

I was extremely disappointed that provisions to help our U.S. Citizen Puerto Rican brothers and sisters manage the fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico were not included in the bill. The residents of Puerto Rico are suffering, and we have a responsibility to provide them with the tools they need to rebuild their economy.

I was also disappointed that on the heels of a historic climate change agreement, the bill includes a giveaway to Big Oil by ending the 40-year prohibition on the exportation of crude oil. This prohibition was set in place to help our country achieve energy independence and to protect national security and economic interests. Lifting this ban will only hinder our goals and harm American refinery jobs, all for the sake of a handout to Big Oil.

However, without this omnibus bill, my home state of California and communities across the country would be faced with the uncertain funding level of a continuing resolution, or, in the worst case, the effects of a government shutdown.

We cannot risk another government shutdown or another year of flat funding for the critical programs our communities need. On balance, I believe this bill should move forward. For that reason, I ask for an aye vote.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, the cybersecurity measures in the legislation before us today results from a bill passed unanimously by the House Homeland Security Committee and the House Select Committee on Intelligence, who both worked closely with the Judiciary Committee to craft the liability provisions included in the House-passed bill, and in the bill before us today. I rise to discuss its liability provisions in particular.

It is increasingly clear that government at all levels must rely on the private sector to help counter more and varied threats to its citizens by those who would do them harm. Those threats can come in the form of terrorist mass shootings, suicide bombers, and cyber-attacks that steal people's personal identification, money, and credit. At the same time, abusive lawsuits have made the private sector less and less willing to take action to reduce public risks because of the fear of frivolous lawsuits.

To date, Congress has enacted two federal statutes, the SAFETY Act and the PREP Act, to provide private entities that are on the front lines in the war with terrorists with protection from debilitating litigation that would otherwise deter them from acting at all. The legislation before us today is a logical extension of those vital efforts.

Soon after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the federal government appealed directly to the private sector for help in combating terrorism. Shortly thereafter, a team of the nation's leading scientists called for a comprehensive rethinking of our anti-terrorism infrastructure, underscoring the need to encourage private activity so existing tech-

nologies could be quickly brought into use. According to their report, conducted under the auspices of the National Academies, "Research performed but not exploited, and technologies invented but not manufactured and deployed, do not help the nation protect itself."

As part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Congress enacted liability protections that the Department of Homeland Security could extend to providers of effective anti-terrorism technologies. The SAFETY Act has resulted in the deployment of tens of thousands of anti-terrorism technologies to protect innocent Americans that would not have been deployed absent the Act's lawsuit protections.

The SAFETY Act was initially opposed by the trial lawyers and their allies. But it soon came to enjoy broad bipartisan support. So much so that in January, 2007, just after the Democrats took control of the House, a bill directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to streamline the SAFETY Act and anti-terrorism technology procurement processes passed by a vote of 427 to zero. During the debate on that legislation, the Democratic Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, BENNIE THOMPSON, said during debate on the bill: "Today I rise to support a bill that reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that safe and effective antiterrorism technologies are being deployed . . . In order to generate revolutionary breakthroughs in antiterrorism technologies, the Department must actively promote awareness of SAFETY Act protections not only among private sector, but across government procurement agencies . . . We must enable the private sector to deliver the revolutionary, breakthrough technologies that will help win the Nation's fight against terrorism."

In 2005, Congress enacted the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act, the "PREP Act." Under the PREP Act, covered entities are protected from lawsuits when they engage in federally approved efforts to create vaccines and other means of stopping the spread of pandemics and other biological threats, including biological attacks by terrorists. Again, the PREP Act was initially opposed by the trial lawyers and their allies. But after it became law, President Obama, along with his predecessor, applied the PREP Act's protections many times, including to cover those making and administering influenza vaccines. Just last December, President Obama's Secretary of Health and Human Services applied the PREP Act's lawsuit protections to those manufacturing and distributing vaccines to help prevent the spread of the Ebola virus.

In a press release announcing the application of the liability protections to those companies, the Secretary of Health and Human Services stated, and I quote, "The PREP Act was designed to facilitate the development of medical countermeasures to respond to urgent public health needs, including the development of critical vaccines like those to prevent the spread of Ebola . . . My strong hope . . . is that other nations will also enact appropriate liability protection . . ." Indeed, one of the vaccines the President protected from excessive liability under the PREP Act was able to quickly advance through its testing phases such that, by this August, it was declared "highly effective."

Today, I am proud to continue the bipartisan tradition of protecting the private sector from lawsuits when it's necessary to help the federal government do its job in protecting our nation's citizens from attack.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT KEVIN GALE STAUFFER

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Sergeant Kevin Gale Stauffer of Tupelo, Mississippi who joined his Heavenly Father on December 23, 2013.

