

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5855) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chair, I rise today to express my opposition to H.R. 5855, the "Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2013." The need to find savings in the Federal budget must not be at the expense of homeland security. I am troubled that H.R. 5855 provides \$39.1 billion for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) activities, which is \$393 million below what the President sought for the Department to continue to carry out its homeland and non-homeland security missions and \$484 million below what was provided for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012.

H.R. 5855 also sends a troubling message about the majority's commitment to honoring its promises. Last year, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass the Budget Control Act. Both sides made sacrifices to achieve a compromise that would keep the government running and address Federal budgetary challenges. H.R. 5855 reneges on the commitments Republicans made last year by reducing the funding allocation for the Department of Homeland Security beyond what is required by statute and below the amount the Department has stated it needs. This "bait and switch" is unjustified and undermines the security of our Nation.

As a result of the Republicans' misguided priorities, several programs critical to our national security are underfunded. For example, H.R. 5855 provides \$45.4 million in funding for Infrastructure Compliance Programs for FY 2013, which is about \$29 million below the President's request and \$48 million below the FY 2012 enacted level. Under H.R. 5855, DHS will not have resources necessary to implement the long-awaited final rule for ammonium nitrate or fully-implement the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) program. As the author of the originating legislation for the ammonium nitrate security program and co-author of the originating legislation for the CFATS program, I strongly believe that these programs are at a crossroads and support is essential for them to realize Congressional intent and address vulnerabilities that put ordinary Americans at risk.

H.R. 5855 also misses a critical opportunity to put a struggling border security and immigration enforcement program on a path to success. It rejects the President's proposal to transfer the US-VISIT program to Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement and, instead, sets up a new bureaucratic office—the "Office of Biometric Identity Management" within the National Protection and Programs Directorate, where it has languished for nearly a decade. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 highlighted the need to identify and remove

visitors to the U.S. who are legally admitted to this country but fail to depart when their visas expire, as four of the 9/11 terrorists were overstays. In response, Congress enacted the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, which directed the deployment of an entry-exit system "with all deliberate speed and as expeditiously as practicable." While the US-VISIT program has begun to capture biometric data of foreign travelers entering the U.S. at air, land, and sea ports, it has repeatedly failed to make progress in deploying a biometric exit system for travelers departing the U.S. This failure to fully implement the program has undermined DHS's ability to verify with certainty which travelers have departed this country. Inexplicably, H.R. 5855 rejects aligning this program with the agencies responsible for border and immigration enforcement, thereby sending the message that the House is not serious about tackling the alien overstay problem.

With respect to homeland security grants, I would note that H.R. 5855 provides \$1.7 billion for State, local, and tribal grant programs, which is \$412 million above FY 2012, but still falls short of where it needs to be. In FY 2010 and 2011, Congress recognized the first responders and first preventers on the State, local and tribal levels and provided \$3 billion and \$2.23 billion respectively. And, like last year, this bill punts responsibility for allocating funding to the 12 targeted grant programs to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Last month, FEMA released the National Preparedness Report. The report found a direct link between grant investments and the development of preparedness capabilities. In areas that have seen substantial grant investment—from emergency communications to medical surge capabilities to emergency planning—State governments reported measurably improved preparedness capabilities. The report also found that in areas where we have not invested, we are less prepared. The report makes clear: targeted homeland security grants work. I fear that if we continue to fail to fund these important grant programs adequately, capabilities that we have spent over a decade developing will be lost.

Finally, I am disturbed that H.R. 5855 is full of political sweeteners intended to rally support from the extreme right-wing faction of the Republican party. From slashing funding for the Transportation Security Agency, to increasing funding for the 287(g) program, to abortion limitations in ICE detention facilities, H.R. 5855 is full of politically-driven provisions that distract from pressing homeland security matters and divert resources from addressing them.

I recognize that the appropriators were faced with a difficult task in drafting this spending bill, and I appreciate the efforts of Chairman ADERHOLT and Ranking Member PRICE to draft a bill to adequately fund the Department of Homeland Security's activities in FY 2013. The funding allocation being what it is, however, this bill could never fully meet our nation's homeland security needs. Therefore, I must oppose H.R. 5855.

