

2014 Chief Real will relinquish his position and retire after 39 years of exemplary public service.

Manny has served as the Chief Probation Officer of Monterey County since February 12, 2004 and has overseen a staff of approximately 300 along with an all administrative budget, operational aspects of the Probation Department's Divisions of Administration, Adult Juvenile Hall and Youth Center and Alternative Programs. At the time of his appointment, Chief Real was already a 30-year veteran of the Monterey County Probation Department having worked in various capacities in both the adult and juvenile divisions. He worked in investigations and field supervision. At various times "Manny" served as a juvenile traffic hearing officer, a child custody investigator and a court officer. His tenure as Chief began in the middle of a series of financial crises. Chief Real worked tirelessly to with the CAO's budget office to mitigate any negative side effects, preserve the progress made, and ultimately restore balance between available resources, community needs and effective interventions.

Chief Real has worked hard in strengthening relations and collaborations County Social Services, Behavioral Health, education, law enforcement, criminal justice, behavioral health and community organizations. Chief Real was integral in securing the use of the old Natividad Hospital to establish the Silver Star Gang Prevention and Intervention Program a one-stop gang prevention and intervention program. The program is unique as it combines probation supervision, educational, vocational and job training, counseling services and truancy abatement, along with mentoring and community outreach strategies to help decrease gang activity. It was a pleasure having worked with Chief Real at the federal level to bring in \$1.5 million dollars to assist with anti juvenile violence and the programs at the Silver Star Resource Center continues to serve many families in Monterey County.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for the whole House in extending our most sincere gratitude for Chief Real's service. I want to wish Chief Real the best as he embarks on a new chapter in his life and know he will enjoy spending more time with his wife, children and grandchildren.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE FY15 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION (NDAA) CONFERENCE REPORT

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Conference Report for the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act.

For the last 53 years, Congress has passed—and the President has signed into law—an annual Defense Authorization bill to provide critical resources our Armed Forces need to maintain the best military in the world. While I recognize that there are many important programs that are authorized in this legislation, this NDAA also contains many major policy decisions affecting our country and our armed forces. Unfortunately, Congress was

not allowed to consider a single amendment dealing with very consequential policy issues to this 1648-page bill.

The NDAA Conference Report also authorizes funding to deploy an additional 1,500 troops to Iraq. I support the core pillars of the President's plan to fight ISIS, including the use of American surveillance, intelligence assets and air power against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria and the arming and training of the Iraqi Army and Kurdish forces to stop the ISIS advances in Iraq. I also believe we should supply weapons to those groups in Syria, such as the Syrian Kurds, who have consistently fought ISIS, and whose priority is to defeat ISIS. However, I believe the Congress should make it clear that American ground troops should not be used in a combat role in Iraq or Syria.

The President has asserted that the 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force (Public Law 107-40) provides the Executive with broad authority to take all military action necessary in both Iraq and Syria to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. While the President has indicated that he does not intend to deploy U.S. ground forces into combat, there is nothing in current law to prevent him from doing so. Congressman MCGOVERN, Congressman JONES, and I asked the House Rules Committee to allow us to offer an amendment to ban the use of U.S. forces in ground combat in Iraq, with the exception of rescue operations for Americans. Unfortunately, this request was denied.

The NDAA Conference Report also provides a two-year authorization to deploy American troops to train and equip the so-called "moderate" Syrian rebels. In September, a majority in Congress voted to temporarily authorize preparation for such a mission for a short period ending December 11th. This bill extends that authorization for two more years and is written so that the four defense committees can exclusively decide how much funding should be allocated for this mission. Congressman DENT and I led a bipartisan letter to Speaker BOEHNER urging him to give us the opportunity to vote on that provision. We also presented an amendment to the House Rules Committee which would have presented this authority. Once again, we were not provided the opportunity to vote on this measure.

My primary concern with the proposal to arm the so-called "moderate" Syrian opposition is that it will have unintended negative consequences that will not serve our ultimate goal of defeating ISIS.

First, the primary objective of these Sunni Islamist fighters is the defeat of Assad and his Alawite dominated regime—not the defeat of ISIS. Since the start of the war there have been shifting alliances among these Sunni Islamist forces that include the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, different elements of the Free Syrian Army, the Islamist Front, Ahrar al-Sham and ISIS, among others. Their common cause and overriding objective is defeating Assad. Indeed, the commander of the Syria Revolutionaries' Front, Jamal Maarouf, one of the most militarily proficient commanders of the FSA, recently said that, "It's clear that I'm not fighting against al-Qaeda. This is a problem outside of Syria's border, so it's not our problem. I don't have a problem with anyone who fights against the regime inside Syria."

