

have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my offices. They may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated and that is why today I rise to pay tribute to four extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are: Ruby Grace, Chelsea Banks, Adam Kong, Lauren Buchanan, Rachel Foster, Keome Rowe, Jesus Vasquez, Maria Mojica, and Ruth Welland, and finally to Victoria Brayer, to whom today I also wish a very happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like them the future of our country is bright and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great, good, and forever young.

IN SUPPORT OF AMERICAN
EDUCATION WEEK

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge American Education Week. This annual celebration was established by the National Education Association and the American Legion in 1921, and it serves as a time to remember the paramount importance of education.

This year's theme, Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility, is a renewed call for all citizens—from parents and teachers, to school staff and education sup-

port professionals, to elected officials and community leaders—to work together to improve our schools.

Public education is the bedrock of our democracy, and we must provide robust support of public schools to ensure our young people can fulfill their potential.

But these days, education programs are on the chopping block. State and federal officials seem to have lost sight of the value of investing in our schools. With that in mind, I cannot imagine a better time to acknowledge the importance of public education and the vital and underappreciated contributions that educators make every day.

Somewhere along the line, we have all been inspired by great teachers who have helped us develop the perspective and good judgment to be active participants in our communities. But the support these teachers need to do their jobs effectively—including a competitive salary and funding for supplies and textbooks—is too often the target of over-eager budget hawks.

We've learned this in our home state of North Carolina, where the Republican majority in the General Assembly has slashed the education budget, even as enrollment has increased. Teacher pay ranks 46th in the nation, having fallen from 20th in the last five years. Overall state funding for our schools has dropped by 8.6 percent since 2008, and believe me when I tell you that our teachers and students are feeling the squeeze.

That trend is hardly unique to North Carolina—a recent report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that 30 states have cut education budgets. Insufficient funding for teachers and public schools has quickly become a national problem.

The picture is even bleaker at the federal level. This year, my Republican colleagues once again plan to oversee major reductions in discretionary spending, including education funding. That will mean new threats to all federal education initiatives, from primary and secondary school support to Pell Grants and other college affordability programs.

As state and federal officials debate budgets, we would be wise to remember that none of our education policies will succeed until committed teachers and administrators, critical school support staff and education support staff, and engaged students all have the support that they need to thrive.

Government should be in the business of recruiting great educators who are willing to dedicate their careers to public education. We must provide them with adequate training, opportunities for professional development, competitive salaries, sufficient classroom resources, and support from effective administrators and staff.

We also have to work to ensure that every American student who works hard can afford to go to college. It is wholly irresponsible to make further cuts to Pell Grants and burden students with additional debt. Instead, we should be doing everything possible to incentivize college for bright students who have a passion for learning.

This American Education Week, students and teachers around the country are calling out for our support. I encourage my colleagues in Congress and friends in the General Assembly to answer the call and restore education funding to sustainable levels. It's the best investment we can make in a future we can be proud of.

ACKNOWLEDGING NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support and recognition of National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. Alzheimer's is a disease that now afflicts more than five million people in our nation and one of them is my father, Ignacio. It is a heart-breaking disease that affects every member of the family, community, and country.

As someone whose father suffers from this debilitating illness, I am acutely aware of the pain and hardship that Alzheimer's inflicts not just on my family but on society as well. In 2014, the direct costs of caring for those with Alzheimer's will total \$214 billion, including \$150 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. Unfortunately, this situation is only going to get worse. The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is projected to grow to sixteen million and the costs of caring for these people will grow to \$1.2 trillion by 2050.

This November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, a time to be mindful of the struggles that families face in caring for loved ones with this disease. It is also a time to raise awareness, support, and outreach for those confronted with Alzheimer's disease and for their families. These efforts will help increase community awareness and understanding to better equip us as a nation to face this disease.

This Thanksgiving break I will visit my father, whose hands never lost their memory, and I will give thanks that those hands helped shape my life. This is why I am committed to finding a cure and calling for increased funding for Alzheimer's research at the National Institute of Health. It is my hope that a commitment to research and improving treatments will one day rid us Alzheimer's disease entirely.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF VIL-
LAGE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN
AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include, for historical purposes, the legislative history of village road improvements in American Samoa.

