

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PEACE CORPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, today, March 1, marks the 50th anniversary of the United States Peace Corps. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy, together with Sargent Shriver, established the most remarkable, long-lasting, and incredibly successful United States Peace Corps. On the announcement of the establishment of the Peace Corps, countries around the world clamored to have Americans of all ages come to their country and assist in the economic development of those countries.

To date, over 200,000 Americans have followed that call to service and have served in over 130 countries. Today, some 77 countries have Peace Corps volunteers and another 20 countries request the presence of Peace Corps volunteers.

My wife, Patti, and I are proud returned Peace Corps volunteers. Joining me today to celebrate this 50th anniversary are two other returned Peace Corps volunteers. And together with SAM FARR, who unfortunately cannot join us this evening, we comprise the four Members of Congress who are returned Peace Corps volunteers.

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I would like to call upon my colleague from California, MIKE HONDA, to join us here to express his own experiences of his work here in Congress and how his Peace Corps experiences may have reflected upon his work.

MIKE, you'll join us.

Mr. HONDA. Thank you, JOHN.

As a returned Peace Corps volunteer, I rise to recognize the work of the Peace Corps on its 50th anniversary. The Peace Corps has played an instrumental role in establishing prosperous foreign relations while fostering cross-cultural understandings. Countries from all over the globe celebrate the contributions of the Peace Corps and look forward with anticipation to its continued growth.

In representing the Ethiopian Caucus here, I was in Ethiopia a couple of years ago and traveled extensively through Ethiopia during the 8 days I was there. I ran across some folks in the upper part of Ethiopia, and we talked about the Peace Corps. Immediately, a lot of the young people there brightened up, and asked, Do you know GARAMENDI? It was at that moment I remembered that our colleague GARAMENDI had served in Ethiopia. What struck me the most were the memories of people and the fact that we touched them in their youth. The influence that we had on the young people in the different countries had stayed with them, and they have become leaders in their own right in the

countries in which we served. The same happened in El Salvador. I'm sure the same happened in Somalia where our other colleagues had served their time.

The Peace Corps provides a unique opportunity for volunteers to help some of the most impoverished people in the world, work that changes their global perspectives.

I had met another person at Stanford University. He was a visiting scholar. He was not much more than 5-foot 1-inch, articulate in English and Spanish, who said that he was an aberration of statistical probability. In saying that, he meant that he was a young boy in the mountains of Peru and that it was a Peace Corps volunteer who had touched his life, who had allowed him to learn more about himself and his country, which pushed him to learn English. Because of the Peace Corps volunteers, he was able to go to school.

His name was Alejandro Toledo. He became the President of Peru. Now he is a visiting scholar and is also looking at running again and perhaps serving his country. He not only serves his country; he serves all people of this world by the fact that he was able to express the idea that he was probably an aberration of statistical probability and that he had attained a position on the global stage, a leadership position, because of Peace Corps volunteers.

This story is replicated over and over again with the over 195,000 volunteers who have served. Yet I just want to pay special attention to Sargent Shriver, the person who made the selfless commitment and took the visionary leadership in creating a pioneering organization that provided opportunities for young people and that provided them opportunities to grow in themselves. Filling Sargent Shriver's shoes will always be difficult.

President Clinton was right when he said that never has America had a stronger warrior for peace and against poverty than Sargent Shriver. Sargent Shriver, himself, said it best when he said that the Peace Corps represents some, if not all, of the best virtues of this society. It stands for everything that America has ever stood for. It stands for everything we believe in and hope to achieve in this world.

So I want to thank my colleague for putting this together. I want to thank my friend Mr. PETRI, on the other side of the aisle, for his friendship. We say "the other side of the aisle," but I think that the aisle does not exist with our relationships and with our commonality within the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps allowed me to grow up. The Peace Corps allowed me to believe in myself. The Peace Corps was responsible for my being here today to be able to speak fervently and hopefully convincingly in encouraging other young people to serve this country through the Peace Corps. It will be 2 years that you will never ever regret—years I would never exchange for 10 years of regular life in this country.

I thank you.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Congressman MIKE HONDA, thank you so very, very much.

Let me now turn to my colleague on the Republican side, TOM PETRI, who also served.

TOM, if you could share some of your experiences with us.

Mr. PETRI. Yes, I am delighted to have the opportunity to join with my colleagues in recognizing the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps.

It was my pleasure some 25 years ago to work with the fellow whose picture is up by the podium, Sargent Shriver, on some of the arrangements for the 25th anniversary of the Peace Corps. They'd had a gala reunion and a program at the Kennedy Center with such luminaries at that time as Harry Belafonte and many others. It was a memorable occasion.

Sargent Shriver, of course, was a great leader in many different areas. I met him in a reception line awhile back. He didn't really much like, though, that I'd said, So great to meet Arnold Schwarzenegger's father-in-law. He really didn't want to be known as Arnold Schwarzenegger's father-in-law. He wanted to be known, and is known, as the most dynamic director of the Peace Corps and for many others of his works—with Mrs. Shriver on the Special Olympics and for a variety of other good works that he did with his life.

We all have our Peace Corps experiences. I had the opportunity to serve in the neighboring country to Ethiopia, which was Somalia—a troubled place now. It was a great experience, though. People ask about the Peace Corps, and I always say that one of the things you have to remember about the Peace Corps is that you get a lot more out of it than you really give. You're serving other people, but you're learning. You're learning about another culture; and at the same time, you're learning about your own country and your own experiences because of the points of contrast.