IN RECOGNITION OF ST. PAUL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH AND DR. EPHRAIM WILLIAMS

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and Dr. Ephraim Williams, who has been its Pastor for 41 years. As church members gather together to celebrate the completion of mortgage payments on the church's Family Life Center and the leadership of Dr. Williams, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring St. Paul's important role in the Oak Park neighborhood and the larger Sacramento community.

Since 1971, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church has been a valuable community resource. Its congregation has grown 50-fold since its founding, and now has over 5,000 members. It has provided healthcare, tutoring, and employment assistance, facilitated charity in the community, established mentorship programs for local youth, and much more. St. Paul's dedication and service to its community has been nothing short of exemplary.

This month, Dr. Williams will welcome congregation and community members in celebrating the completion of mortgage payments on the Family Life Center, a community center promoting active, healthy, and community-centric lifestyles. The facility includes classrooms, space for childcare and the arts, and hosts many community events. I am confident that the Family Life Center will continue to be a shared treasure of the Sacramento area.

Dr. Williams' work in the community has earned him many awards and a great deal of recognition, from the California Legislature, the City of Sacramento, the Black American Political Association, and others. In 2011 he was awarded the Key to the City by the Mayor of Sacramento in recognition of his service as pastor. His leadership has made the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church a staple in the City of Sacramento.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and Dr. Ephraim Williams, as they celebrate their 41st year as a congregation and the completion of mortgage payments on the Family Life Center. I am confident that this church will continue its service to the Sacramento community under his stellar leadership. I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church's outstanding work in providing the community with invaluable services.

RECOGNIZING MS. JERRELLE FRANCOIS FOR HER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AS VICE CHAIR OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Ms. Jerrelle Francois for her years of dedication to the people of Maryland, including

her 7 years as Vice Chair of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

Ms. Francois has a long history of service in Maryland. Beginning as a teacher at Cherry Hill Junior High School, she went on to become a Department Head, Assistant Principal, Principal and Assistant Superintendent. While holding these positions, Ms. Francois worked to establish policies and procedures for improving K–12 curriculum and instruction, as well as system-wide special student support services. Throughout her career, Ms. Francois has received numerous awards and commendations including the Richard R. Green Award, the nation's highest urban education honor, given in recognition of exceptional contributions to urban schools and students.

In 2006, Ms. Francois was appointed as the Vice Chair of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. Utilizing her decades of experience at every level of the public school system, Ms. Francois has provided a valuable perspective which has opened up many new opportunities to students. Ms. Francois' work in Baltimore City Public Schools has been integral to the education and success of thousands of City school children. Under her leadership and guidance, Baltimore City Public Schools have made significant improvements in the scope and effectiveness of their education programs.

Through all of the promotions, accolades, and awards, Ms. Francois has stayed true to her commitment to educate the youth of Baltimore City. She has dedicated her life to improving public education and has enriched and guided the lives of thousands of children. The State of Maryland is forever grateful for all that she has done. As Ms. Francois retires from Baltimore City Public Schools, I would like to thank her for her unwavering dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 2, 2012, I missed a rollcall vote. Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on No. 377.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Cancer Survivors Day celebration that will be cosponsored by Falmouth Hospital, Cape Cod Healthcare, and the Falmouth Public Library.

National Cancer Survivors Day is an annual and honored worldwide celebration of life that is held in hundreds of communities across the globe. Participants in these events unite on the first Sunday in June to show that life after a cancer diagnosis can be meaningful and productive. The local Cape Cod event, to be cosponsored by Falmouth Hospital, Cape Cod

Healthcare and Falmouth Public Library, is part of a biannual celebration for cancer survivors and caregivers of upper Cape Cod. At the event, the "Survivors Quilt," or the Quilt of Hope, will be unveiled, which is made up of handmade squares contributed by local cancer survivors to celebrate their resilience and determination.

