

quickly eliminated all power and radio contact with nearby coast guard escort ships. The attack violently awoke soldiers, killing scores of men and injuring many others. Despite the panic and chaos, four chaplains, George Fox, Alexander Goode, Clark Poling and John Washington, immediately jumped into action, calming frantic soldiers and tending to the wounded. They swiftly began opening storage lockers, distributing life jackets. With an insufficient amount of supplies, the four chaplains removed their lifejackets and distributed them to others. Their decisive and heroic actions assisted in the swift survival of 229 men. Along with 672 other men, the four chaplains tragically lost their lives while assisting others as the USAT *Dorchester* slowly sank into the Atlantic Ocean.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commemorating the USAT *Dorchester*, as the members of the Middletown VFW Post #2179 and Ladies Auxiliary honor the lives of the four heroic chaplains and the other 672 men who lost their lives aboard this transport ship on February 3, 1943. The soldier's gallant actions and resilient efforts aboard the USAT *Dorchester* are positive examples of what dedication and commitment to their comrades and their love for their country can accomplish.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2011
12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
OF NEW JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, every year, more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for Navy pea coats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than most other districts in the country. But this is nothing new—our area has repeatedly sent an above average portion of its sons and daughters to our nation's military academies for decades.

This fact should not come as a surprise. The educational excellence of area schools is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing makes military academy recruiters sit up and take note—indeed, many recruiters know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830's, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating these superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of Government. Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism and handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

My Academy Review Board is composed of six local citizens who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area—many are veterans. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer panels, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize these men and women and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of 2 days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

As these highly motivated and talented young men and women go through the academy nominating process, never let us forget the sacrifice they are preparing to make: to defend our country and protect our citizens. This holds especially true at a time when our nation is fighting the war against terrorism. Whether it is in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other hot spots around the world, no doubt we are constantly reminded that wars are fought by the young. And, while our military missions are both important and dangerous, it is reassuring to know that we continue to put America's best and brightest in command.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2011 12TH
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NEW JERSEY

AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Erin Crow, Livingston, Tabb H.S., Yorktown, VA
Beau Langdon, Livingston, Livingston H.S.
Brian Moscioni, Mendham, Gill St. Bernard's School
Alexander Gilbert, Long Valley, West Morris Central H.S.
Menachem Felzenberg, Morristown, Homeschooled, West Point, NY
Alan Sayil, East Hanover, Hanover Park H.S.
Nicholas Longhi, Succasunna, Seton Hall Prep

MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Michael Francis, Somerville, Immaculata H.S.

Sean Ryan, Madison, St. Peter's Prep
David DelCorso, Bridgewater, Seton Hall Prep
Jason Kratsch, Caldwell, James Caldwell H.S.
Thomas Healy, Byram, Pope John XXIII H.S.
Michael O'Rourke, Boonton, Boonton H.S.
Caitlyn Hughes, Randolph, Randolph H.S.
Antonio Amavisca, Bridgewater, Bridgewater-Raritan H.S.
Alexander Rodgers, Hopatcong, Jefferson H.S.
Sean Kenney, Boonton, Pope John XXIII H.S.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Delphine Slotten, Mendham, Newark Academy
Benjamin Minden, Roseland, West Essex H.S.
Swatii Amin, Dover, Morris Knolls H.S.
Jared Percevault, Landing, Roxbury H.S.
Joseph Boyland, Chester, West Morris Mendham H.S.
William Bocard, East Hanover, Regis H.S.
Julianne Steurer, Morris Plains, Parsippany Hills H.S.
Benjamin Reibman, Chatham, Chatham H.S.
Kera Pezzuti, Montville, Montville H.S.
Michael Lami, Madison, Madison H.S.
Sergio Jimenez, Hopatcong, MAPS

NAVAL ACADEMY

Charles Boles, Chatham, Chatham H.S.
Maria Minor, Kinnelon, Kinnelon H.S.
Clayton Petty, Mendham, West Morris Mendham H.S.
Matthew Infante, Chester, Delbarton School
Benjamin Drill, West Caldwell, Solomon Schechter Day School
Daren Schenck, Pine Brook, Montville H.S.
Caleb DeMoss, Chester, West Morris Mendham H.S.
Connor Maguire, Budd Lake, Mt. Olive H.S.
Thomas Morreale, Short Hills, Millburn H.S.
Patrick Ennis, Chatham, Chatham H.S.
Thomas Mahala, Bernards, Seton Hall Prep

HONORING PAT O'BRIEN

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleagues Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, and Congressman PETE STARK to recognize East Bay Regional Park District General Manager Pat O'Brien and congratulate him as he approaches his well-earned retirement.

Mr. O'Brien's career in public service demonstrates his lifelong commitment to the citizens and communities of the East Bay. We are grateful to him for his service to our constituents.

Mr. O'Brien held his first park and recreation job at the age of 13, giving swimming lessons and performing maintenance at a local salt water swimming club. After serving in the U.S. Army, he came back to California where he worked at Southgate Recreation and Park District in the Sacramento area. From 1980 to 1988, he served as Southgate's general manager prior to taking on the same position with the East Bay Regional Park District.

For the past 22 years, he has guided the largest regional park agency in the United

States, with nearly 108,000 acres of parklands spread across 65 regional parks and over 1,100 miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Approximately 14 million visitors a year from throughout the San Francisco Bay area and beyond take advantage of the vast and diverse District parklands and trails.

