

Brigitte Caboteja, Keisha Cameron, Daniel Card, Alfred Cardwell, Christopher Cavaluzzi, Elizabeth Charity, Louis Chevalier, Marcia Clark, Triane Clowers, Erin Collins, Carolyn Craig-Sprow, Elaine Crocker, Vincent Currie, David Danieli, Jacqueline Daugnon, Randy Davenport, Carolyn Demps, Joel Devallon, Arthur Diggs, Paul Dressler, Henry During, Michael Edwards, Christopher Floyd, Ingrid Floyd-Casco, Emilio Fogerty, Barbara Fortenberry, Stephanie Fox, Doug Freeman, Michael French, Lohrland Gandy, Aria Gee, Keith Givens, Patsy Gordon, CeCe Greco, Tabatha Guion, Linda Hammon, Darrell Harris, Ruth Hellwig, Sherri Hines, Ernest Hines II, Rebecca Hixon, Mary Hoffman, Corey Holman, Gay Howard, Bob James, Vondetta James, Jackie James-Bond, Kimberly Jappell, Breanna Jones, Matthew Jones, Karen King, William Lewis, Dudley Ligon, Vicky Logan, John Louisor, Cora Lynch, Floyd Mangin, Sherman Manley, Leonardo Manning, Bruce Marchal, Ardine Marie, Antonio Mason, David Masters, John McKie, John McMackin, Liz Medina, Robert Melvin, Dan MenMuir, Charles Miller, Jeanne Moore, William Moore, Gregory Morris, Dona Mosley-Williams, Tyler Newton, Dianne Noble, Debbie Page-Maples, Robin Paglianite, Sheila Parocia, Caris Penzien, Christy Phillips, Bernice Piasare, LaTasha Pless, Daniel Ramirez, Paul Ramos, Carlos Recono, Hugo Retana, Rhonda Richardson, Sabeana Roberts, Reina Rodriguez, Suzanne Rucker, Joy Russom, Brandis Sanchez, Cathy Sanders, Charlene Scott, Pastor Angel Serrano, Natasha Severe, Cathy Shaffer, Dennis Smith, Latonya Smith, Odell Smith, Victoria Soberanis, Jeanne Spears, Martin Steinberg, Kevin Stewart, Sherry Stone, Anita Sullivan, Carolyn Taylor, Brenda Todd, Shonietta Travers, Doyoberto Trejo, Aimee Tucker, Ortho Vines, Diane Walden, Andrew Walker, Kenneth Wallace, Patricia Wallace, Amy Ward, Sandra Watjen, Shirley Watson, Delores Weikert, Stephen Weikert, Sandy Weinger, Elizabeth Williams, Stacy Williams, Brianne Wilson, Carol Wilson, Michael Wilson, Robert Wilson, Erica Wright, Reynold Wright, Laurie Raines, Kelly Jimenez, Tracey Wilkins-Clark, Tricia Wyman.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the Prince William County Juvenile Detention Center Volunteers for their service and in thanking them for their dedication to our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF BRENDAN HAAS

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 1, 2012

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of nine-year-old Brendan Haas, a resident of Kingston, Massachusetts, who has displayed the most profound sense of generosity and caring to the family of a fallen soldier.

In February, Brendan set up a Facebook page called "A Soldier for a Soldier," which involves "trading up" items for something bigger and better. His intention was always to donate the best item he received to a military family. Through this project, Brendan began with a single toy soldier and spent three months

dedicated to trading for bigger and better things before he received the item he wanted to donate. Brendan then held a raffle with the names of families across the country and ended up drawing the name Liberty Hope Steele, the daughter of Timothy Steele, a soldier from his native Massachusetts who was killed in Afghanistan last August. On Memorial Day, Brendan presented the Steele family with a free vacation to Disney World.

Brendan's generosity knows no bounds, as he recently demonstrated a second time. Recognized for his actions during the morning telecast of "Good Morning America," Brendan was informed that the Walt Disney Company was awarding him and his family an all-expense paid vacation to Disney World for what he had done on behalf of the Steele family. Brendan; however, refused to accept the trip for himself; instead, he said it would be raffled away to another military family.

This type of selflessness is years beyond what we would expect of a young boy. Brendan has made his community and his country very proud.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Brendan Haas for his remarkable spirit, dedication and generosity. I know we will see more great things from him in the future.

