

have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MR. CUB, ERNIE BANKS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Ernie Banks—known by Chicagoans as “Mr. Cub.”

Chicago lost a true hero and friend when Ernie Banks passed away on Friday, January 23. His baseball accomplishments are legendary. During his playing days, cheers would always erupt at Wrigley Field when Banks would make a clutch hit or a spectacular diving catch. His greatness was well acknowledged: Banks was voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1977—the very first year he was eligible.

While Banks excelled on the field, he also blazed a trail off of it. As the first African-American player for the Chicago Cubs, he was a pioneer in our community and across the country. Banks treated people well, got along with most everyone and stood for justice even as he faced discrimination. During road trips, hotels and restaurants open to his white teammates were often closed to him and other African-Americans. I am happy to see how far we have come as a country throughout the course of his career and his lifetime.

Banks founded the Ernie Banks Live Above and Beyond Foundation, which helps promote social welfare and assist youth and seniors who may need assistance. I know he was very proud of the young players on Chicago's own Jackie Robinson West team who won the Little League championship last year.

According to Fox Chicago, Jackie Robinson West player Lawrence Noble said, ‘I met [Ernie Banks] during the summer and he was such an inspirational person to me, it was just very sad hearing that he passed away.’

It's clear that the next generation appreciates the impact of Mr. Cub. We can honor the legacy of Mr. Cub by doing our own part to break down barriers and build a better community. We will miss you, Ernie.

MISSING CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 26, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 246, a bill “To Improve The Response To Victims Of Child Sex Trafficking,” which broadens the issues to be reported on the federal tip line on Internet-related child sexual exploitation run by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to explicitly include child sex trafficking—specifically, by replacing the term “child prostitution” with the term “child sex trafficking, including child prostitution.”

Trafficking in humans is a major problem across the globe and in our own country. As

lawmakers, we have a moral responsibility to combat this scourge and protect our children, especially those without parents to care for them, from being exploited and falling through the cracks.

As the Founder and Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I understand how important it is to defend those who are too young to defend themselves.

This problem is personal for me because according to the U.S. Department of Justice, my home city of Houston, Texas is the epicenter of human trafficking in the United States with over 200 active brothels in Houston and two new ones opening each month.

Houston has also surpassed Las Vegas for the dubious distinction of having the most strip clubs and illicit spas serving as fronts for sex trafficking.

Human trafficking in Texas is not limited to Houston. During the 2011 Dallas Super Bowl, 133 underage arrests for prostitution were made and during this year's massive effort “Operation Cross Country” led by the FBI, several pimps were arrested.

Between 1998 and 2003 more than 500 people from 18 countries were ensnared in 57 forced labor operations in almost a dozen cities throughout the State of Texas.

The Justice Department's Internet Crimes against Children Task Force (which coordinates with 61 federal, state and local law enforcement task forces) reports that the number of child victims of prostitution increased by more than 900% between 2004 and 2008.

Currently, our state child welfare systems do not properly identify and help the children that have been taken by this horrible industry.

Even more disturbing is that the protections provided by our child welfare systems often do not extend to young victims of trafficking.

Hard as it is to believe, in some states trafficked youths are not even regarded or classified as victims.

Rather, they are treated as youthful offenders and consigned to the criminal justice system.

These kids are not criminals. They are victims, robbed of their innocence by adult criminals.

They are boys and girls who have been taken advantage of and are unable to escape an ugly system.

I support H.R. 246 because it is focused on using technology to minimize the sex trafficking of vulnerable children and empowers people by giving the opportunity and means to report suspicious activity.

Under current law, the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) provides an annual grant to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for a range of activities, including running a tip line that allows online users and Internet service providers to report Internet-related child sexual exploitation.

This tip line includes reports on child pornography, online enticement of children for sexual acts, child prostitution, sex tourism involving children, extra familial child sexual molestation, unsolicited obscene material sent to a child, misleading domain names and misleading words or digital images on the Internet.

I strongly support H.R. 246 and urge my colleague to join me in voting for its passage which will help bring an end to the evil practice that is child sex trafficking.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUDGET AUTONOMY ACT OF 2015

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, District of Columbia residents raise billions of dollars annually for their local budget, and, like Americans everywhere, claim the right to control the funds they themselves raise to support their city as fundamental to their American citizenship. Therefore, today I introduce the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2015, the second bill I introduce this Congress, to allow the District's local-taxpayer-raised budget to take effect immediately when passed by the city, without being subject to congressional approval.