What a wonderful thing it is that America has now tens of thousands of people who have served in the Peace Corps, who have returned and who now are working in every walk of life—working in international organizations, working in business organizations, knowing different cultures, knowing different languages—thereby providing a dimension to our own national life that we would otherwise not have if we did not have people who had had the experience of serving in the Peace Corps.

There is one other thing. I still can remember the quizzical but interested reaction that so many people in Somalia or, I'm sure, anywhere in the world had: Who are you? Why are you doing it? Explain that to me again.

The spirit was kind of catching, and they would participate in all kinds of little volunteer activities and things that they hadn't necessarily thought of doing themselves.

Of course, the Peace Corps volunteers are not representatives of the American Government. They are representatives of the American people. That was always emphasized very, very strongly to all of us as part of our Peace Corps training. The way we were living was among the people, not behind these diplomatic bunkers that we sometimes see in the world today. You're experiencing life in the country in which you're serving.

One thing, just as an example, is that Peace Corps volunteers, of course, do their assignments, but they're also people who do volunteer work of one kind or another. One of the big hits was when I was in Mogadishu in the Peace Corps. I was with two other people who were Peace Corps lawyers at that time, and there were about 50, 60 people who were teachers. Some were community health workers, and some were community school construction workers. They would come to Mogadishu for a couple days off, for vacation time, when school was down, that kind of thing.

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And five or six of them got together and started playing some American young people's music. And the next thing you know they were invited to a restaurant in Mogadishu. Crowds of hundreds of people gathered, and it was the sensation of the town for a couple weeks. Of course they couldn't be paid for doing this sort of thing, but they might have gotten a couple of free meals from the restaurant and that kind of thing. What a wonderful, sort of natural way of building bridges. The people in this country had never really seen something like this. They weren't on a tour for any of these international shows, and they just thought it was the most wonderful thing to see live music played by American Peace Corps volunteers. And that was the face of America that they were presenting in this country, and it was one that I think has served our Nation very well.

So thank you again for giving me the opportunity to participate in this Special Order that you've organized to mark the 50th anniversary of the United States Peace Corps.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Tom, thank you so very much for your experiences. What year were you in Somalia?

Mr. PETRI. I was in Somalia in 1966-67.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Those were the same years that Patti and I were in Ethiopia, and we served in the far western part of Ethiopia in a very small town.

Mr. PETRI. We were there during the peaceful years between the two countries. The Peace Corps had been in Somalia and then had been pulled out because war erupted between Ethiopia and Somalia. The people on the Horn of Africa have very close and great respect for each other but also a strong rivalry. It's a very interesting thing to learn about.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, that's exactly the case. And it's not unusual to find wars going on. But as MIKE HONDA was talking about the President of Peru, who started his climb up the economic and educational ladder as a result of his experience with a Peace Corps teacher in Peru, the same thing happens in the countries in which you and I and other Peace Corps volunteers serve.

I recall in 1999-2000, when the war broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a group of us became interlocutors trying to figure out how to get these two countries to settle up. And because we were able to stand on the shoulders of so many Peace Corps volunteers that had served in those countries, we were able to meet with the President of Eritrea and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in two separate meetings and just talk to them about peace, about why they were fighting, why this war was going on that killed nearly 100,000 soldiers at that point. And it turned out that they were willing to talk to us. The reason was that in their high schools they were taught by Peace Corps volunteers, and they had this trust. They knew we didn't represent the American Government. They knew that we were there searching for peace as we had when we were volunteers. It turned out that those conversations led to the essence of the settlement of that war, the peace treaty.

And I'll never forget a day when—actually, a gentleman who's here in the gallery at the moment, Chic Dambach was one of our team, and another fellow, Mike McCaskey, who was then the president of the Chicago Bears, he was part of our team. We sat down with the foreign minister of Ethiopia, and we were talking about where we served in the Peace Corps and Mike was saying he served in the northern part of the country. And the foreign minister said, what school? And Mike described the school. It turned out that Mike was the teacher for the foreign minister, and immediately there was a connection. That connection then led to the meeting that we had with Meles and the conversation that ultimately led to a peace treaty. Our role was ended, but the African Union carried on.

Those are the relationships that count. We never know when they're going to materialize. It's quite possible that the people that you taught may one day be the leaders in Somalia once again. And these are the foundations upon which the Peace Corps breeds.

Thank you so very much for joining us. I know that you have another appointment that you need to get to. But the experience of a Peace Corps—and my wife, when she was the associate director of the Peace Corps, would often say that a Peace Corps volunteer leaves to search for peace and returns, and throughout one's life, continues that process. Our work here in Congress is part of that. Thank you so very much for your service and joining us this evening.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you for organizing this occasion.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The interest in the Peace Corps is not just shared by those of us who are return volunteers; it's also served, and the interest is found, by others.

I'd like to invite here to the well a colleague of mine from California, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPs, who represents the Santa Barbara area up into Santa Maria. Would you care to join us? Thank you so very much for doing so.

Mrs. CAPPs. I thank my colleague, Mr. GARAMENDI, for inviting me to join him here and for bringing the likeness of Sargent Shriver, the first director, so that I can stand next to him and pay tribute to him as I am speaking about the importance of the Peace Corps as I have experienced it.

