

move forward from here in terms of gender equality. Title IX guarantees the civil right to learn free from discrimination, retaliation, and sexual violence. This victory is something that every student, parent, and educator can celebrate today, tomorrow, and for many years to come.

CONGRATULATING ALIANA
SONKSEN

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2013

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Aliana Nicole Sonksen, a rising senior at Camdenton High School in Camdenton, Missouri, who won third place in the National Institute of Health's Addiction Science Competition. This prestigious award was given at the 2013 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair is the world's largest international science competition for high school students, and this year it provided a forum for approximately 1,500 students from 70 countries, regions, and territories to showcase their independent research. Since 2008, the National Institute on Drug Abuse has selected three projects to receive awards for exemplary work in addiction science, and I am extremely proud that a winning project came from the hard work and dedication of one of my constituents.

Ms. Sonksen's project, "Determining the Behavioral and Physiological Effects of Pentedrone-Based Bath Salts on *Drosophila Melanogaster*," studied the effects of two versions of the drugs called "bath salts" on the common fruit fly. She looked at three possible effects: mortality, feeding patterns, and activity levels. Many of the flies died from exposure to bath salts, and many others decreased their feeding activity. Her research showed that the substances, while commonly considered stimulants, acted more like hallucinogens, with the flies appearing to be in a daze.

I am proud that Ms. Sonksen not only took the time and energy to submit an award winning project but also focused her efforts on such an important issue. Bath salts are emerging synthetic stimulants that often contain amphetamine-like chemicals. Addiction and abuse of these drugs has dramatically increased over the past few years and has resulted in a number of hospitalizations and even deaths. I appreciate the awareness Ms. Sonksen has raised to the issues surrounding bath salts through her research and submission of her project.

In closing, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Aliana Sonksen's Addiction Science Award and her hopeful future of contributing to addiction science for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO THIRD DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2013

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor 51 of the best and brightest students in North Texas who have participated in the Congressional Youth Advisory Council (CYAC), a program I started nearly 9 years ago. CYAC has two primary goals. One, to hear the voices of our future generation and gain insight on issues our youth values, and two, to educate our students on how government policies directly impact their lives and our nation.

Each year, the students in CYAC exceed my expectations ten-fold. They bring innovative, inspiring, and impacting ideas on how to build a better America now and in the future. Their impressive credentials speak for themselves. Participating in student government, community service, honor societies, school athletics, fine arts, and language clubs exemplifies their educational excellence and steadfast commitment to our community as they discover their individual potential. Each time we meet, I am privileged to hear from these dedicated leaders who embody the best of their generation. They are the future of our country and will continue to define what it means to be an American.

Over the past year, each student heard from prominent civic leaders, engaged in discussion about current events and the role of government, and developed their own community service project. I am proud to see our Third District students dedicate their time and talents to serving the people around them. Without a doubt, every student will continue to play an important role in our community for decades to come. America and North Texas will continue to benefit from their dedication, smarts, and service.

To the members of the 2012–2013 Congressional Youth Advisory Council, thank you for volunteering your time and efforts to this council. You have been the voices of your generation to Congress this past year, and have done an extraordinary job. I wish you continued success in your upcoming endeavors and know I am very proud of you.

The names of students serving on the 2012–2013 CYAC follow:

Arthur Anderson, Natasha Blaskovich, Rhian Burnham, Bryce Clark, Andrew Cook, Mark Douglas, Megan Eakin, Noah Eldridge, William Elliot, Rakshana Govindarajan, Shivan Gupta, Grace Han, Lauren Hebig, Hogan Heritage, Sara Nabila Hossain, Aileen Huang, Samuel Huang, Mackenzie Jenkins, Lane Johnson, James Kay, Sarah Killian, Shane Kok, Justin Kong, Jonathon Lara, Candice Lee, Jessica Lightfoot, Connor Madden, Malika Maheshwary, Soumya Mandava, Jessica Martinez, Emily Means, Sarah Michaels, Sydney Patterson, McKay Paxman, Jacob Przada, Jason Randoing, Daniel Rosenfield, Kinnari Ruikar, Daniel Saiyid, Sam Schell, Brian Simpson, Travis Smith, Ryan Snitzer, Sarah Stanley, Hunter Stevens, Simic Tuan, Jessica Todd, Matt Waller, Hannah Wood, Carlie Woodard, Lisa Michales

God Bless You and I salute you!

