

the Military Coalition, which represents nearly 6 million uniformed service members, veterans and their families, has formally petitioned Congress to ban the clauses.

2. Unconstitutional. Question: If binding arbitration clauses are so bad, why are they so common? Because a series of Supreme Court rulings (the most recent one in May) have effectively overturned the traditional common-law understanding of arbitration. In past centuries, arbitration was understood as a voluntary option that is fair only when both parties are of roughly equal bargaining power or else have agreed to it freely after a dispute has arisen.

In lieu of that reasonable understanding, the Court has substituted a doctrinaire “right of contract” that allows a powerful party to effectively force a weaker party to waive his or her constitutional right to sue, before a dispute has arisen and often without informed consent. This transformation defies common sense and severely weakens Americans’ Seventh Amendment right to a jury trial.

Today, arbitration has devolved into a private star-chamber that’s stacked in favor of the accused corporation—which, unsurprisingly, usually wins.

Is the CFPB itself unconstitutional? Yes, in my opinion. But so is forced arbitration. And Congress has a duty to protect our right to a jury trial.

Instead of lashing out at the agency by overturning this regulation, Congress should do the right thing and amend the Federal Arbitration Act to make binding arbitration agreements truly voluntary for all Americans, as the Constitution requires. Having done so, it could then, at its leisure, reform (or, as I would prefer, abolish) the controversial agency.

3. A Political Loser. Those who vote to overturn the CFPB regulation will be placing themselves on the side of accused sexual harassers, corporate wrongdoers and unscrupulous payday lenders who exploit our troops.

If Republicans are politically sensible—or just have an ounce of self-respect—they’ll take the high road and let this reasonable rule stand.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes:

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3219, the Make America Secure Appropriations Act. I am deeply disappointed that this bill includes an indefensible \$1.6 billion for the President’s so-called border wall. It also violates the bipartisan Budget Control Act (BCA) spending caps, strips a long-overdue provision to sunset the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), and bars any efforts to close Guantanamo Bay.

H.R. 3219 includes Fiscal Year 2018 funding for the Legislative Branch, the Veterans’ Affairs Department, the Department of Defense, and Energy and Water programs at the Department of Energy and Department of the

Interior. Although I have many concerns with the bill, I am pleased that it increased funding for the Army Corps of Engineers, including funding for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which will help dredge and maintain Oregon ports. I am also grateful that a bipartisan amendment that I championed with Rep. SCOTT PERRY to increase funding for the Water Technologies Office at the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) was adopted. This will allow Oregon State University to continue their cutting-edge research and development of sustainable hydropower, pumped storage, and marine energy. I am deeply concerned, however, that the bill reduces overall EERE funding and eliminates the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) program. I also do not support the inclusion of harmful policy riders that prevent implementation of National Oceans Policy protections and authorize the withdrawal of the Waters of the United States rule.

I am supportive of provisions in the bill that uphold our commitment to our nation’s veterans. The bill provides robust funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research, and prioritizes funding to hire needed doctors, nurses, and medical staff at VA medical centers. Additionally, the bill addresses the ongoing disability claims backlog by requiring regional offices to report on processing performance and remediation efforts.

Unfortunately, the bill also included \$1.6 billion to fund parts of President Trump’s border wall, a waste of money that will not secure the border and will have long lasting humanitarian, diplomatic, and environmental consequences. The bill also appropriates Defense spending at \$621 billion, which is \$72 billion above the BCA caps. Without a fix to the caps, this funding level would trigger a mandatory 13.2 percent cut in all defense accounts. This reckless cut is irresponsible. Finally, the bill was stripped of a provision to sunset the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which has been used for more than 15 years to justify ongoing military actions overseas. It is long past time for Congress to reassert our authority and responsibility to debate matters of military force. The Majority’s decision to remove this provision—which passed out of the Appropriations Committee with broad bipartisan support—shows a disregard for our duties and the legislative process. Additionally the bill bars any funds from being used to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, or to transfer detainees. For those reasons, I am strongly opposed to H.R. 3219 and urge my colleagues to vote no.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes:

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chair, I will vote against H.R. 3219, the Make America Secure Appropriations Act.

tions Act, because it is not a responsible way to spend taxpayer money. The bill blows through the spending limits in the Budget Control Act. Responsible governing means making hard choices and spending taxpayer money wisely. This bill did not serve either of those goals.