Sergeant Stauffer made the ultimate sacrifice when he gave his life while keeping the citizens of the city of Tupelo safe during a tragic encounter following a reported bank robbery. The lives of others were saved because of Sergeant Stauffer's actions.

Known to his family and friends as Gale, as a young man he earned the honor of being awarded the Eagle Scout badge. After graduating high school, he went on to attend Itawamba Community College where he was a member of the Indians football team. With a passion for learning, he continued his education at the University of Mississippi where he earned a degree in criminal justice.

A true patriot, Gale felt called to serve his country. He enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard, 1088th Engineer Battalion and bravely served his tour of duty in Iraq as a Sergeant in 2004 and 2005.

Prior to his tour of duty in Iraq, Sergeant Stauffer worked for the Lee County Sheriff's Department. Upon his return from deployment, he joined the ranks of the Tupelo Police Department. He was a true public servant and loved his job as a police officer. He was a thorough investigator who always showed sincere compassion for every victim.

Outside of work, Gale was known for his love of the outdoors, his Cajun cooking, and his passion for LSU football. He was also a member of First United Methodist Church in Tupelo.

Above all, those who knew Sergeant Stauffer knew him as an adoring and devoted husband to his wife Beth and a kind loving father to his two children, Dixie and Skip.

He is survived by his wife, Beth; daughter, Dixie Breckenridge Stauffer; and son, Kevin Gale (Skip) Stauffer, III of Tupelo. He is also survived by his father, Kevin Gale Stauffer, Sr. and stepmother, Kay Stauffer of Baton Rouge, LA; mother, Deborah Brangenberg and step-father, Carl J. Brangenberg of Tupelo; sister, Caroline Turney (Brandon) of Tupelo; two stepbrothers, Scott Cooper of Baton Rouge, LA and Chris Brangenberg of Breaux Bridge, LA; stepsister, Carla Brangenberg of Memphis, TN; grandmother, Dr. Dorothy Twiss Sinopoli of Gulf Breeze, FL; grandparents, Dr. Roy and Mrs. Lorene McAlilly of Tupelo.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with Sergeant Stauffer's family and friends.

SUPPORTING DEBT RELIEF FOR PUERTO RICO

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to stand with our fellow Americans, the 3.5 million American citizens of

Puerto Rico, in urging Republican leadership to make good on the promise that action will be taken by March 31st to allow the U.S. territory to restructure its debt. This agreement made last night is welcome news as we cannot continue to ignore the urgency of the mounting fiscal and economic crisis facing Puerto Rico.

On behalf of all Puerto Ricans, including the more than 12,000 who reside in my home state of Alabama, I remain disappointed that a deal to enable the territory to restructure its debt and keep its schools, hospitals, and roads open and functioning past January 1 was not included in the Omnibus. The sovereignty of the Puerto Rican people is our responsibility.

I represent parts of Jefferson County, Alabama, a political subdivision which became the biggest U.S. municipal bankruptcy in 2011. While we all can agree bankruptcy isn't a cure-all and it definitely has its limits, it is often necessary to begin the process of dealing with an unimaginable debt load. Puerto Rico should have the same power to avail themselves of the federal remedies and negotiate directly with their bond holders as every U.S. state has.

Puerto Rico is the third-largest issuer of municipal bonds in the U.S. and now has a debt totaling \$72 billion, amounting to \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child on the island. As over 50 percent of Puerto Rico's citizens live in poverty, default will potentially lead to a humanitarian crisis.

At no cost to us, we can allow the U.S. territory to restructure its debt and declare bankruptcy, ultimately keeping the basic functions of government open and avoiding real social and economic harm to the American citizens living on the island.

But we can't stop there. We all must remain committed to assisting Puerto Rico in a long-term solution to the economic and social challenges the island has been facing for far too long.

The island territory of Puerto Rico has already suffered a decade of economic stagnation, high unemployment, and cuts in every program from higher education to health care. The government of Puerto Rico has closed 160 schools in the past two years and is spending \$2,000 less per student than the average spent in the states. It has laid off 21 percent of its employees since 2008 with further cuts projected in 2016. The Puerto Rican people can ill-afford more cuts. We in Congress must do our part.

We should prevent further crisis by giving our U.S. territory of Puerto Rico the ability to restructure its debt and deal with the root causes of the crisis just as all U.S. states have the ability to do.

I want to commend the leadership of LUIS GUTIÉRREZ, NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, Leader PELOSI, JOSÉ SERRANO, and PEDRO PIERLUISI for their tireless commitment to the people of Puerto Rico and all Hispanic Americans. It is because of their efforts that Republican leadership has agreed to take action by March 31st. We all need to follow their lead in standing up for the American people who live, work, and raise their families in our territories.