CONTINUING REPRESSION BY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by recognizing the many distinguished leaders who are joining us in conjunction with the Vietnamese-American Meetup. Many thanks to all of you for taking the time to come to Washington to meet with your representatives here in Congress, and for joining us for the hearing my subcommittee held which looked at some of the many human rights abuses being committed by the Vietnamese Government.

The hearing was the second held by my subcommittee this year on human rights in Vietnam. We had a greater, in-depth, examination of some of the fundamental human rights violations that we discussed at our first hearing in April, particularly land confiscations in the context of religious and ethnic persecution.

Although the relationship between the United States and Vietnam improved substantially in 1995 when relations were normalized, the human rights situation in Vietnam did not improve. As the U.S. has upgraded Vietnam's trade status, the Vietnamese Government has continued to violate a wide range of fundamental human rights.

To cite just one example, despite the State Department's decision in 2006 to remove Vietnam from the list of Countries of Particular Concern as designated pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act, Vietnam continues to be among the worst violators of religious freedom in the world. According to the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom's 2012 Annual Report, "[t]he government of Vietnam continues to control all religious communities, restrict and penalize independent religious practice severely, and repress individuals and groups viewed as challenging its authority." USCIRF concludes that Vietnam should be designated a CPC country.

It appears the State Department decided to allow political considerations to trump the facts and the brutality of Vietnam's record of religious persecution. In the Department's latest International Religious Freedom Report that was released on May 20th, Vietnam once again was a glaring omission in the list of Countries of Particular Concern. Compared to the disturbing clarity of the USCIRF report, the State Department's description of the state of religious freedom in Vietnam is a whitewash, and an extreme disservice to the truth about the religious persecution that is prevalent in that country. I repeat my past appeals to the Administration to follow the letter as well as the spirit of the International Religious Freedom Act, and hold Vietnam to account as a Country of Particular Concern.

I met courageous religious leaders during my last trip to Vietnam who were struggling for fundamental human rights in their country. Unfortunately, many of them, including Father Ly and the Most Venerable Thich Quang Do, remain wrongly detained today. There are disturbing reports that Father Ly is suffering poor health. Leaders of religious organizations are not the only ones victimized by the Vietnamese government on account of their faith;

individuals and small communities are also targeted by the regime.

Witnesses and experts at our past hearings have recounted the brutality suffered in 2010 by Con Dau parishioners at the hands of police in the course of a funeral procession. This persecution continues to this day in response to the villagers' opposition to the illegal and unjust confiscation of their land.

Tuesday's hearing closely examined ethnic and religious persecution in Vietnam, particularly through the government's practice of confiscating land. The government has unlawfully taken property belonging to families that include many Vietnamese-Americans. Not only is land forcibly taken, but any compensation provided by the government is far below the fair market value. If the rightful owners do not accept what is offered or show resistance, security forces are dispatched to overwhelm any opposition and brutally suppress them. This arbitrary taking of real property not only violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but even Vietnam's own domestic laws.

To address this and the numerous other violations of human rights by the Vietnamese regime, I have re-introduced the Vietnam Human Rights Act, H.R. 1897. This legislation, co-sponsored by the Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, Mr. ROYCE, and members of the bipartisan Congressional Vietnam Caucus, has been reported out of this subcommittee and is awaiting consideration, hopefully soon, by the Foreign Affairs Committee.

This legislation seeks to promote freedom and democracy in Vietnam by stipulating that the United States can increase its nonhumanitarian assistance to Vietnam above FY2012 levels only when the President certifies that the Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress in establishing democracy and promoting human rights, including: respecting freedom of religion and releasing all religious prisoners; respecting rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association, and releasing all political prisoners, independent journalists, and labor activists; repealing and revising laws that criminalize peaceful dissent, independent media, unsanctioned religious activity, and nonviolent demonstrations, in accordance with international human rights standards; respecting the human rights of members of all ethnic groups; and taking all appropriate steps, including prosecution of government officials, to end any government complicity in human trafficking.

It also calls on the Administration to re-designate Vietnam as a country of particular concern for religious freedom, to take measures to overcome the Vietnamese Government's jamming of Radio Free Asia, and to oppose Vietnam's membership on the U.N. Human Rights Council, which will be voted on this fall.