I am particularly concerned about the \$1.57 billion included in this bill to pay for the border wall between the United States and Mexico. For that much money, we could pay for over 94,000 students to get their four-year degrees at a UW-System school. Instead, we are spending that money on a project that will only balloon in price and cost even more to maintain. We need to make smart decisions about how to spend our limited resources. We should be investing in ourselves.

There are plenty of opportunities to pay for important defense priorities by eliminating waste in the Defense Department. In January of 2015, the non-partisan Defense Business Board released a report outlining opportunities for reform that would save \$125 billion in defense spending. That report is now collecting dust. That is money we could be spending on important defense priorities like troop readiness, training, and equipment. This spending bill is another missed opportunity at reform.

Despite voting against the bill, I was happy to see \$55 million provided to the VA to implement the Jason Simcakoski PROMISE Act. The funding will assist in increasing programs to help medical professionals and patients understand the risks associated with pain medication and examine alternative treatments. This will help address the opioid epidemic and give veterans and their families the tools they need and the accountability they deserve.

I understand how important it is to provide ample support for our military, which is why I recently voted in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act. Supporting the brave men and women who defend this nation is of paramount importance. We should not be inserting partisan riders into bills that should be bipartisan. I will continue to work with my colleagues to support our military and pursue fiscally responsible policies that invest in Americans.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2017

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I will vote against H.R. 3219, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2018, also ironically named the, “Make America Secure Appropriations Act” (Roll no. 435). I commend House appropriators for their work on this bill and realize that putting it together was no easy task. However, due to several poison pill provisions and deep budgetary issues, I could not support it.

Most concerning, the bill contains \$1.6 billion in funding to begin construction of a wall

along the U.S.-Mexico border. A border wall serves only to instill fear and puts United States taxpayers on the hook for something that is unrealistic, costly, and unnecessary. It's immoral and goes against our values as Americans.

There are also severe budgetary concerns. The bill would increase defense spending more than \$72 billion above limits set in the Budget Control Act. House Republicans have refused to work with Democrats on a new budget agreement, and without a budget resolution, the funding levels in this legislation would be subject to a sequester. H.R. 3219 is an affront to smart spending and a testament to misguided governing.

The legislation increases funding levels for several redundant weapons programs, including certain dangerous nuclear weapons programs. The prioritizing of weapons systems over our troops and veterans is wrong and will result in the hollowing out of the Army, Navy, and Air Force conventional forces. We need to set clear spending priorities.

In addition, the bill contains a number of provisions that ignore basic environmental policy requirements and important investments in renewable energy. It includes a rider that would prevent the federal government from protecting clean water and even exempts discharged dredged or fill material from clean water act requirements. The bill would also eliminate the Department of Energy's advanced energy research program and the energy loan guarantee program and would slash energy efficiency & renewable energy investments by nearly \$1 billion. The so-called Making America Secure Act even prevents agencies from collaborating on federal ocean policies.

There was a bright spot. The House passed an amendment to defund painful experiments on dogs conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is critical that Congress work to strengthen animal protections, which is why I've laid out an ambitious agenda to help animals and crack down on abuse.

I hope we can work together going forward to pass a budget resolution that prioritizes appropriately.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROL SHEA-PORTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2017

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Chair, I represent the First District of New Hampshire, which includes Pease Air Guard Base, formerly Pease Air Force Base. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I'm aware that our military's historic use of perfluorinated chemicals or PFCs has not only polluted the groundwater of Pease and the surrounding area, but also of bases and their environs nationwide. That's why I'm offering this amendment to authorize the Department of Defense

to fund a nationwide health impact study—which the House-passed NDAA has just authorized—to be conducted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry beginning in FY2018. Our service members, veterans, and other affected constituents deserve answers about how they and their children have been harmed by these chemicals, which are classified as emerging contaminants.

