

the development and acquisition of defensive military articles, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 602, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 603, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 604, a motion to appeal the ruling of the Chair, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 605, a bill to require the United States to oppose the making of concessional loans by international financial institutions to any entity in Peoples Republic of China, I would have voted "aye."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1997

On rollcall No. 606, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 607, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1998 for intelligence and intelligence related activities of the U.S. Government, the community management account, and the Central Intelligence Agency retirement and disability system, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 608, a motion that the Committee rise, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 609, a motion that the Committee rise, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 610, an amendment to strike provisions in the bill that identify specific priorities for charter school grant funding to states that meet certain requirements, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 611, a bill to amend titles VI and X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve and expand charter schools, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, Americans want charter schools. Why? Because charter schools work. They work because they allow parents, teachers and communities demand something new from students—academic excellence and discipline—without interference from Federal and State education bureaucracies.

Charter schools are gaining popularity across the Nation. Today, 30 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have passed legislation allowing charter schools to open. This fall, nearly 700 schools are in operation, serving more than 170,000 students. Many more are waiting for State approval.

The charter schools movement is simple. First, under the charter school arrangement, parents and teachers are freed from the bureaucratic restrictions of traditional schools. Ideally, this means that the charter school is not bound to the State's codes for educational curriculum, personnel, scheduling, or financial administration. In other words, parents and teachers—not bureaucrats in the State capitol or Washington—are free to decide how to best to run their schools. In return, these new school entrepreneurs and held accountable for results, namely high student achievement.

Unfortunately, there are significant barriers between these innovative schools and success. The most daunting of these barriers require access to start-up capital flexible State laws that will encourage the establishment of charter schools. I believe that H.R. 2616, the Charter Schools Amendments Act of 1997, will help new charter schools overcome these barriers.

Specifically, this legislation will help improve the process of creating new charter schools in more States. For the first time, States will be given incentives to adopt stronger charter school laws. Under H.R. 2616, States that

give local school administrators a high degree of fiscal autonomy will be eligible to receive increased funding for their charter school programs. Additionally, these States must also agree to increase the number of charter schools allowed to open each year and provide for academic accountability. H.R. 2616, also ensures that charter school grant money actually gets to the classroom. Under the bill, at least 95 percent of Federal charter school funds go to the State and local level.

Mr. Speaker, the charter schools movement has grown out of the need and demand for parental and teacher control of public schools. With their wide acceptance from both educators and parents, charter schools can no longer be considered an experiment in education reform. They are the future of education reform. For this reason, I strongly support H.R. 2616.

On rollcall No. 612, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 613, a bill to ensure that commercial activities of the People's Liberation Army of China or any Communist Chinese military company in the United States are monitored and are subject to the authorities under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 614, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, I would have voted "nay."

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition H.R. 2264. While this legislation does include critical Hyde amendment language that will prevent Federal funding of abortions through State managed-care health plans I am concerned about several provisions of the bill. I am also pleased that this bill did not include funding for the President's misguided national testing program, but did include \$20 million for charter schools. However, H.R. 2264 does include a \$5 million increase in title X funding a \$273 million increase from the President's budget request and \$5.7 billion more than the fiscal year 1997 bill, and finally an unacceptable compromise on needle exchange programs.

The original House version of H.R. 2264 contained a critical provision that would have banned Federal funding of needle exchange programs for drug abusers. In my opinion, Federal funds should not be used to encourage or support illegal drug abuse. Accordingly, I stand in opposition to the conference report.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1997

On rollcall No. 617, a bill disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding military construction appropriations, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 618, a bill to reform, extend, and repeal certain agricultural research, extension, and education programs, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 619, a bill to allow the Medal of Honor to be awarded to Robert R. Ingram of Jacksonville, FL, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 620, a bill to increase the child care credit for lower-income working parents, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 621, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 122, the Tactile Currency for the Blind and Visually Impaired Act. I am an original co-

sponsor of this legislation, which encourages the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to make cost-effective design changes to this Nation's currency so that it will be better identifiable by the blind and visually impaired.

I strongly believe that it is important that the visually impaired in this country are given the opportunity to have a better chance at living independently by making their money more accessible to them.

Mr. Speaker, tactile marks will make an important difference in the lives of the visually impaired, including those individuals involved in programs offered by exceptional organizations like the Alabama Institute for the Blind and Deaf in Talladega, AL, and its associated programs within the Alabama School for the Blind, The Helen Keller School of Alabama, the E.H. Gentry Technical Facility, and the Alabama Industries for the Blind.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the visually impaired because it is vitally important that every individual in this country is given an equal chance to live his or her life at the best of his or her capacity.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1997

On rollcall No. 622, a motion to table, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO GEMILIA HALL HERRING AND RUTH HALL WILKERSON

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, November 9, 1997

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, the African-American Network of Kern County hosted its seventh annual Community Awards Night on November 8, 1997, and selected several outstanding Kern County citizens in recognition of their lifelong efforts to improve the way of life that thousands of people, young and old, black and white, enjoy.

Gemilia Hall Herring and Ruth Hall Wilkerson are recipients of the African-American Network of Kern County's 1997 Historical Award. This award is given in recognition of the efforts of those who preserve and promote understanding of the history of the African-American pioneers of Bakersfield.

These two women, grandchildren of Mary and Willis Monroe Hall who were Kern County pioneers in 1884, have provided outstanding service to their community as founding members of the Allenworth Historical Park and Museum in Kern County. Named after Colonel Allenworth, who in the 1860's became the highest ranking black man in the U.S. Army, the park has for the past 22 years presented the historical significance of the African-Americans who came as pioneers to Kern County and those that followed in their footsteps.

Over the years, Gemilia Hall Herring and Ruth Hall Wilkerson have raised and loved families, but their love and respect for their heritage has been a bonus for all of us in Kern County. We thank them for giving of their talent and time to ensure that none of us forget the legacy that came before.

The women I honor here are leaders at home, but often through their quiet bearing, are not recognized. We salute them.