

flood control, and cheap, renewable hydroelectric power. Put simply, we need more dams, not fewer.

For those reasons, it is troubling that we are even here discussing this issue. We need to change the current regulatory structure that gives perceived "environmental benefits" unyielding priority—often at unbearable cost—over the social and economic benefits provided to people by dams and other wise-use of our resources: These laws and regulations have forced the owner and operator of the dams on the Klamath River to a point where decommissioning these facilities—by way of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement—is the least-cost option for its customers and ratepayers in California and elsewhere, as opposed to relicensing. These laws and regulations also caused the tragic 2001 water shutoff that affected 1,200 farm families in the Klamath Basin and led them to enter into this settlement process in the hopes of bringing greater stability and water reliability to the Basin in order to continue their way of life.

It represents a monumental failure at the federal level when we consider that, under the laws and regulations that are on the books at this moment, there is currently no alternative that will allow these facilities to be operated as cost-effectively as it had during the several decades of its previous license term, or allow the federal government to fully meet the obligations it made over a century ago with the development of the Klamath Reclamation Project.

I say this to make the point that, unfortunately, this amendment by itself will not address the real underlying issue—the appalling environmental extortion that continues to affect property owners across the rural West and the hardworking people who put food on our tables and provide the raw materials that make life comfortable for the rest of us. Clearly, our laws are grossly out of balance, and I look forward to working with Chairman MCCLINTOCK, Chairman HASTINGS, Mr. WALDEN and my other colleagues to implement the necessary environmental reforms to prevent the continued degradation of our economic infrastructure at the hands of environmental activists and bring greater certainty to the Klamath Basin's agricultural community.

HONORING ANNE THEROUX

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of one hundred years of inspiration and joy that Anne Theroux of Massachusetts has given to those fortunate enough to know her well. A 35-year resident of Cape Cod, Anne turns 100 years old on March 4 and continues to thrive in her West Dennis home, as independent as ever before.

Mother to seven, grandmother to thirteen, and great-grandmother to fifteen children, Anne has maintained an energy and youthfulness beyond her 100 years. She has served her community with many years of teaching elementary school, and she is known to always have a book in hand or story to share. Anne

continues to exercise her intellect as an ace crossword puzzle enthusiast, and has participated as a member of the woodcarving group at the Dennis Senior Center, where she brings the spirit of Cape Cod to each and every one of her bird carvings.

And so, surrounded by her loving children, extended family, and many friends, Anne will celebrate her centennial with a luncheon honoring her 100th birthday. I wish Anne and her whole family best wishes for many years to come.

THANKING THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA FOR SUPPORTING THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL EDUCATION CENTER

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, next week the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honorable Julia Gillard, will be in Washington, DC on a state visit. This will be Prime Minister Gillard's first visit to Washington since becoming Prime Minister in June of last year; and her visit will also mark the 60th anniversary of the U.S.-Australia alliance.

In addition to many other official meetings and ceremonies, Prime Minister Gillard will take time out of her schedule to present a \$3 million check from the Australian government to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to help build the Education Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Regrettably, a last minute scheduling conflict is going to prevent me from attending this ceremony, but I want to extend my deep appreciation and thanks to the Prime Minister and the Australian people for this very generous contribution.

Australia has always been a steadfast ally and partner to the United States. This contribution further underscores the deep ties of kinship and friendship between Australia and the United States.

Many Americans tend to think of the Vietnam War as a solely American conflict. In reality the conflict involved troops from a number of nations, including Australia. Between 1962 and 1972 approximately 60,000 Australian military personnel served in Vietnam. Australia's soldiers had a distinguished and remarkable record of service and courage in Vietnam where more than 500 were killed, and some 3,000 were wounded or disabled defending the South Vietnamese people from communist aggression.

For Australia, as well as the United States, the Vietnam War was the longest major military conflict in which Australians have been involved. Completed in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Constitution Gardens adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial has become one of our Nation's more recognized and beloved memorials. Some 3 million visitors each year come to view The Wall and not only reflect upon those who suffered and died in Vietnam but how this nation let that generation of Americans down when they returned home.