This contamination began in the 1970s, when more than 600 U.S. military fire-training sites used a firefighting foam that contained PFCs called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). Testing conducted by the Department of Defense at many of these sites has found PFC groundwater levels that exceed EPA guidelines many times over. At Pease, it is 12.5 times higher than the health advisory. The Department of Defense has so far spent \$200 million assessing and remediating the water at many of these sites. The House report accompanying the NDAA has extensive language identifying this problem and directing the Defense Department to report to the Committee on the process and timeline for identifying and resourcing long-term remediation on military bases or in the surrounding communities.

Because of widespread PFC use at sites across the United States, contaminated drinking water now poses a nationwide public health threat. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), PFOA is especially problematic “because it can stay in the environment and in the human body for long periods.” Many peer-reviewed studies indicate health dangers of PFCs, including links to testicular, kidney, and thyroid cancer, liver damage, impaired immune system function, decreased fertility, and harm to a developing fetus or child. But the ACS says “more research is needed to clarify these findings,” because a comprehensive, long-term study of the health impacts of PFOA and PFOS has not yet been conducted.

That is why I see a clear and pressing need for this study. Our service men and women, veterans, and others who have been exposed to PFCs deserve answers on both the short- and long-term health impacts of these contaminants. Such a study's findings could enable them to take proactive measures, such as more frequent cancer screenings, to protect their own and their children's health.

Knowing that groundwater contamination exists and understanding the clear danger of long-term health risks, we can begin to remedy past mistakes by supporting the launch of this much-needed study on behalf of our troops, our veterans, their families, and affected civilians. This is a debt we owe our troops and military families, defense civilian workers, and others who served on or lived near these bases.

Please support our amendment to give our military members and veterans, their families and children, in and around bases across our country, the answers they deserve.

RECOGNIZING LAMP HIGH SCHOOL
IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the history and continued

legacy of LAMP High School in Montgomery, Alabama. This Magnet school remains a significant testament to the success of public education in America, especially in the historic city of Montgomery.

LAMP, originally an acronym for Lanier Academic Motivational Program, had its origin in 1984 as a magnet program in Lanier High School. As the Montgomery Board of Education saw that white flight away from integrated schools continued to increase, public education leaders affirmed that retaining racial balance in schools would allow for quality education for all students.

The first director of the program, Mary George Jester, brilliantly led this school to continually be the number one ranked public school in Alabama, a top 50 public school nationally, and the number one ranked magnet school in the nation in 2013, according to Newsweek and US News and World Report. What started as an idea by the Board of Education to combat white flight turned into a program with the philosophy that any student, regardless of background or race, could get the highest quality education in Alabama. Mary George Jester relentlessly took that attitude into a community that was all too familiar with innovative ideas, a fervor for change, and the desire for equal opportunity. Montgomery remains the backdrop of LAMP High School today as it boasts its racial, religious, and cultural diversity.

However, as the 2017 to 2018 school year approaches, LAMP will move locations for the third time in four years. After LAMP formed in an already existing high school in 1984, it finally received its own building in 1999. That facility, built in 1923, housed the first junior and senior high schools for African-American students, and was named after Henry Allen Loveless, a founding member of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Subsequently, LAMP changed its acronym to what it is today: Loveless Academic Magnet Program—reflecting the name of that building. As students and faculty grew accustomed to their new surroundings and strived to get national recognition, the building they worked in slowly deteriorated. Finally, after 13 years, that building was deemed severely unsafe for a school, and the school was promptly moved in November of 2014 to a temporary, unused elementary school building a couple miles away downtown.

Nevertheless, LAMP persisted, with students, faculty, and administrators scrambling to get situated; this was not the first nor the last time LAMP would have to adapt to a new environment. The timeless philosophy Mary George Jester instilled in the program that “excellence in education does not limit itself in the classroom; rather, it encompasses the student's entire world.” After being present for LAMP's second move, Ms. Jester retired after returning that year to be the principal. Ms. Jester's philosophy remained as LAMP was informed that it would be moving again to a renovated portion of the closed down and vacant Montgomery Mall building. The brand new facility will reopen for students and faculty in August of 2017, which will complete its fourth and final move.

It took the push of education leaders in 1984 for LAMP's success to transcend buildings thirty-three years later. Through community support early on, LAMP stands as a testament that public education creates developed