Today I stand with the Puerto Rican people in urging this body to work together on a bipartisan, commonsense restructuring bill that provides economic hope to the people of Puerto Rico.

HONORING THE 2015 STARS OVER DULLES AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce for its ongoing dedication to local businesses and our community and to congratulate the 2015 “Stars Over Dulles” Award recipients.

This year, at the 20th Annual Stars Over Dulles Awards Luncheon, the Chamber will honor those extraordinary businesses, non-profit organizations and citizens who have dedicated their talents and activities to enhancing our economy and our community.

As the former Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and now as a Member of Congress representing this community, I have been proud to partner with the Chamber on promoting the region’s pro-business climate and celebrating the service that so many individuals and businesses provide to our community.

I am pleased to submit the following recipients of the 2015 Stars Over Dulles Awards:

Public Service Star: Presented to Delegate Thomas Rust (86th District) for more than 30 years of public service, including as Chairman of the House of Delegates Transportation Committee and as Mayor of Herndon.

Veterans Star: Presented to Col. Paul Patton, USAF (Retired) of CACI, whose life of service has extended far beyond his time in the Air Force and serves as an example for others to follow.

Community Stars: Presented to Doug and Annie Downer and Laura and George Price for their organization of the beverage shifts during the World Police and Fire Games, during which they found the personnel for 391 volunteer shifts.

Innovation Stars: Presented to Bruce Blechl, Jerome Williams, Bill Knight, and Barry Biggar for their presentation to Fairfax County of the idea to host the 2015 World Police and Fire Games.

STEM Star: Presented to The Childrens Science Center for their opening of a new laboratory in Fair Oaks this summer. The lab is a major addition to our region’s ability to encourage a new generation of STEM learners.

Housing Star: Presented posthumously to Bill Lauer, founder of Tetra Partners, for his tireless work to end homelessness in Fairfax County. Bill was a driver of Fairfax County’s efforts to preserve affordable housing and the Initiative to End Homelessness, built homes himself, and was about to become president of Cornerstones before his untimely death.

Deal of the Year: Presented to The Town of Herndon for its managing of the sale of the Ashwell property, which will allow the town to consolidate its plans to redevelop the downtown area.

Technology Star: Presented to Peter Jobse of the Center for Innovative Technology, who is retiring this year after leading the Center for almost 40 years.

Global Business Star: Presented to Trade Center Management Associates, home to the International Trade Center, for providing a dynamic forum for trade promotion in the heart of the nation’s capital.

New Business Star: Presented to Stone Springs Hospital Center, which opened a brand new facility earlier this year to provide needed care to thousands of individuals with the help of their dedicated staff and resources.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2015 Stars Over Dulles Award recipients and in thanking these businesses and individuals for their many contributions to our region’s economic success and quality of life. These contributions are among the many reasons why Fairfax County is one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, and raise a family. I commend them on their awards and wish them great success in all future endeavors.

REFLECTING ON THE NEED FOR THE WORLD’S RECOMMITMENT TO RECOVERING THE CHIBOK GIRLS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for one minute and to revise and extend my remarks.

Today is the last day that the House will be in session this year and it is imperative that we pause for a moment before we depart to our various homes to reflect on the fact that 612 days have passed since the Chibok girls were kidnapped from their dormitories in the middle of night.

To keep these girls on our minds, all of us here in Congress have worn red every Wednesday to signal the urgency of rescuing, recovering and reintegrating these young women back into the arms of their parents.

I have met with the Nigerian President and was part of a delegation to Nigeria to engage local leaders, activists, businesses and families of the kidnapped girls on strategies for recovering and reintegrating the Chibok girls and many others who have been kidnapped.

These girls are not throwaways and the world cannot and should not forget them.

We must continue to press on in our concerted efforts to assure these daughters of the world that we still care, that we are committed to bringing them back home and will work to reintegrate them back into our community with open arms.

As founder and Co-Chair of the Caucus on Nigeria and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children’s Caucus, the rescue, return and re-integration of the kidnapped Chibok girls continue to be my top priority.

I believe that with our commitment, just as the Aboke girls were recovered after being kidnapped in Northern Uganda by the Lord’s Resistance Army, the Chibok girls will be rescued, returned home and reintegrated back into the human family.

This is why I have introduced H. Res. 528, legislation that enjoyed bipartisan support of my colleagues including Representatives CHU of California, LEE of California, DOLD of Illinois, HAHN of California, KELLY of Illinois, FUDGE of Ohio, WATSON-COLEMAN of New Jersey, SEWELL of Alabama, BROWN of Florida, THOMPSON of Mississippi and my good friend Ms. WILSON of Florida.