Control over the dollars raised by local taxpayers is central to local control, the oldest American government principle. Beyond this core principle, permitting the city's local budget to become law without a redundant congressional approval would have multiple practical benefits for both the city and Congress. For the city, a timely budget means eliminating the uncertainty of the congressional approval process, which has a significant negative effect on the city's bond rating, adding unnecessary interest costs for local taxpayers; improving the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reducing the countless operational problems that result when the city's budget cannot be implemented until Congress approves it (even when it is not delayed, which rarely occurs). Also of major importance, the bill would permit the District to use the typical state and local government fiscal year (July 1–June 30), which is used to provide ample time to prepare for the opening of schools in September, instead of the current federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30), used for the convenience of Members of Congress, not the needs of the city. Moreover, the D.C. local budget consumes valuable subcommittee, committee, and floor time in both houses of Congress, the most inefficient and redundant annual process in the Congress. Yet the D.C. budget is of interest only to those members who use it to promote their own issues, violating a principle of local self-government that they value for their own districts and states.

Increasing recognition of the hardships and delays caused by the congressional approval process has led Congress to begin freeing the city from many congressional constraints. We made significant progress in the last Congress on a major element of budget autonomy. There is unprecedented bipartisan and bicameral support for preventing D.C. shutdowns, which have been constantly threatened as the Congress now almost always fails to pass appropriations bills. Under the fiscal year 2014 D.C. Appropriations bill, D.C. was, for the first time ever, exempt from shutdowns for an entire fiscal year—2015. The fiscal year 2015 D.C. Appropriations bill also exempts D.C. from shutdowns for all of fiscal year 2016. In addition, the president's budgets last Congress and the Senate's D.C. appropriations bills would have granted D.C. budget autonomy. This progress from both Congress and the Executive invites the inevitable next step—a permanent shutdown exemption bill.

The importance of eliminating shutdown threats to the District was definitively shown recently. The three leading bond rating agencies favorably cited the fiscal year 2014 D.C. Appropriations bill provision exempting D.C. from a shutdown in fiscal year 2015. In upgrading their ratings on the District's outstanding general obligation bonds, Standard & Poor's Rating Services and Fitch Ratings both favorably cited the provision, and Moody's Investors Service favorably cited the provision while maintaining D.C.'s rating.

Several years ago, we negotiated an agreement with a Republican-led appropriations committee that ensures that the city's local budget is approved in the first continuing resolution (CR) if the D.C. Appropriations bill has not been approved by the start of the fiscal year, another important step that responded to practical realities. This approach ended the annual nightmares of lengthy delays of approval of the local budget of a big city until a national appropriations bill was passed, often months after the start of the fiscal year. As a result, under CRs, the city has been able to spend its local funds at the next year's funding level, even though federal agencies must spend at the prior year's funding level. We are deeply appreciative that this process, which eliminated serious problems for the functioning of the D.C. government, has continued.

We nearly secured budget autonomy for the District in the last days of the lame-duck session in the 111th Congress, when Democrats were in control. We got the House authorizers to include budget autonomy in the fiscal year 2011 D.C. Appropriations bill, which was passed by the subcommittee. Unfortunately, the Democratic Senate did not include budget autonomy in its appropriations bill, and Congress passed a CR instead of regular appropriations bills in the lame duck.

Most important, we gained critical support for D.C. budget autonomy in the 112th and 113th Congresses. In an Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing in May 2011, Chairman DARRELL ISSA (R-CA) endorsed budget autonomy. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) and Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell (R) during that year both indicated their support for budget autonomy. Last Congress, Majority Leader Cantor and Chairman ISSA both continued in their support for budget autonomy. The President's fiscal year 2015 budget, for the second time, will have granted D.C. budget autonomy. The Senate's fiscal year 2015 D.C. Appropriations bill granted the District budget autonomy, which was the first ever appropriations bill to grant it. We also got budget autonomy introduced as a stand-alone bill in the Senate.

