

keep pace with inflation, which means the tax credit will be worth less and less as the years go by.

Mr. Speaker, the tax provisions in this bill don't do enough to help families make ends meet, and will force us to underfund programs that Americans need to educate their children, keep their families healthy, and provide for their families' future and well-being. I will vote against this bill because it is a bad deal for American families.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RE-  
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-  
TIONS ACT, 2016**

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the underlying bill, H.R. 2029, the "Omnibus Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014."

I want to thank Chairman ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY for their constructive work in fashioning this bipartisan and bicameral legislation to fund the government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2016.

The bill before us is not perfect—far from it—but it is a modest and positive step toward preventing Republicans from shutting down the government again and manufacturing crises that only harm our economy, destroy jobs, and weaken our middle class.

As with any compromise there are some things in the agreement that I support and some things that I do not.

The bill provides a total of \$1.067 trillion for the operation of the federal government, a substantial and necessary increase of \$80 billion in sequestration relief.

The bill contains all 12 regular appropriations bills for fiscal year 2016, with no area of the government functioning under a Continuing Resolution, thus allowing every program to be considered on its own merits and prioritized, rather than be subject to arbitrary across the board cuts.

Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that I am very pleased that Section 208 of the Omnibus (Division N) incorporates the Jackson Lee Amendment to Cybersecurity Act of 2015, which creates a voluntary cybersecurity information sharing process that will encourage public and private sector entities to share cyber threat information, without legal barriers and the threat of unfounded litigation—while protecting private information.

The Jackson Lee Amendment incorporated in the Cybersecurity Act and included in the Omnibus also includes provisions to improve federal network and information system security, provide assessments on the federal cybersecurity workforce, and provide reporting and strategies on cybersecurity industry-related and criminal-related matters.

I also strongly support the James Zadroga 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund Reauthorization contained in Title IV of Division O, which reauthorizes the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund for an additional five years, provides an additional \$4.6 billion to fully fund the VCF; and makes technical adjustments to VCF pay-

ment schedules to ensure the provided funding is sufficient to pay all claims.

In addition, Title IV creates a fund, modeled along the lines of the "Victim of the Terror Fund" I proposed in H. Res. 528, to compensate U.S. victims of terrorism who either hold a final judgment issued against a state sponsor of terrorism under the terrorism exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, or were taken hostage (or are a spouse or child of someone who was taken hostage) from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran in 1979.

This program is funded with an initial allocation of \$1.025 billion and will be augmented in future years through criminal and civil penalties levied against state sponsors of terrorism and their co-conspirators.

Mr. Speaker, the Omnibus provides increases in funding for several programs that I have strongly supported and fought for throughout my tenure in Congress.

Let me list just a few of the more important ones.

**AGRICULTURE AND RELATED AGENCIES**

\$6.350 billion for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), an amount sufficient to meet expected need in Fiscal Year 2016.

**COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES**

\$19.3 billion for NASA, which is \$1.27 billion more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$347 million for Byrne-JAG grants, which is \$14.7 million above the 2015 enacted level and \$2 million more than the House bill.

\$212 million for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program. Within this funding, \$187 million is for the hiring of law enforcement, which is \$7 million above the FY 2015 level and \$187 million above the House bill which eliminated this funding.

\$480 million for Violence Against Women Prevention and Prosecution Programs, which is \$50 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$270.2 million for Juvenile Justice, which is \$18.7 million more than the FY 2015 level and \$83.7 million above the House bill.

\$385 million for the Legal Services Corporation, which is \$10 million more than FY 2015 level and \$85 million above the House bill.

\$7.46 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is \$119.3 million more than FY 2015 and \$69.3 million above the House bill.

\$2.57 billion overall for total State and Local Law Enforcement Activities, which is \$246.2 million above the FY 2015 level and \$405.7 million more than the House bill; and

\$1.37 billion for the Census Bureau, which is \$378.3 million more than the House bill, including funding to help ensure an efficient 2020 Census utilizing innovative and cost-effective enumeration practices.

The bill rejects House proposals to prohibit the Department of Justice from using funds to challenge state immigration laws or awarding grants to "sanctuary" cities; or to defend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy in the pending court case.

**DEFENSE**

\$288.3 million for sexual assault prevention and response programs, \$5 million more than the House bill and \$25 million more than the request.

\$125 million for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Psychological Health research.

\$282 million for cancer research, roughly the same as the House bill, \$407 million more

than the request, and \$1.5 million more than FY2015.

1.3% pay raise for military personnel as proposed in the budget request and included in the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act.

\$26.7 million for the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, the same as the House bill, \$20 million more than requested.

