is more work to be done and by continuing to fund this program at FY10 levels, we will continue the effort to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and express that it is the intent of Congress that funding for the NICS Improvement Amendments Act be maintained at the FY10 level.

IN RECOGNITION OF SHREWSBURY
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES, INC.**HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services, the only private, non-profit social service agency in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services has provided programs and services to help Shrewsbury residents reach their full potential and has promoted the best quality of life for over 27 years.

Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services was founded in 1983, and has since grown to serve over 1,500 children and families each year. They strive to provide a wide range of counseling, empowerment services and youth development programs in order to strengthen children, families and individuals in Shrewsbury. Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services is also committed to ensuring that no one, including the many low income families they serve, is turned away based on an inability to pay for services.

On February 26, 2011, Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services will be holding their 7th Annual Fundraising Gala, and I would like to take a moment to recognize the individuals being honored for their service to the community: the Irving J. Donahue Family, recipients of the Harry S. Cutting Jr. Award; and Hannah Boudreau, John McBride, Sara Pederson and Leland Smith, recipients of the 2011 Outstanding Youth of Shrewsbury Awards.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the United States House of Representatives joins me in recognizing Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services for their dedicated and invaluable work in my district. I sincerely hope that they are able to continue their generosity and serve the Shrewsbury community far into the future.

TRIBUTE TO VERNON MINTON, DI-
RECTOR OF THE ALABAMA MA-
RINE RESOURCES DIVISION**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Vernon Minton, one of the best friends of Alabama's Gulf Coast recreational and commercial fishermen, who recently passed away at the untimely age of 61. Vern Minton was a major force behind protecting and building Alabama's coastal fisheries and his loss will be sorely felt.

A graduate of Auburn University where he earned a master's degree in biology, Vern Minton began his life's work as a steward of Alabama's coastal fisheries in 1978 at the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. For the next 32 years, Mr. Minton would have increasing impact upon the science and the quality of Alabama's marine life. He assisted in the development of techniques for raising many species of fish and authored papers on raising marine animals in captivity.

By December 1990, Vern Minton was appointed director of the Marine Resources Divi-

sion of the Alabama Department of Conservation which manages estuaries and saltwater resources along the state's Gulf Coast. He is credited with both the modernization of his department's enforcement methods as well as the creation of the state's inshore and offshore artificial reef programs.

Although Alabama has the smallest sea-coast of the Gulf states, fish stocks in our state waters are robust, thanks to the leadership of Vern Minton. As a member of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, he was a consistent voice for the need of updated data to accurately calculate red snapper populations and set snapper fishing limits.

On behalf of the people of Alabama and the Gulf Coast who have benefitted from Vern's efforts to enhance and protect our marine life, I wish to extend my condolences to his wife Sharon; their children, Randal and Kristen; grandchild, T.J., and all their family and friends. You are each in our thoughts and prayers.

FULL-YEAR CONTINUING
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1) making appropriations for the Department of Defense and the other departments and agencies of the Government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011, and for other purposes:

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, Congressional Republicans often assert that their aggressive budget cutting is in line with the desires of the American people. The cuts Republicans propose for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011 include eliminating support for homeless veterans, cutting nearly a billion dollars from programs for law enforcement and first responders, and gutting environmental protections that keep our air, water and food safe. As House Republicans continue their march to weaken our communities, kill jobs, and make our most vulnerable citizens bear the burden for tax cuts for the wealthiest citizens, there is another target for cutting—the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, CPB.

In this bill, House Appropriations Chairman HAROLD ROGERS (R-KY) is working to eradicate all funding for CPB and eliminate federal support for public media. This attack on unbiased reporting, cultural programming, and educational television and radio would have dire consequences in my home State for Minnesota Public Radio and Twin Cities Public Television, not to mention the Minnesota taxpayers who rely on public broadcasting every day.

CPB's funding is directed to local public broadcasting stations, which provide commercial-free, high-quality programming to millions of Americans every day. Public broadcasting outlets target underserved audiences, children, minorities, and low-income Americans with non-biased news and cultural programming.

Public broadcasting is one of the most valuable community assets, and it is a prime example of the numerous benefits that come

from investment from the federal government. Every month, over half of all Americans utilize public broadcasting—170 million people—through 368 public television stations, 943 radio stations, and hundreds of online services. Federal funding for CPB costs \$1.35 per American every year, while the rest of the funding comes from private donations. Public broadcasting is a vital educational resource for teachers, parents, and children.

In addition to providing a valuable community good, a majority of Americans value public media and advocate that the federal government continue its support. Last year, Americans rated public broadcasting as an "excellent" use of taxpayer dollars, coming in second to defense spending. Eighty percent of those who were surveyed believe that funding for public broadcasting is money "well spent."

A vote in support of CPB funding is a vote for the American people. Public broadcasting is what our citizens want, and Chairman ROGERS and the rest of the Republicans should listen.

Members from the Fourth District have contacted me to speak out in support of public broadcasting and against this egregious attack.

A St. Paul student, age 14, just called me today to tell me that she is the voice of the future and very supportive of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

A resident from St. Paul told me, "Thank you for standing up for public broadcasting. You are right when you say the Tea Party would like nothing better than to eliminate the one place where we go to find balanced reporting. I am a sustaining member of both public television and radio and find it to be a source of hope in this media-fallow country."

A college student in St. Paul wrote me to say, "I am deeply concerned about proposed legislation in the House that would eliminate federal funding for PBS and NPR. It is vital to our country and our public discourse that we have some forms of independent journalism that are unbiased and free from corporate interests. Not only does public media provide a trusted news and entertainment source for adults around the Nation, but the educational children's programming helps get youngsters from all backgrounds off to a good start. I grew up watching Sesame Street, Mr. Rogers, and Nova on what was then Channel 2 (now TPT). Now, as a college student at the University of Minnesota—Morris, I still depend on PBS and NPR every day. I fear that cuts to federal funding for public media will have an especially adverse effect on smaller and rural stations, like Pioneer Public TV, which are more dependent on federal money. It pains me to imagine a time when public media isn't available to future generations of Americans as a source of nonpartisan information available to all."

Another St. Paul resident said, "I am a current supporter of the MN TPT, and would hate to see this wonderful service eliminated because someone in Congress thinks it is unnecessary. Many people can't afford cable or satellite television—I can only afford the lowest basic service—and the programming on TPT is educational, entertaining and innovative. Please fight to keep the funding! Thank you!"

As you can see, residents of the 4th District of Minnesota are strong supporters of this essential service. Federal support for CPB keeps