We kept the budget autonomy referendum from being overturned in Congress. However, a federal district court struck it down and an appeal is pending before a federal appeals court.

Even if the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2015 were enacted, Congress would still retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under article I, section 8, clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution until statehood is achieved. This authority allows Congress to make changes to the District's budget at any time, as we saw last week when the House voted to permanently ban the District from spending its local funds on abortion services for low-income women. Therefore, it is unnecessary to require the District to incur the costs

and delays of transmitting its local budget for congressional approval. The time is overdue to permit the city to enact its local budget, the single most immediate step Congress could take to help the District better manage itself.

Members of Congress were sent to Washington to do the business of the nation, not a local jurisdiction. Members have no reason to be interested in or to become knowledgeable about the local budget of a single city or jurisdiction far from their own. In the past, the House and Senate have more often than not passed the District's budget as is. Our budget autonomy bill takes the Congress in the direction it is already moving.

INTRODUCTION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in his State of Union President Obama spoke about restoring the link between hard work and growing opportunity for every American. That link is at the very core of what made America great. And he spoke about the need to ensure that working families have a fair shot and a level playing field.

One of the places that the United States continues to lag behind the entire rest of the world is in providing paid parental leave. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation with no paid parental leave. It is only us and Papua New Guinea in the whole world that have no statutory maternity leave. This is embarrassing and it hurts hardworking American families.

It is way past time to drag at least our federal workplace policies into the 21st century. That is why I am introducing the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act to provide six weeks of paid parental leave to federal employees for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

The federal government is our nation's largest employer and it should be setting an example—and leading the march into the modern era. Paid parental leave would be a big boost for the almost two million people who work for the federal government. And this won't just affect our nation's capital—86 percent of federal workers live and work outside the metro Washington, DC area. In fact, the metro region of my home city of New York City has the second highest number of federal employees of any region in the country.

For these working families in New York and elsewhere around the country, paid leave is an economic lifeline. The growing costs of caring for a new child—the expensive diapers, bottles, baby carriers—they all add up very quickly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture found that in the first two years a new child can cost families an average of nearly \$13,000. Who can forego weeks of pay on top of those new expenses. It is both crippling and cruel to ask families to choose between a pay-check and caring for a new child when costs continue to mount.

Providing paid leave helps pay for itself with the broad benefits it produces. It gives parents the time to bond with their child in those critical first weeks of life and research shows the

critical nature of the first few months of life on the health and intellectual development over the lifetime of the child.

To those who would push back on this legislation, I refer you to the Congressional Budget Office findings that this legislation is budget neutral. It costs nothing—but it means everything. It requires no new money but would immeasurably enrich the lives of federal employees by allowing them to maintain their salary during the course of FMLA-permitted parental leave.

I urge my Republican colleagues to support the bill. It passed the House twice before—with great bipartisan support. Now is the moment to bring this legislation forward and in so doing, bring America forward.

WINTER STORM JUNO

HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the state and local leaders and emergency responders in Rhode Island who, as I speak, are working tirelessly to manage the impact of Winter Storm Juno that struck Rhode Island last night.

This storm is still hitting Rhode Island with heavy snow, high winds and coastal flooding. As a former Mayor, I understand the devastating impact this type of snowfall can have on individuals and families, and the painstaking efforts it will take to restore services to Rhode Island's communities.

Yesterday our entire delegation sent a letter to President Obama, Senator JACK REED, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN, and I, urging the President to make federal assistance available to Rhode Island to support emergency operations and recovery due to the blizzard conditions.

I stand ready to assist my home state in any way I can, and applaud the tremendous efforts of our Governor Gina Raimondo, Mayor Jorge Elorza and all the dedicated local leaders and emergency responders who are working around the clock to ensure Rhode Island makes a speedy recovery.

FISCAL YEAR 2015 HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS BILL

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I voted against the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 (H.R. 240), due to House Republicans' irresponsible attempt to hijack this must-pass legislation.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is at the forefront of protecting our nation from terrorist threats. The women and men on the frontline of securing America's borders deserve a clean appropriations bill that provides them with the funding and resources they need to keep our families, communities, and our nation safe. Instead of bringing a bipartisan bill to the Floor, House Republicans opted to pick a political fight with the