We were fortunate to have heard from a distinguished panel of witnesses to discuss these critical issues.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 2216, the FY14 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. I commend Chairmen ROGERS and CULBERSON and Ranking Members LOWEY and BISHOP for crafting a bipartisan bill that addresses the needs of current and former service members and their families.

This MilCon-VA bill provides critical funding for the DoD to build 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. In addition, it provides funding for disability care, educational benefits and other resources to help advance U.S. missions abroad.

I specifically applaud the committee for addressing the inexcusable backlog problem that continues to plague our Veteran's Affairs Regional Offices, including the VA's Baltimore Regional Office. This bill provides \$155 million for the paperless claims process system, \$136 million for the digital scanning of health records, and \$252 million to establish a single, integrated Department of Defense (DOD) and VA electronic health record system. I am hopeful that these measures will be an important step in ensuring that backlogged claims are expedited as quickly as possible.

In addition, this bill fully funds the FY2014 budget request for Family Housing construction at \$1.542 billion, providing these necessary resources for service members, veterans, and their families. I am also pleased that this bill provides for much needed improvements at the Arlington National Cemetery.

While I support the military construction/veterans spending bill, I strongly oppose the procedure Congressional Republicans used to bring it to the House floor. The Rule governing this bill affects not just the MilCon-VA budget, but other parts of our budget. I find it especially cynical that our Republican colleagues would use the spending bills on veterans and military construction as the vehicle to pass their overall budget levels, which will result in dramatic cuts to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that finance investments in scientific research to find cures and treatments to cancer and other diseases. The House Appropriations Committee has already set the funding levels for those categories of the budget. And you know what they are? A \$30 billion cut below the sequester level to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that fund scientific research.

We're supposed to have a budget process. The House passed a budget. I don't like the House Republican budget, but it passed. The Senate passed a budget. Under the rules of the Congress—in fact, as a matter of law—the House and the Senate are supposed to have completed a budget conference by April 15th.

That was quite a while ago. In fact, it's been over 70 days since the Senate passed a budget and the House passed a budget. We still don't have a House-Senate conference committee report. Why might that be? Well, it turns out that the Speaker of the House has refused to appoint conferees to work with the Senate to come up with a budget.

The Rule for the military construction/veterans spending bill says "let's pretend." Let's make believe that the House and Senate went to conference, and let's pretend that they agreed on the House budget numbers—the numbers that would cut the part of the budget that deals with our kids' education—by over 20 percent. Let's pretend that, because we don't want to go through the normal process. That's what this Rule does. It's a total fake, and it's a fake because of the refusal to work these issues out in a transparent manner for the American people.

Let's at least start the process of complying with the law. Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans should follow regular House procedure and immediately request a conference and appoint conferees to negotiate a Fiscal Year 2014 budget resolution—so we can have a real federal budget, not a fake budget.

For these reasons, I support President Obama's threat to veto final passage of this legislation unless it "passes the Congress in the context of an overall budget framework that supports our recovery and enables sufficient investments in education, infrastructure, innovation and national security for our economy to compete in the future."

It is also troubling that this bill rejects the President's proposed 1.0 percent pay raise for federal workers. These individuals have already contributed more than their fair share to reducing the deficit, sacrificing more than \$100 billion in pay and benefits. It is unreasonable to ask federal employees, who have already disproportionately sacrificed for deficit reduction, to bear the burden again.

This year's MilCon-VA bill continues to ensure our veterans and active servicemen and women have the resources they need to succeed when they come home. However, Congress must also come together to follow regular order and appoint budget conferees so we can pass a final budget and have a normal appropriations process. It's time to replace the sequester, invest in our economy, and reduce our long-term deficit.

HONORING SHAWANDA ALLEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Shawanda LaShell Allen. Shawanda LaShell Allen was born in Hazlehurst, Mississippi to proud parents Glenda Johnson and Anthony Allen.

Shawanda has always remained dedicated to her academics and extra-curricular activities. She received the highest academic average for the 2011–2012 school year in advanced placement English Literature and Composition, Calculus, United States Government, and Accounting. In addition, Shawanda was inducted into the Crystal Springs High School Hall of Fame, received the Student