This is such an important anniversary, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps—actually, this day, apparently, that's what you mentioned in your remarks, Mr. GARAMENDI. And you were joined by two Members of Congress who probably were influenced to become Members of Congress by—in fact, one, Mr. HONDA, just spoke, and he said it's because of his experiences in the Peace Corps he could say honestly that that's why he is now serving in Congress. And I've heard others of our colleagues say that as well. And both Mr. HONDA and Mr. PETRI speak eloquently, as you do, Mr. GARAMENDI, about the effect of this experience on you. And I have seen it firsthand from friends of mine.

I don't think it's possible to say enough positive about this wonderful organization. So having a Special Order this evening is an opportunity for us all to come together and celebrate the commitment of the United States Congress to communities around the world as they experience, through volunteerism, through ordinary citizens of this country who volunteer to share in the life and experience of a culture different from their own. As the Peace Corps celebrates its 50th anniversary, it's clear that this work that our citizens and volunteers have done is never more important than we see today, and also more relevant to what's going on in the world today.

I am very proud to represent a congressional district, the 23rd in California, with a very active Returned Peace Corps Volunteers community. The alumni association numbers well over 150 members and they are active in our community. And I know firsthand also, knowing several of them—many of them—that the community has been strengthened because of their experiences in the Peace Corps, and they readily testify to that.

And at the University of California in Santa Barbara, my home town, this campus consistently ranks towards the top of U.S. colleges and universities for volunteer recruitment among its young graduates. When I have the opportunity to meet with folks from the

Peace Corps administrative office, the first thing they always mention when they find out where I'm from is the high concentration of former and future volunteers from my congressional district. And so I know that on the south and central coast of California, with these alumni living and working among us, the importance of service, community, and open mindedness, values that the Peace Corps holds dear, these have influenced the way our civic life is conducted in our country as these Returned Peace Corps Volunteers bring their experiences in their service abroad back to their home communities and places of business. It's a win-win on both sides of whatever body it is that separates us from our countries around the world.

There is an institute on my campus that I'll reference, it's named for my husband, but it's called the Capps Center for the Study of Faith, Ethics and Public Policy. They sponsored an event—in fact, they had a series of events this past fall celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps. And on one of those occasions it was a privilege to welcome Aaron Williams, who is the National Peace Corps Director, to Santa Barbara, and in doing so to pay tribute to the Peace Corps. But also, the Capps Center invited three former Peace Corps volunteers to honor their service, but also to invite them to form a panel discussion so the rest of us could listen and respond and have questions about their own experiences. One of them was Sarah Chayes, who is a former NPR, National Public Radio, correspondent. She is a prominent author and founder of the Arghand Cooperative in Kandahar, Afghanistan. She spoke of her early experiences in the formation of the Peace Corps. She served in Morocco from 1984 to 1996.

Also present to be recognized and also to participate in the discussion was Gordon Radley. He is the former president of Lucasfilm. He served in Malawi from 1968 to 1970 and then again in western Samoa in 1979 and 1980.

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The third person who spoke—I just acknowledge these people because they're examples of community leaders in the country who were influenced so tremendously by their experience in Peace Corps. One whom I know well, because he's a constituent of ours in the congressional district but also with his service, is Thomas Tighe. He is the President and CEO of a very influential organization called Direct Relief International, which provides emergency services, disaster aid to countries around the world. It's headquartered in Santa Barbara. And before Tom came to this position, he served as the Peace Corps associate general counsel and was the chief of staff and COO of the Peace Corps. He, himself, served in Thailand from 1986 to 1988.

I mentioned these three because now the Library of Congress is collecting

these stories from previous volunteers, and I think it's a great idea that the anecdotes and vignettes that Peace Corps volunteers remember so poignantly from their time of service can be woven into the Library of Congress archives and there for permanent record.

Some of us in Congress, Mr. GARAMENDI, are old enough to remember the passion and enthusiasm from these 50 years ago when President Kennedy announced the creation of the Corps, the idea that Americans from all different backgrounds and walks of life would have an opportunity to work for and to learn from other cultures. You know, in that time, that was a fairly radical concept. But I marvel—don't you?—at how far we have come.

Since 1961 when the first volunteers went abroad, nearly 200,000 volunteers have served in over—in 139 countries around the world. These are talented and selfless Americans who have made lasting contributions in agriculture, in business development, in sustainable infrastructure, in education, in health, in combatting HIV and AIDS, in working to protect the environment around the world. Collectively, each volunteer's work represents a legacy of service that has become such a significant part of America's history and the positive image that we have abroad.

I know that Mr. FARR is going to speak probably after me, and he has just joined the group. He and I are part of an organization here in Congress which has some connections to the Peace Corps. It's called the House Democracy Partnership. And last week we traveled actually literally around the world. One of the places we were, one of our partner countries whose parliament we work with closely is the country of Indonesia.

For many years, the Peace Corps was not there. And now, just this past year, volunteers have been welcomed back. We had the chance to meet these active volunteers as we have met during visits to other countries with our work in the House Democracy Partnerships. Some of the countries are Malawi and Indonesia, and we've taken gifts. Sometimes occasionally we'll have a constituent serving there, so a family will ask us to bring some item that this person has wanted.

It was because of Mr. FARR's insistence that we invite four of the current volunteers. They've just come back, the presence of Peace Corps in the country. I know, Mr. FARR, I hope you'll expand upon this. The four had dinner with us who were visiting. Here we were in Surabaya, a coastal community in a large city actually in Indonesia, and these four young people who are teaching English as a second language in the high schools in the region came and shared some of their stories with us. It moved me then as it has over the years as I've heard these stories. And to see these young faces—not all Peace Corps volunteers are young, I know that. But these are young people who just were caught with zeal and enthusiasm with what they were doing.