[Press Release, Mar. 25, 2004]

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AGREES TO INCREASE HIGHWAY FUNDING FOR TERRITORIES AND INCLUDE \$14 MILLION FOR VILLAGE ROAD AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Congressman Faleomavaega announced that the House Committee on Transportation agreed yesterday to increase federal highway funding for the Territories and include \$14 million for village road and other improvements in American Samoa.

Although this bill still must pass the House and Senate, I am pleased that my

good friends Chairman Don Young and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar of the House Transportation Committee have agreed to increase transportation funding for the Territories, Congressman Faleomavaega said. Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo (Guam), Congresswoman Donna Christensen (VI) and I have worked on this issue for the past year and Congressman Nick Rahall, Ranking Member of the House Resources Committee, has supported our efforts.

As a result of our work, the Territorial Highway Program (which includes American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and CNMI) will be increased from \$33 million to \$40 million for FY04, FY05 and FY06. For FY07, FY08 and FY09, funding will increase to \$50 million. Despite the Transportation Act (now known as TEA-LU) being \$100 billion less than what was originally proposed, the Territorial set aside will increase by 23.6%.

Moreover, American Samoa will receive \$14 million for high priority projects including village road improvements, drainage mitigation, shoreline protection and upgrades and repairs of the Tau ferry terminal facility. On January 23, 2004, I called Governor Togiola to let him know that the Committee had informed me of its intentions and asked that we keep this information confidential until the Committee held its mark-up. The Committee originally intended to hold its mark-up in February but postponed it until March 24, 2004.

On February 4, 2004, I also wrote to Governor Togiola in response to his January 15, 2004 letter to me. In my letter, I explained that from 1992 to 2003 American Samoa received over \$77 million in federal highway funds including \$12 million I obtained to improve village roads in American Samoa.

Roads that are not part of the federal highway system are ineligible for funding. This rule applies to every state and territory and includes our village roads. Be that as it may, I fought hard to convince my colleagues that an exception should be made for American Samoa and in 1998 they agreed to support my request for \$12 million for village road improvements.

The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century is now expiring and Congress is reauthorizing funds for the next six years. Again, the House Transportation Committee has agreed to my request for additional funds for American Samoa. On March 5, 2003, the House Committee on Transportation notified members of Congress that it would accept written and oral testimony regarding requests for funding. On March 5, 2003, I wrote Governor Sunia and requested his input. Although I did not hear back from Governor Sunia, I testified and appeared before the Committee.

Initially, I requested money for a ferry boat and terminal construction as well as funding for our village roads. However, since September 2003, Governor Togiola and I have worked together to obtain funding for the purchase of a vessel for Manua and on January 22, 2004, the House Committee on Transportation informed me that it would be able to grant \$14 million of my requests for highway projects in American Samoa. This funding is in addition to our annual federal highway funds.

In consultation with the Governor, we have set aside \$9.4 million for village road improvements in the Eastern, Western, Central and Manua districts of American Samoa. In further consultation with Senator Tualo Fruean and High Paramount Chief Mauga and members of the Pago Pago council of chiefs, we have also set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Pago Pago village roads.

In consultation with Senator Tago Suilefaiga, Representative Fagasoia

Lealaitafea and Representative Mary Taufetee and members of the Nu'uuli council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for shoreline protection and drainage mitigation for Nu'uuli village roads. In consultation with Senator Faamausili Pola and members of the Tau village council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1.6 million to upgrade and repair the Tau harbor facility.

Finally, in consultation with Senator Faiivae Galeai, Senator Lualemaga Faoa and members of the Leone and Malaeloa councils of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Malaeloa-Leone village roads. Governor Togiola and I thank our local leaders for their support of this historic and important initiative and we are hopeful that the House and Senate will pass this legislation before the 108th Congress adjourns, the Congressman concluded.

[Press Release, Apr. 2, 2004]

HOUSE PASSES HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION BILL AND INCLUDES FALEOMAVAEGA'S REQUEST OF ADDITIONAL \$14 MILLION FOR VILLAGE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that by a vote of 357 to 65 the House passed H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU) which increases federal highway funding for the Territories and includes an additional \$14 million for village road and other improvements in American Samoa. The Senate has already passed its version of TEA-LU and the bill will now go to conference in May after which time it is expected that the President will sign it into law.

