

Ukraine, a civil war in Syria, conflict and suffering in Africa, trade in North America or peace in the Middle East for example, our Foreign Service is there in fact and in spirit reflecting the best of who we are as a country and for that we say "Thank You" and congratulations on your 90th Anniversary.

#### WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. DOUG COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 20, 2014*

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I strongly commend Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member RAHALL for bringing conference report for the Water Resources and Reform Development Act to the floor. It represents a great bipartisan effort on one of Congress' true article one responsibilities, providing for America's infrastructure. In northeast Georgia, the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP) means jobs. Georgia's 9th Congressional District shipped more than 10,780 tons of goods through Georgia ports in 2013 alone. As a member of the Georgia House of Representatives, I fought for Georgia's investment in SHEP to get the project moving, and now as a member of the United States House of Representatives, I'm proud to vote in favor of the federal government living up to its promise of matching funds. Deepening this harbor from 42 to 47 feet will allow new supertankers to use the port to transport Georgia products all over the world.

There are a number of good reforms in this bill that will increase efficiency and reduce the cost of upcoming projects. A provision of the bill will limit the length and cost of Army Corps of Engineers feasibility studies, so that projects can be completed on schedule and on budget. This bill deauthorizes over \$18 billion of old, inactive projects, more than offsetting the authorizations in this bill. WRRDA also sunsets the authorization of any project authorized by the bill after 7 years if construction has not begun.

Any piece of legislation aimed at reform has room for improvement. Language included in the underlying bill regarding the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River (ACF) and the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River (ACT) Systems was far from perfect. No language in this bill implies any Congressional intent to interfere with states' work on this important issue. This dispute has been ongoing for a number of years, and Congress interjecting will not bring about a more favorable outcome to any of the parties involved. Water supply disputes are best handled at the state level, and I trust that the governors of the affected states will come together and resolve the issue without Congressional intervention.

Overall, I am very supportive of this bill and urge its adoption.

#### HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to the Shimkus amendment and efforts to undermine the continued success of the Internet.

The Internet has always been driven by consensus decision-making, or multistakeholder governance. This model brings together industry, civil society, government, technical and academic experts, as well the general public, to tackle issues around the design and operation of the Internet.

Three time in the past two years, this body has voted to reaffirm our commitment to the multistakeholder model, including last May when Democrats and Republicans joined together to unanimously pass H.R. 1580, a bill stating that "it is the policy of the United States to preserve and advance the successful multistakeholder model that governs the Internet."

So what exactly is the problem with the amendment before us today? It's a U-turn. The Shimkus amendment would restrict NTIA's authority to continue what has been U.S. policy since 1998—transitioning the government's role in administering the domain name system to the multistakeholder global community. Although supporters of the amendment characterize it as a stand against anti-democratic nations seeking a greater government role in Internet management, the amendment could have the opposite effect of emboldening efforts by authoritarian regimes to seize control of the global Internet. Specifically, authoritarian regimes point to the U.S. government's continued oversight of technical Internet functions as evidence that global Internet governance and management should be under the control of a governmental or intergovernmental entity such as the United Nations.

The Shimkus Amendment lacks a fundamental understanding of the U.S. government's role in the management of the global Internet domain name system. Contrary to assertions that the United States "controls" the Internet through an ongoing contract that the Administration is now proposing to terminate, NTIA's role has always been ministerial and largely symbolic. Simply put, the U.S. government has never had any legal or statutory responsibility to manage the domain name system.

The world is watching and now is not the time to turn our backs on a governance model that has enabled the Internet to flourish. I urge my colleagues to take a stand for a global Internet free from government control and vote "no" on the Shimkus amendment.

#### HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. CAROL SHEA-PORTER**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Chair, due to sequester cuts, the Department of Defense (DoD) needs to increase efficiency and lower costs wherever it can, but this costly amendment prevents DoD from hiring the most cost-efficient workforce. It also would prevent DoD from ever correcting, through insourcing, any contract that costs too much or is poorly performed, period—regardless of the increased costs to taxpayers.

According to the Government Accountability Office, DoD reports savings of almost \$1 trillion through insourcing in FY10 alone. In 2013, the DoD Comptroller acknowledged in a Senate hearing that civilian employees are significantly cheaper than contractors, particularly for the performance of long-term functions. So why would anyone want to make it impossible for DoD to save money by correcting overly costly or poorly-performed contracts, especially in a time of shrinking defense budgets? DoD can't afford this amendment, and neither can American taxpayers. Please join me in opposing this costly and wasteful amendment.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of our nation's veterans and express my views regarding H.R. 4031, the Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014.

This weekend the nation will mark the occasion of Memorial Day the time our nation pauses to recognize the valor, and self-sacrifice of our nation's veterans.

We must remember that freedom is not free.

That is why the timing of the disclosure is especially troubling regarding accusations made by a whistleblower about the treatment of veterans seeking healthcare at the Phoenix Veterans medical facility.

Now, more than ever, we must renew our commitment to keep our promises to the nation's more than 2 million troops and reservists, their families, and 23 million veterans.

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center located in Houston, Texas serves the 32,477 veterans who I have the privilege of representing in my Congressional District.

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center serves as the primary healthcare provider for almost 130,000 veterans in southeast Texas.

Veterans from around the country are referred to the DeBakey VA Medical Center for specialized diagnostic care, radiation therapy, surgery, and medical treatment including cardiovascular surgery, gastrointestinal endoscopy, nuclear medicine, ophthalmology, and treatment of spinal cord injury and diseases.