During times of both war and peace, our volunteers through Peace Corps have exemplified some of the best qualities that this country has to offer the world: generosity, tolerance, hard work, ingenuity, friendship, and compassion. They have exhibited critical attention to detail and an unwavering commitment to sustainable development. These are talented people who really are a beacon of the goodwill that we want our country to stand for.

So I'm offering tonight, and I'm standing right next to the likeness of Sargent Shriver, as I offer my sincerest congratulations to the Peace Corps on its 50th anniversary that we all join in celebration.

I want to take the opportunity to encourage anyone who is thinking about it to serve either abroad or find a way in one's own community to serve with this kind of volunteerism.

I appreciate the leadership you've shown, Mr. GARAMENDI, in calling us together. I want to thank you and my colleagues in Congress who add so much to your service as colleagues of mine by this history that you share. You can add this to the kind of Peace Corps volunteerism that you did when you were younger, and it is a spirit that I know has never left you.

So I got a signal from Mr. GARAMENDI, and it is really a tribute, because Mr. FARR is a dear friend but also my neighboring congressional district Representative, and he never misses an opportunity, whether he's at home or abroad, to bring up the topic of serving in the Peace Corps. And how fitting this evening, Mr. FARR, that you are here to add your words to and your stories to this celebration.

I'm going to yield the floor, if it is okay with Mr. GARAMENDI, right directly to you.

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPs. I'm so fond of you and the service you give in your wonderful district, the Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo County coastlines.

Yes, I was with Congresswoman CAPPs last week when we hosted, in Surabaya, dinner with Peace Corps volunteers. And what struck me is, one, some of their assignments were much tougher than the one I had in a barrio in Medellin, Colombia, back in the 1960s, that women live with Muslim families because Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world. They teach in schools.

Very interesting how, and essentially progressive even, those Muslim schools were, allowing the American women not to have to be covered and to essentially be themselves and represent this country, and how fond the students are of their teachers and the faculty of the teachers. So Peace Corps was there.

And it's interesting that, as we pay tribute on the 50th anniversary, there's no age limit to joining the Peace Corps. We're in, I think, 77 countries now. We're about half our full size. We once were 15,000 volunteers. We're down

to 7,000. Growing. Congressman GARAMENDI and myself and others have been working to try to increase the Peace Corps budget because it's the only thing that's standing in the way between more volunteers being overseas.

There's 20 countries that want Peace Corps. There's 20,000 people that apply to the Peace Corps. And there's only, every year, about half of 7,000, so about 4,000, 3,500 jobs available. So only one in three or four ever can get a chance to get accepted, and that's not fair. And we need to double the size of Peace Corps.

And lastly on that point is that it costs, I think it's for every soldier we sent to Afghanistan, we could send 12 Peace Corps volunteers abroad. So we really get a good bang for our buck.

Why I rise tonight and I will try to be quick before I give it back to Mr. GARAMENDI is to, on behalf of all four of us who are returned Peace Corps volunteers now serving in Congress, we circulated a letter asking the President of the United States to issue a proclamation honoring the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps. It was signed by 136 Members of Congress.

Today, on the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, the President of the United States said the following:

"In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive order establishing the Peace Corps"—remember, Executive order. It wasn't done by a congressional act; it was a Presidential act—"establishing the Peace Corps, forever changing the way Americans see the world and the world sees us.

□ 1800

"Today, one of President Kennedy's most enduring legacies can be found in the over 200,000 current and returned Peace Corps volunteers who have collectively given over a half a century of service to the cause of peace. On its 50th anniversary, the United States Peace Corps remains an enduring symbol of our Nation's commitment to encouraging progress, creating opportunity, and fostering mutual respect and understanding throughout the world.

"Over the past five decades, Peace Corps volunteers have served in nearly 140 countries, bringing a wealth of practical assistance to those working to build better lives for themselves and their communities. From the first group of volunteers to arrive in Ghana and Tanzania in August of 1961, they have been emissaries of hope and goodwill to the far corners of the world, strengthening the ties of friendship between the people of the United States and those of other countries.

"Living and working alongside those they serve, volunteers help address changing and complex global needs in education, health, HIV/AIDS, business and information technology, agriculture, environmental protection, and youth development. With each village that now has access to clean water,

each young woman who has received an education, and each family empowered to prevent disease because of the service of a Peace Corps volunteer, President Kennedy's noble vision lives on.

"In our increasingly interconnected world, the mission of the Peace Corps is more relevant today than ever. Returned volunteers, enriched by their experiences overseas, bring a deeper understanding of other cultures and traditions back to their homes here in the United States. The lasting accomplishments of the Peace Corps continue to strengthen the partnerships with leaders in countries around the world.

"This year, we also mourn the loss and pay tribute to the extraordinary life of Sargent Shriver, the founding director of the Peace Corps. The impact of his decades of public service will echo forever in countless places across the globe that have been touched by the Peace Corps.

"On this anniversary, we honor the men and women from across the country who have carried forward our Nation's finest tradition of service, and we rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the dream and continuing the work of all those who aspire and yearn for peace.

"Now, therefore, I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby claim March 1, 2011, as the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the Peace Corps and its volunteers, past and present, for their many contributions to the cause of global peace and friendship.

