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OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,738,116,336,111.15. We've added \$6,111,239,287,178.07 to our debt in 4 and a half years. This is \$6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE JAMIE KOTULA FOUNDATION FOR OUT- STANDING COMMUNITY CON- TRIBUTIONS

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Jamie Kotula Foundation, an organization set forth to enrich the lives of others in Northeastern Pennsylvania through "random acts of kindness," a strong value of Jamie Kotula. The Foundation will also host the third annual Kick-Off Classic on August 31 and September 1, 2013, marking the outset of the fall sports season at Marywood University in Scranton.

Jamie Kotula, who tragically passed in a car accident on the morning of January 14, 2011

at the age of sixteen, lived a life of service towards others. His selfless character was revealed as a student at Holy Cross High School in Dunmore, Pennsylvania, where he served as secretary of the Student Council and a member of the boys' varsity soccer, swim, and track teams. In addition to being a dedicated class leader and a skilled and energetic athlete, Jamie was extremely well-rounded as a member of the National Honor Society, the Pro-Life club, chess club, foreign language club, and the show choir.

In honor of Jamie Kotula, who lived his life in the present each and every day, the Jamie Kotula Foundation was created to support like-minded individuals and groups in Northeast Pennsylvania who enrich lives and communities through acts of kindness and selflessness. Since its creation in 2011, the Foundation has distributed more than \$100,000 in both scholarships and donations to charitable causes, such as helping out the victims of the school violence at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut.

In recognition of the community contributions of the Jamie Kotula Foundation's largest event, the Kick-Off Classic, I add my congratulations and best wishes for continued success and service.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PERMA- NENTLY ENDING RECEIPT BY PRISONERS ACT

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Permanently Ending Receipt by Prisoners Act, also known as the PERP Act. I am pleased to be joined by Representatives TODD YOUNG, MIKE KELLY, TIM GRIFFIN, JIM RENACCI, TOM REED, and CHARLES BOUSTANY, all Members of the Committee on Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, which I chair. As a former sheriff and now Chairman of this Subcommittee that has jurisdiction over the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, this bill blends the expertise I developed in my past career with my present committee responsibilities.

Under existing UI program rules that operate in all States, an individual must be able, available, and actively seeking work in order to be eligible to collect UI benefits, which are paid to those who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Individuals confined in jails, prisons, and other penal institutions are by definition not "able and available" to work and have historically been presumed to be not eligible for UI benefits.

Despite this fact, news articles in multiple States have revealed a nationwide epidemic of unemployment benefit payments to incarcerated individuals. Recent headlines include: Illinois: "State: More than \$2M in Unemployment Benefits Went to Inmates" (10/9/12); New Jersey: "Audit Says 20,000 Inmates Were Mistakenly Paid Nearly \$24M in State and Federal Benefits" (5/29/13); Pennsylvania: "Inmates Collect Millions in Unemployment Benefits in Philadelphia Jails" (2/20/13); and South Carolina: "Government Waste—Inmates Collecting Millions in Fraudulent Unemployment Checks" (2/21/13). The list unfortunately does not end

there, and these and other articles make it clear that taxpayers are wasting millions of dollars each year on unemployment benefit payments to prisoners.

We must make it very clear that incarcerated individuals should not be receiving unemployment benefits, and that States need to make affirmative efforts to end this obvious abuse. Unemployment benefits are designed to support people who are able and trying to find work and provide for their families, but who have fallen on hard times. It is an injustice that the tax dollars of law-abiding citizens are being used to provide assistance to people who have broken the law and simply should not qualify for these benefits.

The PERP Act provides the solutions to this problem by taking the following steps:

Barring States from paying UI checks to local, state and federal prisoners, strengthening a current implied prohibition because prisoners are not "able and available" for work; and

Requiring State UI agencies to regularly compare UI rolls with currently available inmate rosters to ensure UI checks are not paid to current inmates. At a minimum, States must access and use prisoner information the Social Security Administration has collected and used since the late-1990s to prevent the payment of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit checks to currently incarcerated individuals. This current data match is simple, quick, and efficient, and can readily be replicated by States to ensure that UI benefit checks are not paid to prisoners.