During his tenure, the district has acquired over 40,000 acres of new parklands, adding 17 new parks, doubling the size of 12 existing regional parks, and adding more than 200 miles of new regional trails. He has attracted more than \$105 million in matching funds—including this year's historic \$10.2 million Tiger II award. He has successfully secured stable funding through ballot measures and by creating assessment districts, and refinanced existing district bonds at lower rates, saving taxpayers over \$14 million. Every community in the East Bay has received at least one park, recreation or community center project funded through his efforts.

His dedication to serving the public through the parks and recreation procession is the legacy he will leave behind. His career has been guided by the desire to make substantive contributions to society and to people's lives. His firm leadership has helped to preserve the priceless heritage of our region's natural and cultural resources—open space, parks and trails—and to set aside park areas for enjoyment and healthful recreation for current and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, we invite our colleagues to join us in honoring General Manager Pat O'Brien for his dedicated service to the people of California and the Bay Area. We are pleased to join with his family, colleagues, and friends in congratulating Pat on a long and highly successful career and wish him a happy and healthy retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUDGET AUTONOMY ACT OF 2011

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, next to voting rights, the highest priority for District of Columbia residents is to achieve the right to control the funds they themselves raise to support their city, as resident in other jurisdictions do. Therefore, today I introduce a bill, the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2011, to allow the District's local taxpayer-raised budget to take effect immediately when passed by the city, without being subject to affirmative congressional approval.

Control over the dollars raised by local taxpayers is central to local control, the oldest American principle. Moreover, permitting the city's local budget to become law without first coming to Congress would have multiple practical benefits for both the city and Congress. For the city, a timely budget means: eliminating the uncertainty of the congressional approval process, which has a negative effect on the city's bond rating, adding unnecessary interest costs for local taxpayers; significantly increasing the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reducing the countless operational problems that result because the city's budget cannot be implemented until

Congress approves it. Of major importance, eliminating congressional approval of D.C.'s local budget would also align the District's fiscal year with the typical state and local government July 1st fiscal year instead of the congressional fiscal year, which starts in October, allowing ample time to prepare for the usual opening of schools in September. The D.C. local budget consumes valuable subcommittee, committee, and congressional floor time in both houses of Congress even though it is of interest only to those members who use it to promote their own issues, violating the principle of local self-government.

Increasing recognition of the hardships and delays caused by the annual appropriations process has led Congress to begin freeing the city. When I was last in the minority, I negotiated an agreement with the appropriators that has ensured that the city's local budget is always included in the first continuing resolution, if it is not approved by the start of the fiscal year. This approach has ended the lengthy delay of the budget of a big city until an appropriations bill is passed, often months after October 1st. As a result, the city has been able to spend its local funds at the next year's level, even though the budgets for federal agencies are often delayed for months. We hope that this process, which ended some serious problems in the functioning of the local government, will continue.

We nearly secured budget autonomy for the District in the last days of the lame duck session last Congress. I used an unusual procedure, getting subcommittee and committee authorizers to agree to place budget autonomy in the D.C. appropriations bill that was passed by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. Unfortunately, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution instead of regular appropriations bills.

If the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act is enacted, Congress would retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under article I, section 8, clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution. Because this authority allows Congress to make changes in the District's budget and laws at anytime, it is unnecessary to require a lengthy repetition of the District's budget process here. The time is overdue to permit the city to enact its local budget, the single most important step Congress could take to help the District better manage itself.

Members of Congress were sent here to do the business of the nation. Members have no reason to be interested in or to become knowledgeable about the local budget of a single city. In the past, the House and Senate have more often than not passed the District's budget as is. Our bill takes the Congress in the direction it is already moving. Congressional interference into one of the most vital rights to self-government should end this year with enactment of the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2011.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 12, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

VAN WEZEL PERFORMING ARTS HALL

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall's education programs and the work of the Van Wezel Foundation in support of arts education.

I also recognize Mary Bensel, Executive Director of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota, Florida for her service in support of the educational programs and community engagement activities of the Van Wezel.

The mission of the Van Wezel Foundation is to enrich the Gulf Coast community, with an emphasis on children, through the performing arts while supporting the needs of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

The arts education and community engagement programs of the Van Wezel are celebrating their fourteenth year, are nationally known, and are a major factor in the integration of arts education within our region's schools.

Each year tens of thousands of students, educators and lifelong learners from four counties are introduced to national performing arts programming through the support of the Van Wezel Foundation.

Annually, over 23,000 students from DeSoto, Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota County Schools attend the School-time performances conducted by the Van Wezel and supported by the Foundation.

Each year the Van Wezel, in collaboration with the Kennedy Center and local school districts provide specialized workshops to train teachers of science, math, history, social studies and literacy on ways to use the arts to enhance the presentation of their subject materials.

The Van Wezel is affiliated with the Partners in Education Program of the Kennedy Center and is one of the only projects nationally that has conducted a longitudinal study on the impact of integrative arts education on student learning and achievement. It is the only Kennedy partner in the country to have received seven national research grants on the impact of the arts and education programs within county schools.

Furthermore, the Van Wezel Education Department and the Manatee County schools are in the second year of Project Stage, a project funded through a U.S. Department of Education three year grant to increase literacy in elementary schools.

Under the leadership of Mary Bensel, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation have made a remarkable contribution to the cultural life of our community and education of our children.

DR. WILLIAM HALE

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dr. William Hale. Dr. Hale