"In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 28th day of February, in the year of our Lord 2011, and of the Independence of the United States of America the 235th. Barack Obama."

So in that honor I am very pleased that my colleague and friend from California, JOHN GARAMENDI, has asked us to pay tribute to the Peace Corps on its 50th anniversary. And I yield to my good colleague, who had the wisdom to set up this moment of special order.

Mr. GARAMENDI. SAM, if there was wisdom it was because you suggested it. Don't run off. I would like to ask you a couple of questions about your service.

SAM, the President's words were very touching to me, and I know they were to you, because we were part of the Peace Corps, and we still are, not so much because of our role here in Congress, but rather because once you are a Peace Corps volunteer you never leave the service of peace. Talk to me about where you served and the work that you did as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Mr. FARR. JOHN, I went into the Peace Corps right after graduating from college in 1963. I knew I wanted to be called for that service. I had done Air Force ROTC in college, and I

worked overseas for a cousin who had a factory in Argentina. It was my cross-cultural experience. And I realized that once I got bitten by wanting to see other languages and other cultures, that when the Peace Corps was announced, that's what I would do. And I thought when I left the Peace Corps—when I went in, I thought when I leave I will probably come back and be a high school biology teacher.

My background had been in science. And I went to do urban community development, which just means we were listening to what we call the felt needs of very poor people in a very poor barrio that didn't have any water or lights. And we were taught, and it was very interesting, because it's been probably one of the best teachings I have ever had in my life is don't go down there and just tell them what you want do based on your values, because you are going to be in a country that doesn't have infrastructure. Your main thought and idea will be about cleanliness because you haven't lived in dirt before. And you don't have garbage pickup and you don't have that infrastructure. Don't let your values not allow you—open your eyes and your ears and listen. Look before you leap. And that was really great advice, because I think in politics you really do have to be a good listener.

So we listened to the community, and what they wanted to do was first build a soccer field. I thought that's odd. I played soccer, but I have no idea of the dimensions of a field. I don't know how you do this. It didn't matter. It was just like, okay, they need a motivational force. I am there. I said, okay, how do we do this? Got some shovels, got some picks. Where do you want to do it? And we did it. What was interesting is they had never worked together in a community project. So the teachings there were community development, how do you get together. And from there on we went to build schools, and we put in sewers, all by hand by the way.

And we had to go downtown to the municipal government to get the sewer pipes and to get bags of cement. So that petitioning of government, going down, and a long story but quickly, it woke me up to thinking I am in another country, I can't vote here. I am petitioning government. I won't be able to vote for or against it. We have got poverty in America. The book had come out, "The Other America," which showed there was a lot of poverty in the United States. Why don't I go home and petition my own government to right wrongs? And here I am in the United States Congress.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Before you arrived here, you spent many years in the California legislature, where I had the privilege of working with you. You started the discussion about your own Peace Corps experience by answering the call to action, President Kennedy's very famous call: Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you

can do for your country. I know that for you and for myself, and even more so for my wife Patti—

Mr. FARR. You did it even more so, because you were married, you were a rock star athlete out of California, you were at the University of California Berkeley. And to be married and to take that risk, sort of walking away from what was just the ideal life to go off to Ethiopia must have been an incredible pull.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Certainly the pull personally, but much more important than that was the pull that Patti exerted upon me. I had an opportunity to play professional football, but turned that down to get married and to spend a 2-year honeymoon in the far western part of Ethiopia, where there was no running water, and we literally lived in a wattle, which is a mud-walled home with a corrugated tin roof and an out-house out back. And it turned out to be the most marvelous honeymoon, and it's still going on now some almost 46 years later. So it was a beautiful opportunity for us to serve.

And then the rest of what you said is a Peace Corps volunteer never leaves a life of service. We transform it into many, many ways. LOIS CAPPS talked about three or four examples from her own district of returned Peace Corps volunteers and the way they inserted themselves into their communities for service, and in one case international food.

Mr. FARR. Would you share for me, I got here a little late, maybe you already did, but I think you did one of the most remarkable diplomatic missions ever in being asked to come back to Ethiopia with some colleagues of the Peace Corps by the president of the country to see if you could help to settle the dispute with neighboring Eritrea. And as I recall, it was a band of Peace Corps volunteers that put that peace agreement together.

□ 1810

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, it really speaks to the thousands of Peace Corps volunteers that worked in Ethiopia and Eritrea. In the late nineties, a war broke out between those two countries.

There is, here in Washington today, well over 100,000 people from Ethiopia and Eritrea. They were getting riled up and choosing sides. Those of us that served in Ethiopia, together with Chic Dambach, who is here in the gallery, set out to try to get these people here in the Washington area to work towards peace rather than to get into an argument amongst themselves over which country was right or wrong. From there we very quickly found ourselves invited to travel to both Ethiopia and Eritrea, where we were able to meet with the heads of state.

In both cases, the team that was assembled, there were five of us, myself, I was then just leaving Federal Government service as the Deputy Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Dambach had just left the Returned Peace Corps Volun-

teer Association, the National Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Association, a Federal appellate court judge who had served in Ethiopia who was then on the bench in Arizona in the Ninth Circuit; Mike McCaskey, who was then the president of the Chicago Bears; and another fellow who was deeply involved in African relief issues.

We journeyed and we sat down and met with first the President of Eritrea and had a 3-hour conversation with him about the war and why the war was underway, what his goals were.