\$25 million for STARBASE, a STEM education program for fifth graders, the same as the House bill, \$25 million more than the request, and the same as FY2015.

**ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES**

\$2.1 billion for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, which is \$404 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$6.0 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers, which is \$350 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$1.3 billion for water resources projects within the Department of Interior, which is \$135 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$206 million for activities to modernize the electricity grid, which is \$19 million more than the House bill and \$59 million than the FY2015 enacted level.

\$6.2 billion for environmental cleanup activities, which is \$309 million more than the House bill and \$337 million more than the FY2015 enacted level.

The Omnibus eliminates the majority of riders proposed in the House bill, including those related to Waters of the United States, guns on Corps lands, Clean Water Act agriculture exemptions and ceiling fan standards.

**FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

\$871 million for the Small Business Administration (SBA), which is \$16.6 million less than the 2015 enacted level (as a result of reduced loan subsidy costs) and \$18.5 million higher than the House-passed level.

\$729.8 million for the District of Columbia, which is \$50.3 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$51.8 million more than the House-passed level.

\$6.8 billion for the Judiciary, which is \$80 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

The Omnibus eliminates the majority of riders proposed in the House including those prohibiting funds: to subsidize abortion services in connection with a multi-state plan offered under the Affordable Care Act exchanges negotiated by OPM; to implement the Affordable Care Act (ACA) individual mandate and prohibiting HHS transfers to IRS for ACA implementation; implement the net neutrality order until the current court cases are resolved; and to travel to Cuba for educational exchanges not involving academic study pursuant to a degree program.

**HOMELAND SECURITY**

\$13.03 billion for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which is \$451 million more than the FY2015 enacted level and \$59 million less than the House level.

\$4.93 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, which is \$225.8 million less than the 2013 enacted level.

\$7.44 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, which is \$211.3 million more than the FY2015 enacted level and \$207.5 million more than the House level.

\$923.8 million for Cybersecurity and Communications, an increase of \$27.5 million above the 2013 enacted level.

\$4.62 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, \$268.9 million above the 2015 enacted level.

\$2.54 billion for State and Local Grants, an increase of \$10 million above the 2015 enacted level and \$308.6 million more than the request.

\$1.93 billion for the U.S. Secret Service, which is \$267.8 million more than the FY2015 enacted level.

\$10.92 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, which is \$880 million more than the FY2015 enacted level and \$805.9 million more than the House bill.

\$100 million for Pre-Disaster Mitigation, which is \$75 million more than the FY2015 enacted level and the House bill.

\$190 million for Flood Mapping, which is \$90 million more than the FY2015 enacted level and the House bill.

\$50 million in new funding to help state and local communities counter violent extremism and to help state and local law enforcement prepare for and respond to complex, coordinated terrorist attacks.

\$100 million in new funding for DHS to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities of DHS IT systems.

Controversial House riders related to abortion services and immigration enforcement are not included in the bill.

Among the contentious riders not included were provisions:

1. related to the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program;

2. to eliminate ICE's discretion to release certain categories of detainees from custody, except for removal;

3. intended to prohibit Americans from bringing back merchandise from Cuba; and

4. prohibiting the award of terrorism preparedness grants to states or political subdivisions of states that do not permit law enforcement officers to assist or cooperate with the enforcement of federal immigration law.

#### INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

\$4.203 billion for Wildland fires, which represent the 10-year average of costs.

\$4.8 billion for the Indian Health Service, which is \$165 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$450 million is provided for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, an increase of \$144 million above the 2015 enacted level.

\$2.851 billion for the National Park Service, which is \$237 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$147.9 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is \$1.9 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$1.9 million more than the House bill.

\$2.796 billion for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is \$195 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$30 million more than the House bill.

\$2.455 billion for the U.S. Forest Service (non-fire), which is \$35 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$99 million more than the House bill.

#### LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

\$9.26 billion for Head Start, which is \$570 million more than the 2015 enacted level, and \$14 million more than the House bill.

\$2.7 billion for job training through WIA Training and Employment Formula Grant pro-

gram, which is \$86 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$835 million for Seniors' Nutrition programs, which is \$20 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$14 million more than the House bill.

\$2.36 billion for Child Care & Development Block Grants, which is \$36 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$244.7 million for Historically Black Colleges, \$63.3 million for Historically Black Graduate Institutions, and \$9.9 million for Predominantly Black Institutions, a total of more than \$319 million, which represents an increase of about \$23 million over the 2015 enacted level.

\$56,758,601 for the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Research Centers in Minority Institutions equal to the enacted 2015 level.

\$22.5 billion for Pell Grants, the same as the 2015 enacted level but \$370 million more than the House bill, and which, when combined with mandatory funding, will enable the maximum grant to increase to an estimated \$5,915, an increase of \$140 in the 2016–2017 school year.

