

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 paycheck 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

President, jeopardizing our country's security needs.

Republicans voted to add five poison pill amendments targeting the President's executive actions on immigration to this critical funding bill. One of the most offensive and dangerous of these amendments is the DeSantis/Roby amendment. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women strongly opposes this and other amendments, which they describe as "overly broad, sweep large numbers of victims into their scope and ignore the best interests of victims and their children." In addition, the Task Force urges Congress "to prioritize the needs of immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence, and reject these amendments."

Other amendments proposed by House Republicans would further derail the Administration's progress on immigration reform. The Aderholt amendment would block the Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) program and expansions to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In addition, the amendment would block measures to strengthen border security, facilitate legal immigration, promote citizenship and immigrant integration, and spur innovation and entrepreneurship. The Blackburn amendment would terminate the existing DACA program and prevent hundreds of thousands of young people (DREAMers) who already have come forward, passed background checks, obtained protection, and followed the rules from renewing DACA. The Salmon amendment is based on the false premise that the president's recent executive actions create an incentive under the Affordable Care Act for employers to hire deferred action recipients. Finally, the Schock amendment also is premised on the false notion that deferred action applications unfairly delay the adjudication of all applications.

Jeopardizing this must-pass legislation, critical to our national security, is unacceptable. I urge my Republican colleagues to bring a clean bill for the remainder of FY2015 for DHS, without further delay and without the distraction of partisan politics.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

It is fitting today to remember those who experienced the depth of human cruelty in that camp and all other Nazi concentration camps.

It is estimated that over one million prisoners perished at the Auschwitz concentration camp over the five years that it was operational.

I grieve for those lost souls, but I give thanks for the 7,500 prisoners who were liberated 70 years ago today.

The stories of those survivors ensure that we remain vigilant and dedicated to combating hatred and oppression in all its forms.

For that reason, I would also like to bring attention to the ongoing massacres and human rights violations being carried out by the militant terrorist organization Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Just like the actions of the Nazis during World War II, the actions of Boko Haram today are an affront to human life and dignity.

From their first violent uprising in 2009, to the massacre in Baga less than one month ago, Boko Haram has been waging a war that has cost an estimated 10,000 lives, and displaced more than one million people.

I thank Secretary Kerry for his active role in supporting the Nigerians in their efforts to combat Boko Haram.

I also thank the United States military, for providing the Nigerian military with trainers and specialists to aid them.

But there needs to be more.

These atrocities must not be permitted to continue, and we must do everything within our power to stop the kidnapping and killing of innocent men, women, and children across Nigeria.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CITY OF DELANO'S CENTENNIAL

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of Delano, California in honor of its centennial.

After its founding by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1873, Delano was incorporated on April 13, 1915. It is an extremely culturally diverse community, with residents who have ties to Mexico, Spain, China, France, Japan, Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Russia, and India.

Delano is also an area with rich history. During World War II, a prisoner of war camp was located in Delano. Additionally, a squadron of Northrop P-61 Black Widow planes that protected the Pacific coast from invasion during the war was based there. Delano played an important role in ensuring the safety of the homeland throughout this conflict.

Located in the Central Valley, Delano plays a substantial role in our nation's agricultural industry. The local farmers in Delano are known for the grapes, oranges, almonds, pistachios, and cotton they farm. Without the hard work of Delano's farmers, the economy of the Central Valley and the food reserves in the United States would be dramatically compromised.

In honor of Delano's centennial, the city will be hosting a 100th Year Gala Celebration on January 31, 2015. The celebration will provide the people of Delano with the opportunity to look back on their city's past with pride and look forward to its bright future with excitement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the City of Delano on their centennial and honoring the city for its immense contributions to our nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVE BRAT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Mr. BRAT. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 41, I was present on the House Floor and attempted to vote "YES" via my electronic voting card. However, it has been brought to my attention that my vote was not recorded.

Had I been present, I would have voted YES.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 26, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees, I rise in strong support of H.R. 357, the "Human Trafficking Prevention Act."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their stewardship in bringing this legislation to the floor and for their commitment to expanding the training and capability of federal government personnel in detecting and combating human trafficking and assisting its victims.

Throughout my tenure in Congress and a founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I have advocated on behalf of victims of human trafficking, especially children, who are the most vulnerable and innocent victims.

I am also committed to ensuring that law enforcement agencies have the tools, resources, and training necessary to identify, apprehend, and prosecute criminals who ruthlessly traffic in people.

H.R. 357 strengthens the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 by amending it to require training related to trafficking in persons for all State Department personnel. Specifically, the bill requires the following:

1. A distance learning course on trafficking in persons issues and the Department of State's obligations under the Act to be completed by embassy reporting officers, regional bureaus' trafficking in persons coordinators, and their supervisors;

2. Specific trafficking-in-persons briefings for all ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission before they depart for their posts; and

3. Annual reminders to all such personnel and other federal personnel at each diplomatic or consular post of the Department of State located outside the United States of key human trafficking problems, threats, methods, and warning signs.

This legislation does for the State Department what the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 4660, "Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act for 2015," approved by the House in the last Congress does for the Justice Department.

That amendment, adopted in May 2014 by the House, provides another tool in law enforcement's arsenal to tip the balance in favor of victims by ensuring funding for the Attorney