We then traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where we met first with the foreign minister of Ethiopia, who actually was a student of Mike McCaskey. They talked about it, and there was this bond that was immediately established between them.

Shortly thereafter, the foreign minister arranged a meeting with Prime Minister Meles, and, again, we spent nearly 3 hours with him asking him about the war from his perspective, what there was. It came to the five of us that there was a way to find peace, that there was a path that could bridge these differences that these two countries had that at that point had resulted in nearly 100,000 soldiers, both Ethiopia and Eritrean, having been killed in that war.

We turned that information over to the Organization of African Unity, which was then working towards some sort of a settlement. And, shortly thereafter, within a couple of months, the basic elements of the peace treaty were developed, and they were based upon the work that we had done. There was some more back and forth that took place. But our team was invited to Algeria for the signing of the ceremony of peace.

So the work for peace really never ends, and I know you are doing it here in Congress.

Mr. FARR. It's one thing to be a Peace Corps volunteer. It is one thing to bring two nations at war together living in peace because you are Peace Corps volunteers. I think that's a great tribute. You mentioned Chic Dambach. He was a student of mine when he was going into volunteer service in the Peace Corps in Colombia.

It seems that you and I have developed a great fondness for Chic. Maybe he is more important than either of us because he has been so instrumental in your life and what happened in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and was instrumental in my life in Colombia. I am glad he is here tonight because he really is part of the Peace Corps legacy.

Mr. GARAMENDI. There is another example of an individual who has dedicated his life to peace. He now heads up an organization that is a consortium of nongovernment organizations that are dedicated to searching for peace in countries around the world and trying to resolve disputes before they come to war.

We would just be derelict in our duty if we didn't make a heavy-duty pitch here for people to join the Peace Corps.

Everywhere I go on campuses, people, the young men and women that are graduating, and older people—I think 7 percent of the volunteers today are over 50 years of age. The next election may give us an opportunity to return to the Peace Corps. Who knows what will come of that.

But whatever your age is, the Peace Corps offers you an opportunity to serve.

Mr. FARR. I would also like to mention that we could use a lot more Peace Corps volunteers because of these countries that want us. They want us to come in for the first time, they want us to grow. Vietnam is interested in getting the Peace Corps.

We were just in East Timor. They were there. We were pulled out due to unrest. They are now in peace. They want them back. Surabaya in Indonesia, there are, I think, 18 volunteers there now. They could grow that to hundreds of volunteers. The country wants it.

But the one thing we have to do here in Congress is give them more money. Frankly, I want to really salute the President of the United States, because in these tough fiscal times, where everything else has to be cut back, this year he has asked Congress to give the Peace Corps more money than we gave them last year, and that's one of the bounce-up programs.

We have gotten strong bipartisan support on this, and hopefully in this Congress, which is going to be mostly a cut, squeeze, and trim Congress, we don't throw the baby out with the bath water, as you said. What an incredible opportunity at a time when peace might be breaking out in the Middle East. They are going to need a lot of this. They are going to need a lot of community development.

You are going to need people to understand. I mean, I could go on for hours at what I just saw in East Timor where women had, three, four, five babies in houses with no electricity, mud floors, before anyone got to them and said, you know, you need to go through a prenatal discussion and some postnatal treatment. Even in that poverty, what they are just trying to do is sequence the babies so they won't be born so quickly one next to another because there is a high risk of low birth rate.

You know who is there right on the ground doing that—that is what the Peace Corps does. So the need, the war on poverty never ends.

The war, or the path to peace, the process for peace, as we have seen hopefully breaking out in the Middle East, that we can get a democratic society, they are all going to need teachers, and as we need them here at home we need them abroad. Teachers and not just traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic but teachings of health care and HIV prevention and so on. And I know you and Patti have dedicated your lives to that work and what a wonderful way to celebrate on this 50th anniversary.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And as you were talking about Peace Corps volunteers working with young families, our son and daughter served in Paraguay in the Peace Corps, and her work was precisely that, working with her families in her community in Paraguay. They were also in a rural area working on family health on the issues of raising children, healthy children, and providing them with information about how they could better take care of their families and have a better life.

Our son was involved in community development work. Our two daughters also served in the Peace Corps, and for young men and women, and others who are not so young, the Peace Corps offers an incredible opportunity to serve the world, serve this country, and to serve the needs of individuals in a one-on-one relationship in some 77 countries now, and hopefully with a small increase in the Peace Corps budget, which stands just at \$400 million.

You issued, you gave a statistic earlier in your discussion that is really, I think, important. For every soldier that we send to Afghanistan, we could send 13 Americans somewhere in the world to work on the issues of poverty, the issues of education, social development, societal development, and peace. So it's a 13-1 ratio, a great investment.

Aaron Williams is the current Peace Corps director. He was a volunteer in the Dominican Republic from 1967 to 1970, served 3 years.

Mr. FARR. He met his wife there too. They are happily married. So some Peace Corps volunteers come home with new families.

Mr. GARAMENDI. There are many, many opportunities that the Peace Corps develops and yes, indeed, they can come home with a new family or wife. You are quite correct about Aaron.

There are 8,655 volunteers, as of today, serving in 77 countries, urban, rural, in all kinds of work. Just some of the statistics are, I think, interesting; education, 37 percent. We were teachers and community development. Actually, Patti and I were involved in the smallpox eradication program, Ethiopia being one of the last countries to eradicate smallpox.