While there is no doubt that Assad is a brutal dictator, he does not pose the same threat to the United States as ISIS, and his forces

have recently been battling ISIS. At this point, arming fighters whose primary purpose is to weaken Assad has one unintended result—strengthening ISIS. Indeed, I fear that the arms we provide to the so-called Syrian opposition are more likely to end up in the hands of ISIS or al Nusra.

I also have significant concerns about other measures in the NDAA Conference Report. I was disappointed that it includes a provision to continue funding restrictions on the construction or modification of detention facilities in the United States to house Guantanamo detainees. It also removes the prohibition on transfers of Guantanamo detainees to Yemen that was included in the SASC-reported bill.

Despite my overall opposition to this legislation, it does authorize many important programs. I was pleased that the Women's Small Business Procurement Parity Act, S. 2481, was included in the final Conference Report. This language provides much needed guidance to assist federal agencies in reaching the goal of awarding 5 percent of federal contracts to women-owned small businesses.

Today's bill also restores more than \$818 million in cuts made to military readiness accounts. This will allow our military to invest in critical repairs and upgrades to many mission-critical facilities such as electrical and fire protection system upgrades.

I am also encouraged that this bill builds on a number of provisions passed in last year's NDAA and continues to address the problem of sexual assault in the military. In particular, it would eliminate the so-called "good soldier defense" in court-martial proceedings, prohibiting a soldier from using good military character as a defense in a sexual assault case. These proceedings should be based on the specific evidence presented in the case.

Finally, I am pleased that the bill contains many long-delayed public lands conservation measures to protect more than one million acres of public land, including 245,000 of new wilderness.

While I support each of these measures, the fact remains that without the amendments I proposed, the bill could create a very slippery slope that would drag American troops even more deeply into Syrian war and renewed conflict in Iraq. For those reasons, I regretfully am unable to vote in favor of this year's NDAA Conference Report.

CONGRATULATING FYFFE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Fyffe High School Football Team on winning the Alabama High School Class 2-A Championship on December 5, 2014.

Coach Paul Benefield, his players, and staff achieved the very difficult task of a 15-0 record during the 2014 season. I would officially like to congratulate them on their victory.

Coach Benefield has spent 34 years in the coaching and teaching profession, winning many games and awards. In 18 years as the head coach at Fyffe, Benefield has won more than 200 games and 13 region and area

championships. Now he can add to that list a state championship.

I want to commend the fine young men who make up this championship team at Fyffe. They set a goal at the beginning of the season to take the Red Devils to the state championship, and that's exactly what they did. These players worked in the scorching heat of late summer and on many cold nights in the late fall, but they never lost sight of their goal.

By beating Elba High School 28–17 in the championship game, the Fyffe Red Devils saw their goal realized and did much more. The win, and the hard work it took to get there, taught life-lessons these young men will carry with them for the rest of their lives. While the winning is certainly an important accomplishment, the struggle to get there will prove to be just as valuable.

Again, I want to congratulate the Fyffe Red Devils on this great achievement. They have brought pride to their school, community, DeKalb County and to the Fourth Congressional District. I wish them continued success in the seasons to come.

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

HON. STEVE STOCKMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit today important information regarding the proposed trade deal between the United States and the European Union. The following article was written for Roll Call by my Legislative Assistant Zachary Leshin. During his time as my Legislative Assistant, Mr. Leshin has conveyed a profound understanding of the issue at hand, and has been an important asset to my office.

[From Roll Call, Oct. 22, 2014]

(By Zachary Leshin)

SHOULD CONGRESS RECONSIDER TTIP?— COMMENTARY

Recently there has been discussion over whether the United States should enter into a free trade agreement with the European Union known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. There are several major issues with TTIP that make it not in the interest of the United States to enter into the agreement.

One major issue is non-tariff barriers to free trade that are not addressed by TTIP. In the European Union there are certain classes of product known as Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication. One example of a PDO is Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, which legally can be made only in a certain region of northern Italy. Currently, American dairy farmers are not allowed to sell Parmesan cheese in the European Union because the name sounds too similar to Parmigiano-Reggiano. In all of the European Union's trade agreements, PDO and PGI protection has been extended to include the products in the other countries who are party to such agreement and the European Union has stated its intent to include that in TTIP under the guise of "intellectual property rights."

There are many examples of how arbitrary and nonsensical the designation process is. Newcastle Ale had to request that its PDO status be revoked so it could move its factory just across a river. Stilton cheese is not

allowed to be made in the English village of Stilton from which it derives its name, but only in three neighboring villages. Feta cheese is allowed to be produced only in Greece, but not in Cyprus or other areas where ethnic Greeks may be living.

