

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2810, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 14, 2017*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2810, the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. This bill authorizes \$700 billion in defense spending for our already out-of-control Pentagon budget. It would also increase funding by \$66 billion for wars that Congress has never debated or voted on. And once again, my Republican colleagues have used an off-the-books spending gimmicks to further expand the already-bloated Pentagon budget.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough.

Instead of writing blank checks to the Pentagon, Congress needs to live up to its constitutional obligation to debate matters of war and peace. We need to rip up the 2001 blank check for endless war. We need to stop funding wars without end.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, we need to do our job.

And this Defense Authorization Act does just the opposite. It allows Congress to kick the can down the road again, while funding wars with no debate on the costs and consequences to our troops or to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to say that I am pleased by the passage of my amendment, which I co-authored with my good friend Congressman BURGESS, to report on the audit-readiness of the Pentagon. This is a good first step, but much work remains to bring some accountability to Pentagon spending.

So I call on Speaker RYAN to act to actually audit bloated Pentagon spending and to bring forth an authorization so Congress can vote up or down on these wars.

I urge my colleagues to vote 'NO' on this bill and reject this wasteful spending.

### HONORING FATHER SOLANUS CASEY

**HON. JIM BANKS**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 17, 2017*

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Father Solanus Casey and to celebrate his upcoming beatification on Saturday, November 18th. Father Casey was born

in Oak Grove, Wisconsin, the son of Irish immigrants. Though he faced challenges in the early part of his life, Father Casey's love for God guided him to the priesthood. Thus, he joined the Capuchin Order and was ordained a simplex priest. On July 31, 1904, he celebrated his first Mass.

Father Solanus' journey took him to all parts on the country. He was assigned to monasteries in New York, Detroit, and most importantly Huntington, Indiana, where he served the Capuchin novitiate of Saint Felix. He was known for his kind demeanor, his "attitude of gratitude," and his devotion to the Church and God. He served the people of Huntington with distinction from 1946 to 1956. Shortly after, Father Solanus passed away on July 31, 1957.

After years of research and advocacy by the Father Solanus Guild, Father Solanus will be recognized as another step farther along the path to Sainthood this weekend. I am particularly pleased that the Catholic Church is recognizing a man who touched so many lives in Northeast Indiana. Father Solanus still has a strong following to this day, and I would like to congratulate the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for all of its efforts throughout the years to celebrate the life and memory of this generous man. I am excited to celebrate this momentous occasion with all of my constituents whose lives have been touched by Father Solanus and his ministry. Father Solanus Casey truly lived a noble, Christian life.

### HONORING THE FIRST RESPONDERS TO THE GLOVERSVILLE FIRE

**HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 17, 2017*

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the brave actions of the first responders to a fire in Gloversville, New York.

Due to the quick and decisive response of Gloversville police officers and firefighters, tragedy was averted in a burning house on Grand Street in the early morning of October 20, 2017. Upon discovery of the fire, Officer Melinda Palmer, Sergeant Robert Brown, Officer William Christman, Fire Department Battalion Chief Brandt Minkler, and Officer Ronald Reu were able to ensure the safety of the occupants, two of whom escaped without injury while two were hospitalized and are expected to fully recover. If not for the brave actions of these first responders, the outcomes for these individuals could have been drastically different.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to thank these firefighters and police officers for their bravery and decisive action, and honor the sacrifices that they have made for the community.

### RECOGNIZING NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

**HON. BOBBY L. RUSH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 17, 2017*

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, November 18th is National Adoption Day, intended to raise awareness of adoption. Since the beginning of National Adoption Day, over 65,000 children have been placed in a home. On any given day 428,000 children are in foster care in the United States. Currently, in Illinois, there are 2,806 foster children waiting to be adopted.

Mr. Speaker, to recognize this important day, I am participating in a wonderful project that highlights the importance of finding adoptive families for foster children waiting a permanent home. For the month of November, I will be honoring the Olsson family from Evergreen Park, Illinois, which is in my district. Scott and Heather Olsson adopted a 12-year-old boy named Nathan. On his 11th birthday, Nathan received the best gift when the Olsson's decided to open their heart and their home as foster parents. Nathan remembers the laughter and warmth of the first night he spent with his adoptive family. They were all having a great time as his father Scott, told "corny Dad jokes." Then his parents set a birthday cake on the table that read "Welcome Home." Nathan remembers that moment as he thought, "Home! I feel home for real."

Since then the Olsson family has created wonderful memories, and I know they have many more to create. Many more birthdays, holidays, and special occasions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Heather and Scott Olsson for breaking the cycle for a young boy. Because of you, he no longer goes from foster home to foster home and instead, has a stable home. Because of you, there is one less child in the system.

At the age of 12, Nathan understands the simplicity and efficiency of adopting an infant, but he urges those considering adoption to consider an older child who may have made poor choices because of instability. And Mr. Speaker, in the words of Heather Olsson, it's always scary to add a new family member, whether adopted or biological, but don't allow that fear to hold you back. Adoption is a rewarding experience.

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