Ninety-one thousand eight hundred Hoosiers served in Vietnam and the names of the

1,530 who died in Vietnam are etched on The Wall. The Education Center, which will be built adjacent to the Wall, will help educate future generations of Americans by sharing the stories of these exceptional individuals from Indiana and across the America, who served their country with honor. By telling these stories visitors will hopefully understand the courage, sacrifice and devotion of those who fell, those who returned, and those who waited for their loved ones to come home. Along the way, visitors will also discover how the Memorial shaped the way Americans mourn, and the vital part The Wall played in helping to heal the bitter divisions that tore at our nation's heart and soul.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking Prime Minister Gillard for her leadership, her friendship and her dedication to helping us to ensure that the Education Center gets built so that the voice of the 58,000 plus names on the Wall and the millions of Americans—and thousands of Australians—who fought in the Vietnam War can be heard and remembered. And I also ask my colleagues to join me in extending my heartfelt appreciation to the people of Australia for their support and friendship.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AMENDMENTS, 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2011

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we must get our fiscal house in order. That is why Democrats sought to cut more than \$40 billion from the President's 2011 budget request in December. We have a responsibility to our constituents to evaluate every program and determine whether it merits taxpayer funding.

Although I will vote for it, I do not support every cut in the underlying bill. We must make targeted reductions that make our government more efficient while prioritizing critical investments in innovation if we are to remain a global leader. Instead of reducing our deficit by eliminating education programs, we should find savings by ending taxpayer-funded subsidies to large oil companies, which fleece taxpayers of tens of billions of dollars.

However, it is imperative that Congress do everything it can, and reach common ground whenever possible, to avoid a government shutdown. We cannot allow for the possibility of seniors going without Social Security checks or veterans losing access to the health benefits they have earned.

The seven month continuing resolution the House passed in February is a dangerous bill that would create not a single job, hurt federal programs essential to economic growth, and compromise our security. We must adopt this short-term continuing resolution to keep the government operating while we negotiate spending for the remainder of the fiscal year that will continue economic growth.

# INTRODUCING THE VETERANS PENSIONS PROTECTION ACT OF 2011

## HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans Pensions Protection Act of 2011, which will protect veterans from losing their pension benefits because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss or casualty loss.

When assessing a veteran's eligibility for a pension, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers a variety of sources of revenue to determine a veteran's annual income. If such income exceeds the income limit set by the VA, the veteran does not qualify for a pension or loses their benefits. Currently, the VA considers any reimbursement that compensates a veteran for his/her expenses due to accidents, theft or loss as income. Only reimbursements of expenses related to casualty loss are currently exempted from determination of income.

Under current law, if a veteran is seriously injured in an accident or the victim of a theft and receives insurance compensation to cover his/her medical expenses, the cost of replacement of the stolen items, or for pain and suffering, he/she will likely lose their pension. This means that the law effectively punishes veterans when they suffer from such an accident or theft.

Such a tragedy happened to one of my constituents, a Navy veteran with muscular dystrophy who was hit by a truck when crossing the street in his wheelchair. His pension was abruptly cut off after he received an insurance settlement payment to cover medical expenses for himself and his service dog, and material expenses to replace his wheelchair. As a result, he fell below the poverty line, could not cover his daily expenses and mortgage payments, and almost lost his home!

There is clearly something wrong with a law that cancels veterans' pensions following the award of an insurance payment, which was only intended to cover exceptional medical expenses. I am distraught that the VA can cancel the pensions of unemployed and disabled veterans without further notice. The VA has a moral responsibility to care for our veterans and ensure that they live decent lives.

The Veterans Pensions Protection Act will amend the U.S. Code to exempt the reimbursement of expenses related to accidents, theft, loss or casualty loss from being included into the determination of a veteran's income. This will guarantee the continuity of our veterans' pensions and that no veteran will have their benefits unfairly and abruptly depreciated or cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will fix a loophole under existing law to ensure that pensions are issued to veterans who legitimately meet the income criteria and rely on such benefits to survive. We must enact regulations that help veterans live better lives, not hurt them. At a time when our nation's servicemen and women are fighting two wars abroad, we have a duty to our past, present, and future veterans to provide them with the very best services and benefits. We owe our veterans

an enormous debt, and cannot thank them enough for their service. I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

## CONGRATULATING SILVER STAR RECIPIENT JOSHUA R. LABBE

### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Army SGT Joshua R. Labbe for receiving the prestigious Silver Star—the third highest honor for valor in the Army. I also want to share with you a brief account of the remarkable story that earned him this award while serving in the Baghlan Province of Afghanistan.