\$3.4 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is the same as the 2015 enacted level and \$25 million more than the House bill.

\$11.9 billion for Special Education state grants (IDEA), which is \$415 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$87 million less than the House bill.

\$1.6 billion for worker protection agencies at the Department of Labor, which is \$3 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$39 million more than the House bill.

\$445 million as an advance appropriation for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which is the same as the 2015 enacted level and the House bill. An increase of \$40 million is provided for Television Interconnection in 2016, which is \$40 million more than the House bill.

\$948 million for Unaccompanied Minor Children, which is the same as the 2015 enacted level and \$130 million more than the House bill.

\$1.1 billion for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which is \$40 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$407 million more than the House bill.

The Omnibus abandons the futile but wasteful effort by House Republicans to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

\$71.414 billion in discretionary funding for Veterans Affairs, which is \$6.4 billion more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$630.7 million for prosthetic research, which is \$41.8 million above the 2015 enacted level.

An additional \$2.369 billion for the Medical Services account and \$105 million for Medical Facilities for fiscal year 2016.

Of the additional funds included for fiscal year 2016, \$1.5 billion is dedicated for the treatment of Hepatitis C within the VA system, an additional \$50 million is included for the Caregiver Program, and an additional \$15 million is included for mobile Vet Centers.

The Omnibus provides new tools and resources to address the backlog of veterans' disability claims by increasing personnel, enhancing training and quality oversight, and strengthening accountability.

#### STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

I would have preferred that the bill provide more than \$2.22 billion for Embassy Security,

Construction and Maintenance, an amount that is \$102 million less than the 2015 enacted level. Our diplomats who risk their lives serving in dangerous outposts around the world deserve all the resources required to keep them safe.

\$2.78 billion for Development Assistance (DA), which is \$274 million more than the FY 2015 level but \$218 million.

\$4.32 billion for Economic Support Fund (ESF), which is \$428 million less than the FY 2015 level.

\$1.28 billion for USAID Operating Expenses (OE), which is \$66.6 million more than the FY 2015 level.

\$5.9 billion in total funding for humanitarian assistance accounts, which is \$899 million more than the FY 2015 level.

And the FY 2016 Committee mark and \$1.66 billion more than the

\$410 million for Peace Corps, which is \$30.5 million more than the 2015 Committee mark and the FY 2015 level and equal to the Administration's request.

\$8.5 billion for Global Health (GHP), which is \$49.5 million more than the FY 2016 Committee mark and FY 2015 level and \$322 million more than the Administration's request.

\$575 million for bilateral family planning, which is equal to the 2015 enacted level.

The final agreement does not include a policy rider codifying the "Global Gag Rule," which prohibits non-governmental organizations (NGOs) receiving federal funds from providing women information about certain health services.

#### TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

\$16.3 billion for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which is \$563 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$500 million for National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER), which is equal to the 2015 enacted level and \$400 million more than the House bill.

\$2.2 billion for Capital Investment Grants, which is \$57 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$256 million more than the House bill.

\$50 million for Railroad Safety Grants, \$25 million for rail infrastructure improvements and \$25 million for positive train control grants.

\$17.7 billion for Section 8 Tenant Based Rental Assistance renewals, which is \$195 million more than the 2015 enacted level.

\$60 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), which is \$15 million below the 2015 enacted level but \$60 million more than the House bill, and \$60 million more than the President's budget request.

\$10.4 billion for Section 8 Project Based Rental Assistance renewals, which is \$885 million more than the 2015 enacted level, and is sufficient to meet expected need based on updated estimates.

\$4.5 billion for Public Housing Operating Fund, which is \$60 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$60 million more than the House bill.

\$1.9 billion for Public Housing Capital Fund, which is \$25 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$219 million more than the House bill, and \$50 million below the President's budget request.

\$3 billion for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which is equal to the 2015 enacted level.

\$110 million for Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, which is the same as the

2015 enacted level and \$35 million more than the House bill.

\$300 million for flooding disasters that occurred in calendar year 2015.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that Title III of Division O of the Omnibus keeps faith with the first responders who risked their lives and sacrificed their health in aid of the fellow human beings who were trapped or perished in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Specifically, Title III of Division O includes the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act which reauthorizes the World Trade Center Health Program through 2090, establishing annual caps for funding for the first 10 years, then increasing the caps to account for inflation in future years and allowing the funding to carry over if necessary.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated, this bill is not perfect, but on balance it is a significant improvement over the spending bills considered in the House last year.

#### SPANKY'S RIVER STREET KICKS OFF 40TH YEAR IN BUSINESS

#### HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to join my friend, Ansley Williams, in celebrating the 40th year of business at Spanky's River Street in Savannah, Georgia.