Once signed into law, the Territorial Highway Program (which includes American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and CNMI) will be increased from \$33 million to \$40 million for FY04, FY05 and FY06. For FY07, FY08 and FY09, funding will increase to \$50 million. Despite the Transportation Act (now known as TEA-LU) being \$100 billion less than what was originally proposed, the Territorial set aside will increase by 23.6%.

In addition to our share of funds from the Territorial Highway Program, American Samoa will receive an extra \$14 million for high priority projects including village road improvements, drainage mitigation, shoreline protection, and upgrades and repairs of the Tau ferry terminal facility. At this time, I want to thank my good friends, Chairman Don Young and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar, of the House Transportation Committee for agreeing to my requests to increase American Samoas annual funding and to include an extra \$14 million for our village road improvements and other high priority projects, Congressman Faleomavaega said.

Regarding our funding, I believe it is important to explain how Congress authorizes transportation funds. Simply put, a federal gas tax is collected nationally to fund the transportation bill. Residents of American Samoa and other territories are not required to contribute to this fund or pay federal gas taxes. Although we pay no federal gas taxes, Congress provides for our transportation needs by way of a direct-set aside for the Territories and this is known as the Territorial Highway Program.

Since 1992, American Samoa has received more than \$77 million in federal highway transportation funds including \$12 million I obtained in 1998 to improve village roads in American Samoa. Roads that are not part of the federal highway system are ineligible for funding. This rule applies to every state and territory and includes our village roads. Be that as it may, I fought hard to convince my colleagues that an exception should be made

for American Samoa and in 1998 I was able to get \$12 million for Village Road Development on the islands of Tutuila and Manua.

This was the first time that Congress ever agreed to let federal highway funds be used for constructing roads that are not part of the federal highway system and I am pleased that Congress acted favorably on my request. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century is now expiring and Congress is reauthorizing funds for the next six years. As of today, the House has now agreed to support my request to provide American Samoa with an additional \$14 million over the next six years for village roads and other transportation improvements.

In consultation with Governor Togiola, we have set aside \$9.4 million for village road improvements in the Eastern, Western, Central and Manua districts of American Samoa. In further consultation with Senator Tualo Fruean and High Paramount Chief Mauga and members of the Pago Pago council of chiefs, we have also set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Pago Pago village roads.

In consultation with Senator Tago Suilefaiga, Representative Fagasoia Lealaitafea and Representative Mary Taufetee and members of the Nuuli council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for shoreline protection and drainage mitigation for Nuuli village roads. In consultation with Senator Faamausili Pola and members of the Tau village council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1.6 million to upgrade and repair the Tau harbor facility.

Finally, in consultation with Senator Faiivae Galeai, Senator Lualemaga Faoa and members of the Leone and Malaeloa councils of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Malaeloa-Leone village roads. Again, Governor Togiola and I thank our local leaders for their support of this historic and important initiative.

I also thank Chairman Don Young (Republican from Alaska) and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar (Democrat from Minnesota) of the House Committee on Transportation as well as the Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Resources, for their support of increased funding for the Territories. I also commend Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo (Guam) and Congresswoman Donna Christensen (VI) who have also worked tirelessly to increase funds for the Territorial Highway Program.

Out of 422 members of the House who voted today, 357 overwhelmingly voted to support this historic legislation. In other words, its not about whose in the majority. It takes both Democrats and Republicans to get the job done. It also takes seniority and this is why I am thankful that the people of American Samoa have trusted me time and time again to get the job done for them. With your continued support and prayers, I am hopeful that our increases and add-ons will be supported when the House and Senate meet in May to conference this bill, the Congressman concluded.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS EQUAL ACCESS ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the bipartisan Veterans Equal Access Act along with my colleagues DANA ROHRBACHER, DINA TITUS, JUSTIN AMASH, PAUL BROWN, WALTER JONES, THOMAS MASSIE, SAM FARR, JARED POLIS, BETO O'ROURKE, STEVE STOCKMAN and STEVE COHEN, which