

marrying the same sex is okay and a given right to people. This country is socially going down hill through the decisions made by the government and the people and this ruling was just another step towards this fall.

# INTRODUCTION OF THE EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGER REFORM ACT OF 2016

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act of 2016 is intended to ensure that state-appointed emergency financial managers for municipalities in fiscal distress do not violate Constitutional protections, ensure public health and safety, and are accountable stewards of taxpayer funds. The bill responds to problems presented when unaccountable emergency financial managers usurp local elected officials and unilaterally make decisions that jeopardize public health and safety.

Across our Nation, there are many cities in financial distress still struggling to recover from the Great Recession and other factors undermining their economic recovery. While most states work cooperatively with their cities to foster economic stability and growth, others such as my home state of Michigan, use draconian, autocratic laws that usurp local elected officials and replace them with unaccountable political appointees—typically known as emergency financial managers—who, through their vast powers, can jeopardize the health and safety of those who live and work in these struggling cities.

In Michigan, for example, the root cause of the hazardous condition of Flint's lead-contaminated drinking water and the Detroit Public School System's buildings is the unaccountable emergency financial managers appointed by our Governor, Rick Snyder. This law and its implementation threaten not only our citizens' health and safety, but our fundamental Constitutional values and principles.

In addition, extreme emergency financial manager laws frequently facilitate conflicts of interest and mismanagement and can be used to contravene important federal and state constitutional protections for collective bargaining agreements. They can authorize emergency financial managers to unilaterally reject collective bargaining agreements and other contractual obligations and thereby negate years of hard earned worker pension benefits. These are not just problems in Michigan, as it has been suggested that Atlantic City, which is also in financial distress, be taken over by an unaccountable emergency financial manager with broad powers similar to those available in Michigan.

The Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act responds to these serious concerns by authorizing the Attorney General to reallocate five percent of the law enforcement funds that would otherwise be allocated to a state under the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne-JAG), which provides funding to states for law enforcement purposes, if it is determined that the state appointed emergency financial manager violates any one of seven common sense safeguards:

Protection Against Discriminatory Impact on Voting—This provision requires the state that has appointed an emergency financial manager to submit a certification to the Attorney General (and every 18 months after such appointment if the tenure of the emergency financial manager continues beyond such period) that the appointment: (A) has neither the purpose nor the effect of denying, abridging, or diluting the right to vote on account of race or color; and (B) the community for which the emergency financial manager is sought to be appointed has had an opportunity to comment, on the impact of such appointment may have on voting rights.

Protection Against States Ignoring Adverse Impacts on Voting Rights—This provision requires the Attorney General to receive copies of all public comments submitted in response to the notice required above and to interpose an objection to the certification.

Protection Against Harm to Public Health and Safety—This provision requires the emergency financial manager before making decisions affecting public health or safety, including the disbursement of any emergency funds provided by any federal or state entity for the purpose of addressing lead or other contamination of drinking water in a public water system, to receive prior approval from the governor and local elected officials.

Protection Against Conflicts of Interest, Mismanagement, and Abuse of Discretion—This provision requires the emergency financial manager to have adequate oversight to ensure against conflicts of interest, mismanagement, and abuse of discretion.

Protection Against Unilateral Rejection of Other Contracts—This provision provides that the emergency financial manager may not reject, modify, or terminate an existing contract without mutual consent or unless such rejection, modification, or termination is approved by a federal bankruptcy court.

Protection Against Rejection of Collective Bargaining Agreements—This provision provides that the emergency financial manager may not reject, modify, or terminate a collective bargaining agreement without mutual consent of the parties.

Protection Against the Failure to Provide Public Notice and Opportunity to Comment—This provision ensures that the public—before an emergency financial manager is appointed—is provided notice and the opportunity to comment on whether the appointee has any conflicts of interest, whether he or she has the requisite experience and financial acumen, and whether the appointee is empowered to propose sources of financial assistance, such as loans, grants and revenue sharing. The public must also be given the name of a state official designated to receive complaints from the public about the appointee's conflicts of interest, mismanagement, or dereliction of duty.

The objective of the legislation is not to deny Byrne-JAG grant funds, but rather to incentivize the states to protect their citizens against these risks and abuses when emergency financial managers are appointed. However, if in the event the funds are withheld, they are directly reallocated to the local government for which an emergency financial manager is appointed.

We can and must stand together to make sure that the unaccountable emergency financial managers responsible for these man-

made disasters—and the legal system that empowered them—are not permitted to inflict further harm on our citizens.

## TRIBUTE TO PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY POLICE OFFICER JACAI COLSON

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my condolences and prayers to the family of Prince George's Police Officer Jacai Colson, who died in the line of duty last Sunday just before his 29th birthday. The senseless, callous, and unprovoked death of Officer Colson reminds us that our men in blue risk their lives every day for our safety. In his four years of service on the force, Officer Colson was dedicated to his community. His friends and family describe him as a natural leader with an infectious smile who followed in his grandfather's footsteps to become a police officer. Officer Colson served as an undercover narcotics officer and was placed frequently in high risk situations—risks that he took because he knew he was making a difference. Our community lost a true hero who every day put his life at risk for the rest of us. His loss is a tragedy for his family, his fellow officers, and our State. I offer my deep condolences to all who knew Officer Colson in this time of grief.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for votes taken on the House floor on March 3, 2016, and March 14, 2016, as I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 106, 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 107, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 108, 'YES' on Roll Call Vote Number 109, 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 110, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 111, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 112, and 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 113.