Another major issue with TTIP is that automatically having a free trade agreement with the United States would provide a major incentive for more countries to join the European Union. The European Union has increasingly become more of a centralized government over its member states, especially since the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. In some areas (such as rules regarding the standardization of driving licenses) the European Union government has more control over its member states than the United States federal government has over US states.

Encouraging further expansion of the European Union is bad for the people of Europe, as the European Union has been eroding the sovereignty of its member states. The European Union has been imposing many absurd and burdensome regulations. One regulation requires all projects that receive funding from the European Regional Development Fund to fly the flag of the European Union. Another regulation states that prepackaged products are allowed to be sold only in certain sized packages, and packages that deviate from the proscribed size dimensions are prohibited from sale.

What also needs to be considered is not only what these regulations are, but how they are established. In the United States, the heads of the federal executive agencies, which are responsible for establishing regulatory policies, are nominated by an elected president and confirmed by elected senators. The European Union has no such accountability mechanism.

Another issue that needs to be considered is discriminatory trade policies imposed by the European Union. In May 2014, the European Union put in place a ban on the import of poultry and eggs raised by Jews in Judea and Samaria, but still permits import of poultry and eggs raised by Arabs in that same region. The European Union has also been considering implementation of discriminatory meat labeling policies where meat products slaughtered using religious methods are required to label the method, but meat products slaughtered using other methods are not.

Supporting TTIP may impact the proposed referendum on United Kingdom membership of the European Union that is planned for 2015, skewing the outcome in favor of maintaining membership in the European Union. Instead, the United States should seek to establish a free trade agreement with a free and independent Britain. This will encourage other European Union member states to leave the European Union as well and will hopefully serve as a catalyst for the dissolution of the European Union. It is not in the strategic interests of the United States, nor in the interests of the people of Europe, for the European Union to become a more centralized institution.

BATTLES WORTH FIGHTING

HON. KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, a war is raging for the soul of America. It is not a war of steel and cartridge. It is a conflict of ideas, fought not in trenches, jungles or a desert; in-

stead, it is played out in town halls, roundtables, tea party and Liberty groups all across the nation. Instead of cannonades, there are editorials; instead of bombs, there are speeches; instead of rifle volleys, there is education on the benefits of Liberty ordained by God protected by a United States Constitution.

There is a genuine feeling today, especially among people who attend the various Tea Party and Liberty Groups that we, our country more specifically, may not make it. Many people consider these folks, the common everyday people who attend the Tea Party meetings 'fringe, ring wing nut cases and extremists'. Many of the people who attend the Tea Party meetings, sometimes weekly, most commonly monthly, and more attend intermittently, sense something is drastically wrong. For the most part, they sense it and yet cannot firmly point their finger and claim what exactly is the cause of their discontent, the uneasiness; the fear danger is lurking just around the corner. It is not necessarily a feeling of doom from a nuclear, biological or chemical attack on our country from some foreign enemy or terrorism either. It is more serious than any violence a bad actor can bring. It is something more innate, a sense that they somehow lost something but can't remember what it was, like when you know you lost something important, an item you need to accomplish a task but can't remember what it is and where you placed it. You know it's around somewhere and if you looked hard enough you'll see it and you can continue with your task.

What is missing, what they are looking for, is our capacity for governing. Today, in Washington, D.C. we have a President inept in offering any sort of cooperative government. According to the President the House of Representatives is a non-entity. As President he has a pen and a phone to make the changes he sees as necessary to move his political agenda and the People's house has no say in the matter. But, the great threat to our country, our Constitutional government, is not entirely the President. It is easy to blame him for our dysfunctional government. Rather, the blame lies entirely with the system itself. We have created by our apathy a system that has normalized a process that distorts the will of the people by an economy of influence. A system designed to make those most connected rich. Our system of government created a class of rich whose wealth does not come from innovation, creativity or hard work, instead a new class of rich who secured their wealth through the manipulation of politicians and government agencies. The great new classes of wealth are a breed of financial politicians who could not secure their power by traditional methods that instead turned to the massive wealth directed by our government as the means to secure wealth and power for themselves and their circle of supporters.

Our enemy is not simply a Democrat or a Republican; it is a new breed in thousand dollar suits. They have changed laws agreeable to their business interests, bought and paid for politicians, judges, the media and skirted criminal laws and for the most part they are engaged in bad government and fail to actively track the will of the people. To them Democracy is a charade, only rhetoric for political messaging of a lost ideal to placate the masses still engaged in the political process while they make money for themselves and