DeBakey VA Medical Center provide vital healthcare services to Veterans in the Houston area and through the nation. The Medical Center houses:

- A Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinic;
- Network Polytrauma Center;
- an award-winning Cardiac and General Surgery Program;
- Liver Transplant Center;
- VA Epilepsy and Cancer Centers of Excellence;

- VA Substance Abuse Disorder Quality Enhancement Research Initiative;

- Health Services Research & Development Center of Innovation;

- VA Rehabilitation Research of Excellence focusing on mild to moderate traumatic brain injury;

- Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center; and

- one of the VA's six Parkinson's Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Centers.

In late 2012, the MEDVAMC received official designation as a Kidney Transplant Center. Including the outpatient clinics in Beaumont, Conroe, Galveston, Houston, Katy, Lufkin, Richmond, Tomball and Texas City, MEDVAMC outpatient clinics log more than a million outpatient visits annually.

Earlier this week I joined other members of the Congressional Women's Caucus for the Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to remember the contributions of women who served our nation proudly in uniform.

Veterans are told that the care that they need can be found at Veteran medical facilities around the nation and we must be certain that they have access to the care that is provided.

The veterans who have served our nation deserve better than what we have been made aware of due to the disclosures related to the Arizona VA facility in Phoenix.

It has been reported that physicians at the Phoenix Veterans Hospital ignored mandates to prioritize treatment of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

The placement of veterans on secret waiting lists who later died is unconscionable and should be criminally investigated if proven to be true.

The Veterans facilities serving veterans in Houston, to my knowledge, are not under investigation regarding these terrible reports related to accusations of mistreatment of our nation's veterans.

I know that there are concerns regarding the implications of H.R. 4031 on civil service protection for federal employees at the Veterans Administration.

I am mindful of those concerns, but I am also very focused on making sure that our veterans receive the healthcare that they need.

Should this bill become law, I will make sure that veterans received the care they need, while monitoring how the authority provided under this bill is used.

The intent of this bill should not be solely for the removal of people from federal service unless there is cause for such action—like in the case of the Phoenix reports if proven to be true.

Falsifying federal records that may lead to the deaths or further degradation of health of our nation's veterans if true should disqualify a person from federal employment and the receipt of bonuses.

Our nation's veterans need help now—not later.

The work that Congress along with the Administration can do today to make sure that the promises made to our veterans and their families are kept should be done.

The bill would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to remove any individual from the Senior Executive Service upon determining that such individual's performance warrants removal, and remove such individual from federal service or transfer the individual to a General Schedule position at any grade that the Secretary deems appropriate.

A part of the important job of our Nation's Secretary of Veterans Affairs is to administer a national hospital system for our nation's veterans.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs needs more than just the power to fire, but the authority and means to hire hospital and facility administrators at competitive rates when compared to the private sector.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs needs the ability to make decisions regarding distribution of resources and facility management.

The Secretary must have the ability to make decisions and the power to act on whether to open additional facilities or enter into agreements with private or other public hospital systems to meet the healthcare needs of returning Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans along with the needs of our aging veteran population who have increased need for healthcare.

The Veterans Administration needs Congressional intervention by making sure that the Secretary can be held fully accountable for how the Department functions because they have the authority and the means to manage the agency as it should be managed.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs would always be ultimately accountable to the oversight of Congressional Committees, and must provide greater transparency to veterans and their families on what the agency is doing to meet the needs of veterans.

But it is within our power as Members of Congress to make sure that our nation's veterans receive the best medical care that modern medicine has to offer to them and their families.

In the State of Texas we have over a million Veterans under the age of 65 and nearly a half million who are over the age of 65.

I believe that a message of unity is critical to the wellbeing of our men and women in uniform and those transitioning out of uniformed service to our nation.

Veterans share a kinship in ways that too few Americans who have not served can understand.

Our men and women in the military have fulfilled a commitment to this nation and to each other that we should imitate in our actions to work to provide for veterans now that their military service has ended.

Today, I want to renew my commitment to our nation's veterans by encouraging my col-

leagues to act to keep the nation's promises to them.

Congress must communicate its wholehearted support for the security of the nation by addressing mindless cuts created by sequestration.

I firmly believe that Congress must act to care for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, both on and off the battlefield.

I believe that the nation's concern for their wellbeing must be more than in words, but must be reflected in deeds.

Veterans demonstrate a love of country and a measure of devotion making us proud as their Representatives, but we must offer to each veteran a level of comfort that the promises made to them will be kept.

Their quiet dignity sets aside concerns for self because their vision is broader than the moments of partisanship that we see too often in Washington, DC.

I ask that my colleagues remember the damage done to the budget of the Veterans Administration through cuts, sequestration, and the government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the passion that I see in the actions and words of fellow Members of the House will translate into a long-term commitment to mend what is broken at the VA and strengthen what is working well.

We should recognize the great work being done by a majority of doctors, nurses, therapists, and medical aides at the dozens of veterans medical facilities around the nation.

We must remember that the leadership at Veterans Affairs needs the funding and authority to make decisions regarding implementing solutions to overcome challenges of providing the best care possible to our nation's veterans.

We should seek reports on the ability of the VA to meet the challenge of the returning veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the needs of Veterans from previous wars with the current level of funding, personnel, offices, and medical facilities.

I am in support of our veterans and seek a bipartisan solution to resolving the problems with VA backlogs and the treatment of veterans and their families.

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Chair, for the past year, the House Armed Services Committee has conducted an "Oversight of the Asia Pacific Rebalance." This initiative was brought forth by the collective leadership of Chairman BUCK McKEON and Ranking Member ADAM SMITH. I would also recognize Chairman RANDY FORBES and Congresswoman COLLEEN HANABUSA for their great efforts on this critical committee engagement,