During 2011, the UI program made a staggering \$10.3 billion in improper payments, some of which were to individuals in our nation's jails and prisons. Those payments were made because under current practice too many States rely on the inmate to report their change of residence to the jail so that their UI benefits would end. Not surprisingly, few inmates volunteer to stop collecting these checks, and no benefit program should rely on the honesty of inmates to ensure taxpayer funds are properly spent. This legislation ends the practice of relying on self-reported information by inmates to prevent this type of UI benefit misspending. It does so simply by expecting all State UI agencies to tap into an existing Federal database of prisoners, already used to ensure that inmates do not collect disability checks. This system is fast, efficient, and affordable.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues on the Human Resources Subcommittee, Representatives TODD YOUNG, MIKE KELLY, TIM GRIFFIN, JIM RENACCI, TOM REED, and CHARLES BOUSTANY, for their support as original cosponsors of this bill. I invite all Members to join me in supporting this important legislation and look forward to its speedy consideration so that we can ensure we put an end to the outrageous practice of prisoners collecting benefit payments intended for the truly unemployed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, last week, July 18, 2013, I was speaking with a documentary group about the civil rights movement, and I was unable to make it to the floor

for rollcall votes 364, 365, and 366. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" for all three.

IN RECOGNITION OF BOBBY VASSAR AND HIS CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I, along with House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member JOHN CONYERS, Jr. and Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations Ranking Member ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, would like to take this opportunity to thank Bobby Vassar for his work with the House Committee on the Judiciary and Congressman SCOTT's Congressional office for the past 19 and ½ years.

Bobby came to Representative SCOTT's Congressional office on February 1, 1994 to serve as Senior Counsel and Legislative Director. He joined the staff of the Crime Subcommittee of the House Committee on the Judiciary in March of 1999 as Minority Chief Counsel. From January 2007 to January 2012, Bobby served as Majority Chief Counsel for the Subcommittee.

Prior to joining Representative SCOTT's office in 1994, he worked for three Virginia governors, starting as Chairman of the Virginia Parole Board in 1982 and ending as Acting Secretary of Health and Human Resources in 1994. Prior to 1982, he worked as Executive Director of the Peninsula Legal Aid Center in Hampton, Virginia, for which Congressman Scott served as Chairman of the Board. He also held positions previously as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as a staff attorney with the Laborer's Pre-paid Legal Services Plan of Washington, D.C. and Vicinity, and as a Reginald Heber Smith Community Lawyer Fellow at the Roanoke Virginia legal Aid Society. Bobby is a graduate of Norfolk State University and the University of Virginia School of Law.

Bobby's ability to work well with his colleagues, especially across the aisle and across the Capitol, made him a valuable staff asset to passing many key pieces of legislation. He had the lead staff responsibility in the House for several significant bipartisan bills that were enacted into law including the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment, and Crime Reduction Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-416); the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-220); the Deaths in Custody Reporting Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-297); the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (Public Law 107-273); the Second Chance Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-199); along with dozens of other bills enacted into law over the years. He also led the development of the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education (PROMISE) Act which was introduced in the 110th Congress and has been reintroduced every subsequent Congress; H.R. 1695, the Justice Safety Valve Act of 2013; H.R. 2656, the Public Safety Enhancement Act of 2013; and many promising bipartisan bills pending in the House and Senate.

We are deeply appreciative of the service and contributions Bobby has provided the Crime Subcommittee, the Judiciary Committee and the Congress over the past two decades. Throughout that time, many people both on and off Capitol Hill have been fortunate to call him a colleague and friend. He will be missed. We wish him the best of fortunes and fulfillment in his future endeavors.

EIGHTH UNANSWERED QUESTION ON BENGHAZI ATTACKS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I am raising the eighth in a series of critical, but unanswered, questions about the terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate and annex in Benghazi last September 11.