Health, HIV/AIDS, was 22 percent. Business. Do you want to be a graduate of Harvard Business School and really get some experience? Fourteen percent of the volunteers do that.

Mr. FARR. We had small business development in Colombia. There was also a whole bunch of people working on educational television, which the country was implementing and needed teachers who knew how to do that, and technicians on how to run the studios and set it all up.

□ 1820

We also had architects helping design public facilities and parks. You don't work on your own. You work with host country counterparts who are professionals like you are.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I have a great example of this. A television reporter, a cameraman in the San Francisco Bay area, is about to retire; and every time I see him, he says, I'm going to go in the Peace Corps. And I say, have you gone online, peacecorps.gov, to put your application in? He says, no. And I said, well, the next time I see you, I want you to tell me that you have your application in. He wants to take his knowledge of reporting and television camera work overseas to work with countries that are developing their own media for the purposes of providing that foundation for a democratic society. And he would be terrific. He's a great reporter.

Mr. FARR. I think that's very important. One of the things I did today, because I was in the same conversation that you were having, somebody asked me about it who was my age and wanted to know whether he could go in the Peace Corps. And I said, go look up the Peace Corps on the Internet.

Not only that. It shows every one of those countries, 77 countries, and what jobs are in that country. You can go out and look around the world and see the country you want to go to and find a job that you think you're qualified to do, and that gives you a motivation to do that. Also, not all Peace Corps volunteers live in mud huts. If you're teaching in a university or in a school in an urban area, you could be in a much more comfortable, middle class setting than people out—the image of sleeping in a hammock in a mud hut. So it's all kinds of opportunities, just depending on the skill sets of you, the individual, and the needs of the host country.

We are always there as a guest being asked by the country to be there, and we do the jobs they ask us to do. And, frankly, I think we have enough innovation, as you and I found out, that sometimes if the job isn't working exactly as they described, you just look around and see what else is needed and adapt yourself. That's a lot of fun. That's a lot of creativity and I think a lot of satisfaction for the volunteer.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Sam, we're just about out of time.

Today, March 1, 2011, marks the 50th anniversary, the 50th birthday of the United States Peace Corps. It's been an incredible organization all of these years. Over 200,000 Americans have served, both young and old, in some 139 countries. And so for all of those out there that want to do something very, very special with their life, well, you can Google it or you can go directly to peacecorps.gov. Put your application in and see what the toughest job you ever loved will bring to you.

Congressman SAM FARR, thank you so very much for joining me this evening, for TOM PETRI and MIKE HONDA, the four of us who are in Congress that were—that remain—Peace Corps volunteers, and for LOIS CAPPS joining us and giving her perspective, a very big “thank you.”

Mr. FARR. Happy birthday.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Happy birthday, Peace Corps.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive Order establishing the Peace Corps, forever changing the way America sees the world and the world sees us. Today, one of President Kennedy's most enduring legacies can be found in the over 200,000 current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have collectively given over a half century of service to the cause of peace. On its 50th anniversary, the United States Peace Corps remains an enduring symbol of our Nation's commitment to encouraging progress, creating opportunity, and fostering mutual respect and understanding throughout the world.

Over the past five decades, Peace Corps Volunteers have served in nearly 140 countries, bringing a wealth of practical assistance to those working to build better lives for themselves and their communities. From the first group of volunteers to arrive in Ghana and Tanzania in August 1961, they have been emissaries of hope and goodwill to the far corners of our world, strengthening the ties of friendship between the people of the United States and those of other countries.

Living and working alongside those they serve, volunteers help address changing and complex global needs in education, health and HIV/AIDS, business and information technology, agriculture, environmental protection, and youth development. With each village that now has access to clean water, each young woman who has received an education, and each family empowered to prevent disease because of the service of a Peace Corps Volunteer, President Kennedy's noble vision lives on.

In our increasingly interconnected world, the mission of the Peace Corps is more relevant today than ever. Returned volunteers, enriched by their experiences overseas, bring a deeper understanding of other cultures and traditions back to their home communities in the United States. The lasting accomplishments of the Peace Corps continue to strengthen partnerships with leaders and countries around the world. This year, we also mourn the loss and pay tribute to the extraordinary life of Sargent Shriver, the founding director of the Peace Corps. The impact of his decades of public service will echo forever in countless places across the globe that have been touched by the Peace Corps.

On this anniversary, we honor the men and women from across the country who have carried forward our Nation's finest tradition of service, and we rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the dream and continuing the work of all those who aspire and yearn for peace.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1, 2011, as the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the Peace Corps and its volunteers, past and present, for their many contributions to the cause of global peace and friendship.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA.

PUTTING OUR NATION ON THE
RIGHT TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Iowa is pleased to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House, and I want to express my disappointment in the gentlemen who spoke before me. I usually come here to pick up my material for rebuttal. And as I listened to you talk about your affection for the Peace Corps, I didn't come up with a single thing that I seek to rebut here tonight.

So I'll go off on the subject matter that I came to address, Madam Speaker, and that is the situation where we are in this country today with debt and deficit and the growth in government and the things that we must do to turn this country back around and put it on the right track.

This House here this afternoon voted to pass a continuing resolution that has within it an aggregate of about \$4.1 billion in cuts over a 2-week period of time that if you multiply or extrapolate that out to the end of the fiscal year, it comes in that neighborhood of about \$61 billion in cuts which arguably holds the reductions in place. But it did specifically go in and make the cuts in areas where the President had recommended those cuts. It dialed down the contention and tried to find a way to find a solution and a resolution. A list of the President's recommendations I have, but I don't think I'm going to take the time or the trouble, Madam Speaker, to read them into the RECORD. I'll just say that it suffices to show that a number in the neighborhood of \$2.7 billion would be to earmark savings, and the termination of programs saving is about \$1.25 billion, so we get to that number that's just slightly more than \$4 billion.