Spanky's River Street, home of the original chicken finger, began 40 years ago with a dream hatched by brothers Dusty and Alben Yarbrough and Ansley Williams, all natives of Thomaston, Georgia. They opened the original Spanky's restaurant in December 1976 with the idea of selling half-pound burgers and pizza.

Culinary history was made when Alben insisted on having a chicken sandwich on the menu. The only problem was the bird was bigger than the bun. To get it to fit, the edges had to be trimmed off. Alben took the trimmings, tossed them in a special seasoned breading, and fried it up to a golden delicious treat. Right then and there, the original chicken finger was born.

Spanky's River Street kicked off its 40th year in business with a celebration on December 16th to acknowledge and honor employees and patrons, past and present. With a staff as friendly as the happy hour and a history wider than the Savannah River, Spanky's has been a favorite dining spot for locals and visitors alike.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to recognize Ansley and the Spanky's family for all their hard work and dedication to Savannah's restaurant community. Congratulations on your 40th year of business.

#### RECOGNIZING THE EL PASO COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE OFFICE

#### HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in recognition of the El Paso County Veterans Assistance Office for their efforts in supporting veterans and their dependents and survivors in my district of El Paso, Texas. The Veterans Assistance Office works with veterans and their families to overcome obstacles that may be preventing them from getting the benefits they need and have earned.

The El Paso County Veterans Assistance Office is certified through the Texas Veterans Commission and provides information to our Veterans regarding their eligibility for state and federal benefits. The office assists the veteran and their family through every step of the paperwork process—from researching eligibility requirements to verifying that the claims are filed correctly. The knowledgeable staff led by Mr. Michael Flores works diligently to stay informed on the latest legislation and newest policy in order to best advise veterans and their families.

The Veterans Assistance Office is involved with many local veteran service organizations and is a recognized voice in our area, regularly seen advocating for veterans and raising awareness for veteran issues at different meetings and events in El Paso.

The El Paso County Veterans Assistance Office is deserving of recognition for their continuous support of our veterans. The office takes the time to explain and walk veterans through the process from start to finish, ensuring that they are not forgotten. I am proud of the work that the El Paso County Veterans Assistance Office does to help veterans.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes from Tuesday, December 15, 2015 through Thursday, December 17, 2015, because I was sitting shiva with my family in accordance with Jewish law following the death of my mother Jean Deutch on Friday, December 11, 2015. Had I been present I would have voted as follows:

On Roll Call 694, I would have voted yea. (H. Res. 536)

On Roll Call 695, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 2820)

On Roll Call 696, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 4246)

On Roll Call 697, I would have voted yea. (S. 1090)

On Roll Call 698, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 2297)

On Roll Call 699, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 3750)

On Roll Call 700, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 4239)

On Roll Call 701, I would have voted no. (H. Res. 566, On ordering the previous question)

On Roll Call 702, I would have voted no. (H. Res. 566)

On Roll Call 703, I would have voted yea. (H.R. 2029, amendment 3b)

On Roll Call 704, I would have voted yea. (On approving the Journal)

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, on December 16, 2015, I missed two recorded votes due to a previously scheduled meeting. I would like to reflect how I would have voted if I were present:

On Roll Call Number 700, I would have voted YEA in support of H.R. 4239, the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act.

On Roll Call Number 699, I would have voted YEA in support of H.R. 3750, the First Responders Passport Act of 2015.

These two pieces of legislation will strengthen our national security and deservedly recognize first responders who aid a foreign country following a natural disaster.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALVIN BERNARD STEWART

#### HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the loss of my dear friend, Al Stewart. Al was a giant of a man with a heart of pure gold. He was the person everyone in his community came to when they needed a helping hand. He never turned anyone away in their hour of need. He was a friend to everyone and a true pillar of our community.

Al Stewart was deeply committed to the safety and security of his fellow citizens. He bravely served his country in our Army during the Korean Conflict. He also served in the Philadelphia Police Department for 25 years, including 5 years in the Gang Control Division.

His commitment to our citizens did not end when he left the Police Department. He moved to the Board of Revision of Taxes where he was dedicated to ensuring that our seniors and citizens of modest means were not unfairly taxed.

Mr. Speaker, Al Stewart honorably served the people of Northwest Philadelphia as a community leader and as their City Councilman. But, his greatest service was as a husband and a father. He deeply loved his late wife Ojetta and was devoted to his children Alinda, Shellyn, and Dwayne.

Al leaves a great legacy behind as he goes on to his reward. Those of us who knew him are better off for that privilege. So, I ask all of my colleagues in the House to join me in honoring him today.