The cosponsors of the Cape's National Cancer Survivors Day event are local leaders who have led the effort to eradicate cancer and to assist cancer patients, their caregivers, and survivors. Cape Cod Healthcare, which is one of the top ten healthcare systems in the nation, provides the latest diagnostic imaging technology at health facilities throughout the Cape. As for Falmouth Hospital, its cancer program has received significant endorsements from accreditation agencies, such as the Commission on Cancer and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers. Falmouth Hospital's Clark Cancer Center provides local access to the latest, most sophisticated, and most reliable cancer therapies available, and is the only hospital in which many Cape Cod residents can receive such treatments. Additionally, the hospital's Seifer Women's Health and Imaging Center, along with the Wilkens Outpatient Medical Complex in Hyannis, are the two Cape Cod Healthcare centers that provide certain types of digital screening and diagnostic services to Cape residents. The work of these organizations is invaluable to the local community, as the American Cancer Society estimates that Massachusetts will see over 38,000 new cancer diagnoses this year.

Mr. Speaker, it brings me great pride to honor these local organizations in their continuous fight against cancer and to commemorate their celebration of National Cancer Survivors Day. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the importance of their work in the local community as well as the significance of National Cancer Survivors Day.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL MARINA DAY

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the significance and contributions of local marinas across the country as we commemorate National Marina Day on June 9, 2012. Every day across this great nation, folks take advantage of waterways for a variety of reasons, including commerce, sport, and recreation. National Marina Day is a special opportunity to highlight the valuable role that marinas play in communities across America as gateways to some of our country's most exceptional waterways.

The First District of Virginia is a region where waterways are an important part of life for many folks, from the Potomac, Rappahannock, and York Rivers to the great Chesapeake Bay itself. For many citizens, marinas serve as gateways to these grand waterways, places where folks can reacquire themselves with nature and learn valuable lessons of environmental stewardship, all while mastering the practical skills and expertise associated with operating a boat. Many of these life lessons

were instilled in me during summers on Virginia's Northern Neck, which I have called home for many years, and they are lessons that I have found to be beneficial in all aspects of my life. Marinas have provided the opportunity for folks from all walks of life to experience all of the substance that our natural waterways have to offer, and I am pleased to recognize their contributions and unique imprint on our communities as we commemorate National Marina Day.

HONORING MONTANA'S WORLD WAR II VETERANS

HON. DENNY REHBERG

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2012

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, today, it is my distinct privilege to welcome a very special group of men to our nation's Capital. And while it is incumbent upon us to honor them, the truth is, they honor us with their presence here.

On June 15, 2012, nearly 100 veterans of the Second World War will arrive in Washington, D.C. through the Honor Flight program. Since 2005, Honor Flight has worked to bring WWII veterans to visit their war memorial at the foot of the Washington Monument, and a few feet from the White House. In that first year, 137 veterans participated in the program. By last year, that total annual participation has swelled to 18,055.

And while each of the veterans who has participated deserves our thanks and our honor, this particular group is very special to me in particular because it marks the very first time Honor Flight has brought out a group of veterans from Montana.

You won't find a state that's more proud of our veterans than Montana. And we have a lot of them. In fact, you won't find many states that have more as a percentage of our population.

On December 7, 1941 the United States was pulled into the war and Montanans answered the call to service. Within the first year, 40,000 Men and women from the Treasure State enlisted. By the end of the war, 57,000 had served—nearly 10 percent of the state's entire population at the time, one of the highest rates in the country.

They served in every branch and in every theater of the conflict. And too many of them never made it back to Montana, although I think that heaven must be a little something like a peaceful sunset over the Yellowstone River.

But Montana's veterans didn't sacrifice in vain. They bled and died to defeat the greatest threat to freedom the world has ever seen. They fought across the bloody islands of the Pacific and in the frozen forests of Europe. They fought in the air, land and sea. Some even fought below the waves. And they won.

Today, the men and women who fought and won that war are justifiably part of what is called The Greatest Generation. The sacrifices of men who arrive in Washington, D.C. are the reason for this honorable title. It is not something we gave to them, it's something they earned.

As they visit this city and reflect on what it stands for as a beacon of freedom to the