It's perhaps a victory. It's perhaps a success. It's perhaps a temporary one. I think most likely that it is. These cuts that were offered here today will, most likely, be met with an agreement down on the other end of the Capitol Hill building in the Senate that is run by Majority Leader HARRY REID of Nevada. I think I saw some language in this appropriations bill that might directly affect him. That might be what helps convince him as well.

Madam Speaker, this is a short-term piece that was designed to be a period of time that would allow the Senate to mull over the House position, which is H.R. 1. H.R. 1 is the bill that has the highest priority for the Speaker of the House. It's been traditionally the case. And 2 weeks ago, this Congress negotiated, debated, and offered amendments. Some 500 to 600 amendments were filed. Nearly 200 of them were debated and voted upon. And many of them that went in were cuts in spending or prohibitions from using that spending to implement certain policies

that have been since rejected by this Congress.

And, Madam Speaker, we need to remember that there was an election last November 2 of 2010. And to quote the President of the United States, he famously said after the election of November, 2008: We had an election, and we won, which means that he dictates the policy. Well, Madam Speaker, to the President of the United States, I would say, we had an election November 2. You didn't win that one, Mr. President. In fact, you declared it to be a "shellacking." It was a shellacking.

And the Republicans won the majority in this House by huge numbers. We're looking today at 87 new freshman Republicans and nine freshman Democrats, to give you a sense of the poor proportionality, or the disproportionality. The seats that were picked up have dramatically changed. The gavels all changed hands in the House of Representatives. The agenda changed. It has gone from an agenda that has been driven under the speakership of NANCY PELOSI for 4 years, of an agenda of accelerating spending, increasing government and pushing socialized medicine—which is what I have long declared ObamaCare to be. That doesn't shock anybody, Madam Speaker. It is common vernacular out in the central part of the United States at a minimum.

And so we saw this push to grow government. We saw the President participate in, as a United States Senator, and accelerate his efforts as the President of the United States in the government take-over, first promoting a \$700 billion TARP bailout program that was designed to pick up toxic assets that could have been far better picked up by the private sector if he would have just identified them and we would have exempted capital gains taxes on the profits that would be have been made. We would have seen private money go in and pick up these toxic mortgages in a large way and be managed—managed for a better result that would have kept more people in their homes. The list of good things goes on that might have happened had we had more free market solutions and less government intervention.

□ 1830

But that \$700 billion TARP plan was a mistake, in my view, Madam Speaker. And behind that came the call for the economic stimulus plan which was \$787.5 billion that rolled up to around \$816 billion for the economic stimulus plan. Not all of it was spent, but it was to keep unemployment below 8 percent. We know that it sailed up into the upper 9 percentile, 9.7 and above. It has dialed down now to around 9. But we have a lot of people who have given up and stopped trying.

It is clear that the stimulus plan didn't stimulate the economy at all in the way that it was described or the way it was promised to us, but it surely added to the debt. We have seen about

\$3 trillion in unnecessary spending driven by this President. We have watched as proud companies went into hock to the Federal Government and found the Federal Government engaged in managing some of those companies.

Three large investment banks were taken over by the Federal Government, at least by the power of management or influence—AIG, the insurance company, over \$180 billion that flowed into AIG to protect other investors that had an interest in AIG, the insurance company, or in policies that they had offered that were guaranteeing the return on mortgage-backed securities, Madam Speaker. So there is \$180 billion there. Three large investment banks and AIG, the insurance company.

We saw Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac transition from quasi-government to government, to taxpayer guaranteed, stepping in to play a role in the majority of the mortgage loans in the United States, guaranteed by the taxpayers.

I recall standing on this floor, the floor of the House of Representatives, October 26, 2005, listening to the most immediate past chairman of the Financial Services Committee arguing that he was never going to participate in bailing out Fannie and Freddie. And if anyone was considering buying stock in either one, they should not do so under the consideration that BARNEY FRANK from Massachusetts would be engaged in bailing them out. And so he later became chairman of the committee, and that's what happened.

We saw Dodd-Frank become law, which gives the Federal Government massive regulatory control over the financial institutions in America. We saw the government, the White House, takeover of General Motors and Chrysler. And we saw ObamaCare pass, which I have declared to be the nationalization of our skin and everything inside it. And by the way, it includes a 10 percent tax on the outside if you go to the tanning salon. That is over 51 percent of our economy swallowed up by the Obama administration and supported by the Pelosi House and the Reid Senate.

And we come to this point where America can't take it anymore, Madam Speaker. We can't take it anymore. And all over the world they know that too much spending has put America in debt. It has put our currency in question. It has put our economy in an unstable position, and it guarantees that we will be in a long, drawn-out recovery because we have the overspending. We have the debt to service, which is pay the interest. And then we also have to eventually pay off the principal. And we are borrowing from the Chinese and begging them. And we are borrowing money from the Saudis and begging them. Yes, it affects our foreign policy. We are watching a foreign policy that is a conflagration in the Middle East. Country after country is blowing up and seeking to throw off the yoke of its long-term dictatorship ruler and replace it with—we are not sure what