COMMEMORATING AZERBAIJAN'S REPUBLIC DAY

HON. DAN BOREN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 1, 2012

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan and their celebration of Republic Day on May 28.

Azerbaijan first declared independence from the Russian Empire on May 28, 1918. Though the Azerbaijan Republic later succumbed to Soviet forces in 1920, in its 2 years of independence Azerbaijan achieved a number of measures on state-building, armed forces, education, economy, and universal suffrage, from which it benefits today. Azerbaijan restored its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Azerbaijan is a key global security partner for the United States. Azerbaijan was among the first nations to offer unconditional support for US and its allies in anti-terrorism efforts, providing use of its airspace, airports, and troops for operations in Afghanistan. Azerbaijani troops were also part of international contingent in Kosovo and Iraq.

Azerbaijan has opened Caspian energy resources to development by U.S. companies and has emerged as a key player for global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project is the most successful project contributing to the development of the South Caucasus region and has become the main artery delivering Caspian Sea hydrocarbons to the U.S. and our partners in Europe.

As a proud Co-Chair of Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus I call my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Republic of Azerbaijan on this important occasion.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 31, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5854) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my qualified support for H.R. 5854, the FY13 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. While I commend Chairmen ROGERS and CULBERSON and Ranking Members SMITH and BISHOP for their efforts to craft bipartisan legislation dedicated to addressing the needs of current and former servicemembers and their families, I support this bill with strong reservations about how the measure treats the very civilian employees who will be asked to provide the services and carry out the instructions outlined in the bill.

H.R. 5854 contains a number of important provisions designed to serve our military with an eye toward trimming spending, eliminating waste and directing taxpayer dollars more effectively.

The MilCon-VA bill, as it is called, funds construction by the Department of Defense for hospitals, clinics, schools, family housing and other facilities in order to deliver timely and vital medical care to our Nation's veterans, active military members and their families. The measure also provides funding for disability care, educational benefits and other resources to help advance U.S. missions abroad.

Specifically, I applaud the committee for funding support for medical services and facilities; for veteran's compensation, pension and burial benefits for former servicemembers, survivors and their dependents; and for the important family housing here and abroad that helps ease some of the financial burden faced by our men and women in uniform.

Despite providing necessary support for these and other important projects and programs, this bill also continues a troubling new Republican pattern in the Congress of balancing our fiscal accounts on the backs of our Federal employees. It seems like every time the Republicans bring a bill to the floor, they use it as a vehicle to attack public servants by cutting their pensions, or pay, or benefits to pay for other spending items. Federal employees have already given up \$60 billion of salary over 10 years as part of the two-year pay freeze. Starting in January 2013, new Federal employees will contribute more to their pensions to offset the \$15 billion cost of Unemployment Insurance Extension legislation. And with this MilCon bill, Federal employees are asked to give up the very small .5% partial COLA allotted in the President's FY13 budget request.

Nurses and rehabilitation specialists, weapons systems mechanics and border guards are among the many dedicated Federal employees that serve our country. They sometimes serve shoulder-to-shoulder on the battlefield with our uniformed servicemembers.

They should not be a piggy-bank that Republicans turn to whenever they need a source of funds.

RECOGNIZING THE GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE HEARTLAND, IOWA CITY, AND THE ABILITYONE PROGRAM

HON. DAVID LOEBSACK

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 1, 2012

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the AbilityOne Program. Over the last few years, AbilityOne has helped more

than 50,000 Americans who are blind or have other significant disabilities gain the skills necessary for gainful employment.

The AbilityOne Program, through Federal purchasing, supports community-based non-profit agencies that are dedicated to training and employing people with disabilities. Opportunities through the AbilityOne program have brought individuals into working society and afforded them the ability to receive competitive wages and benefits. The job skills and training these individuals receive go a long way to foster greater independence and quality of life. Those who benefit from the program have historically suffered from significant unemployment, but AbilityOne is turning this trend around.

I would also like to acknowledge Goodwill Industries of the Heartland of Iowa City, an AbilityOne Program affiliate. As one of 207 regional Goodwill organizations, Goodwill Industries of the Heartland serves Iowa communities by empowering people with significant disabilities to seek education and employment. With the support of the AbilityOne Program, Goodwill Industries of the Heartland's training and job placement programs help clients and their families live more independently while making positive contributions to their communities.

I want to commend the dedication and commitment of the staff of both AbilityOne and Goodwill Industries of the Heartland of Iowa City. Their work helps people with disabilities live full lives as active members of society.