My previous seven questions have focused on what happened in Benghazi that night.

Today, I would like to focus on what happened in Washington.

It has been well documented that official Washington started to get reports of the attack around 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. It also has been well documented that then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made the decision to brief President Obama about what was happening at a previously scheduled 5 p.m. meeting, which is 11 p.m. in Libya.

Former AFRICOM commander General Carter Ham (ret.) told a paying audience at the Aspen Security Forum in Aspen, Colorado—where tickets started at \$1,200—last weekend that by the time a U.S. drone appeared over the consulate shortly after 11 p.m. the attack on the consulate was winding down. He also said it was clear this wasn't a protest and he understood it to be a terrorist attack—a direct conflict with repeated statements by the Obama Administration.

If the Pentagon immediately knew this to be a terrorist attack, why did the president go to the United Nations nearly two weeks later and blame the attack on protest in response to a controversial video? Why did then-UN Ambassador Susan Rice go on five Sunday shows and attribute the attack to the video? Why did former Secretary Clinton continue to reference the video as the cause of the protest when the Pentagon immediately attributed the attack to terrorism?

It is also worth asking what Gen. Ham thought of the waves of attacks against the CIA annex later that night. Trusted sources have told my office that in the weeks leading up to the attack, the annex had a notice on its bulletin board warning about imminent attacks on U.S. facilities and other foreign consulates in Benghazi. How does Gen. Ham reconcile his position that there was to send assistance after the consulate firefight ended when there was so many more attacks against Americans that night?

A U.S. consulate is under attack. A U.S. Ambassador is missing. A State Department Diplomatic Security Agent is dead. Are the American people to believe the president is briefed only once that entire night, at 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time?

My question(s) today: Where was the president the rest of the night?

Did his national security team, including John Brennan, Sec. Panetta and Gen. Dempsey, ever go back and brief the president when the annex came under attack? If so, what steps did he direct at that time?

Did the president ever step foot in the White House Situation Room that night?

Did he ever see the footage from the unarmed drone stationed over Benghazi monitoring the attacks?

I field many of these questions from my constituents on a regular basis and I believe they are fair to ask, especially when the White House carefully orchestrates photo-ops and leaks of the president and other senior administration officials when the news is favorable, like the now-famous picture of the president and his national security team watching a live video feed of the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in 2011.

Last evening, Fox News' Catherine Herridge reported how Diplomatic Security Agent David Ubben is still recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center—more than 10 months after the attack—for injuries he sustained while repeatedly risking his life to save others that night. Fox reported that it was Ubben who ran into the burning consulate building to retrieve Sean Smith's body. Fox reported it was Ubben who later that night climbed the roof of the annex compound with Ty Woods and Glen Doherty to try to defend the annex during the mortar rounds, where he sustained a very serious injury that is still being treated at Walter Reed.

Contrast David Ubben's valiant efforts—repeatedly putting his life on the line to try to save the lives of the other Americans at the consulate and annex—with what is currently known about what the White House national security team did to support him and the others in Benghazi.

As far as the American people know, after nearly a year of investigations, the White House took no additional efforts to come to the aid of those in Benghazi, nor, apparently, did the president take another briefing on what was happening.

Has the president ever called or met with David Ubben to thank him for his sacrifice? Has he ever called the others who were seriously wounded that night, including the former Navy SEAL on the security team who sustained significant injuries?

To Secretary Kerry's credit, I know that he has visited with Mr. Ubben at Walter Reed. But did former Secretary Clinton ever meet with him during the six months she was still in office after the attack?

Either way, the families of the four Americans—including a U.S. Ambassador—who lost their lives in Benghazi have a right to know where the Commander-in-Chief was on September 11, 2012 and what role he and his national security team played to provide support to those in Benghazi that night.

The State Department's own Web site asserts, "International rules do not allow representatives of the host country to enter an embassy without permission—even to put out a fire—and designate an attack on an embassy as an attack on the country it represents."

In this context, with an attack against America underway, it's fair to ask, did the president and his team ever even consider cancelling