Labbe, a former tight end on Stonington High School's football team, was raised in Pawcatuck, Connecticut. To the surprise of his family and friends but with their support, Joshua enlisted in the Army shortly after graduating, expressing his deep desire to make a difference. He did just that.

Joshua was awarded the Silver Star for leading his squadron through more than 6 hours of consecutive battles on October 6 of this year. He and his platoon began the day before dawn sweeping for mines in a mountainous region—one deemed critical in the fight to protect supply routes and crack down on drug trafficking in the province.

Not long after the operation had finished, Labbe and his squad came under heavy small arms fire from a group of Taliban fighters outnumbering them by roughly three to one. Following an order to retreat from their hillside position, Labbe returned—through enemy gunfire—to accompany several soldiers to safety including one who fell and had to be carried. Later, while towing a damaged truck in the midst of an ambush, Labbe provided cover fire—from close range and from an exposed position—for the recovery team. They all returned to base with no casualties.

Sergeant Labbe is one of just 195 soldiers to receive a Silver Star in Afghanistan since 2003. While this account provides only a glimpse of the heroic actions that earned him this honor, Joshua's contributions and deep devotion to protecting this country are clear. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating and honoring SGT Joshua R. Labbe for his service and sacrifice to this great nation.

## HONORING THE GARFIELD BABE RUTH LEAGUE ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Garfield Babe Ruth League on 50 years of service to the youth of Garfield, New Jersey. Since its founding in 1961, the League has provided countless young people with the opportunity to participate in a quintessential American pastime: youth baseball.

The Garfield Babe Ruth League is a proud member of the Middle Atlantic Region of Babe

Ruth Baseball. Comprised of two divisions, 13–15 year olds and 16–18 year olds, the League provides an important team experience and extracurricular outlet for as many as 200 young people each year. All of the coaches and league officials are volunteers, devoting their time to bring baseball into the lives of teenagers. These volunteers also maintain Columbus Field, home to all games played in the Garfield Babe Ruth League. Over the years, with the help of its invaluable volunteer coaches and officials, the League has been able to add a press box, score board, dugouts, club house, fencing, lighting, bleachers, and numerous other field enhancements. Garfield has hosted many District All-Star Tournaments and has been selected to host this year's New Jersey State Final Tournament for the 14-year-old division.

Throughout its half-century of service to the City of Garfield, the League has always provided the youth of the community with the opportunity to create cherished memories, have important character-building experiences, and celebrate proud accomplishments, both on and off the baseball field. The legacy of this organization only grows stronger as the League continues to touch the lives of all who become involved with it.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to celebrate the Garfield Babe Ruth League's 50th anniversary and honor all of its volunteers and participants for their role in keeping this wonderful tradition going for so many years. I wish the League continued success as it continues to proudly serve the community of Garfield, New Jersey.

## MARKEY AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1

### HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. MARKEY. This amendment would strike a strange provision in law that allows for royalty-free production for certain offshore drilling leases.

I have introduced legislation, the No New Drilling Act of 2011, which would stop the Interior Department from pursuing any new exploration, development or production of oil, gas or any other mineral anywhere off America's coasts. The fact remains that opening up new drilling for fossil fuel development is unnecessary, poses a serious threat to our shores, and is the wrong approach.

If oil companies are going to drill in our waters, at the very least they should be required to pay royalties to the federal government on the profits they make at the expense of our environment. We have seen the environmental catastrophe that can occur, most notably with the BP oil spill last year.

I don't support issuing any new leases for offshore drilling in areas not currently leased. I support this amendment so that we can hold these companies financially accountable for the benefits they are reaping from our coastal environment. I urge all of my colleagues to vote aye.