## TRIBUTE TO EAGLE SCOUT ANDREW JONES

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Andrew Jones of Boy Scout Troop 729 in Treynor, Iowa for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained for more than a century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. For his project, Andrew planned and implemented the installation of a new fence and other grounds maintenance at the Fairview Pioneer Memorial Chapel. He is also an active member of his community and participates in local food drives, flag retirement ceremonies, and highway litter removal projects. The work ethic Andrew has shown in his Eagle Project and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank speaks volumes of his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Andrew and his family in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating him on reaching the rank of Eagle Scout and in wishing him nothing but continued success in his future education and career.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I missed ten votes on March 15. If I were present, I would have voted on the following:

Rollcall No. 114: On Ordering the Previous Question, "yea."

Rollcall No. 115: On Passage of H. Res. 640, "yea."

Rollcall No. 116: On Passage of H.R. 2081, "yea."

Rollcall No. 117: On Passage of H.R. 3447, "yea."

Rollcall No. 118: On Passage of Pallone Amendment No. 1 to H.R. 3797, "nay."

Rollcall No. 119: On Passage of Pallone Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 3797, "nay."

Rollcall No. 120: On Passage of Bera Amendment to H.R. 3797, "nay."

Rollcall No. 121: On Passage of Veasey Amendment to H.R. 3797, "nay."

Rollcall No. 122: On the Motion to Recommend with Instructions, "nay."

Rollcall No. 123: On Passage of H.R. 3797, "yea."

#### HONORING JIM GREER

#### HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Jim Greer, Veteran Service Officer of Stanislaus County Veterans Services Office, on his retirement and to thank him for his dedicated service to our Nations heroes.

After serving 30 years, Jim retired as a Command Master Chief Petty Officer in the Navy. Following his service, he applied for a

Veterans Services Representative position in Stanislaus County, and was hired in April of 1993. At first, the Veterans Services Office was serving about 50 to 60 veterans a month. Within six months of Jim's service, the office was seeing nearly 500 veterans a month.

As a Veterans Service Officer, Jim gladly accepted tremendous responsibilities including: visiting the local Veterans Service Organizations, training work study students to become Veterans Representatives, and personally assisting as many veterans as he could.

Jim has played a vital role in acquiring a Veterans Center and a VA Community Base Outpatient Clinic in Modesto, California, improving assistance to veterans in the area. As a member of the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers, Jim has been asked to speak at various conferences and events to raise awareness on administrative issues in order to benefit local veterans.

An active member of my Veterans Advisory Committee, Jim plays an essential role to reach out to the Veterans population with the most current information regarding bills, issues, and needs.

Jim has changed the lives of thousands of veterans through his dedication and commitment over the last 23 years. He lives by the motto, "if Veterans don't help each other, no one else will" and he has truly lived up to that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing my friend for his unwavering leadership, many accomplishments, and contributions on behalf of the veteran community and his service to the United States of America.

#### CONGRATULATING I.C. NORCOM HIGH SCHOOL'S BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

#### HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2016*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a talented group of young athletes who have distinguished themselves as giants on the basketball court, making their school, their community, and the city of Portsmouth, Virginia very proud. The I.C. Norcom High School boys basketball team had another remarkable season and I am honored to recognize their accomplishments.

On March 12, 2016, the I.C. Norcom Greyhounds beat the Hopewell Blue Devils 67 to 65, to win the Group 3A state basketball championship. It was truly a remarkable game. In overtime, I.C. Norcom tied the game and with only seconds left on the clock, the Greyhounds' Travis Fields stole the ball from the Blue Devils, successfully hit a jump shot, clinching another championship for I.C. Norcom.

The Greyhounds have had a consistent run of excellence in recent years. This year's victory is I.C. Norcom's third consecutive state title and their fifth state title in the last seven seasons. It goes without saying, but I.C. Norcom has certainly become a force to be reckoned with in Virginia high school sports.

I.C. Norcom High School was founded in 1913 as the High Street School, the first public high school for black students in Portsmouth. It was renamed in 1953 in honor of its first su-

pervising principal, Israel Charles Norcom, a pioneering educator, civic leader and businessman. Now, more than 100 years and three locations later, I.C. Norcom High School is still an innovating and inspiring place for Portsmouth students.

In addition to excelling on the basketball court, the Greyhounds are also doing great things in the classroom. I.C. Norcom houses a Center of Excellence in Math and Science, which provides students with additional classes in science, math, and technology. Seniors completing the Center's curriculum this year will receive Center of Excellence Diplomas which require five science course credits, one more than necessary under the advanced diploma. In addition, I.C. Norcom students have been participating in the First College program—attending Tidewater Community College this semester and taking up to 14 college credits before they graduate. I.C. Norcom is doing a great job cultivating excellence both on and off the athletic field.

I would like to extend my enthusiastic congratulations to each of the Greyhounds' players, their families, Principal Shameka Pollard, Coach Leon Goolsby and his entire coaching staff, on the occasion of another amazing state championship victory. On behalf of the citizens of Virginia's Third Congressional District, I commend the Greyhounds for this historic win and wish the program many more years of continued success.

#### SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2016 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

#### MEETINGS SCHEDULED APRIL 5

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the effects of consumer finance regulations.

SD-538

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine recent Iranian actions and implementation of the nuclear deal.

SD-419