

LINDA AND GEORGE PERNO
NAMED KIWANIAN OF THE YEAR

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2002

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Linda and George Perno who are being honored as Kiwanians of the Year by the Kiwanis Club of Astoria/Long Island City. Their contributions to the community have touched many lives. It is a pleasure to pay tribute to both of these illustrious community leaders.

Linda and George Perno started their business, Lincole Lithograph, in 1975. True partners in business and in life, they are both deeply involved in community activities. Born and raised in Astoria, Queens, Ms. Perno's passion for community service started when she was an office volunteer at her son's kindergarten. Ms. Perno is a current Board Member and Past President of the Astoria Civic Association. She also sits on its Scholarship Committee, and Chairs the Judge Charles J. Vallone Scholarship Dinner Dance which draws over four hundred people annually.

Ms. Perno was recently voted President Elect of Astoria Long Island City Kiwanis. She has been a board member of Community Board 1 for the past ten years, and is currently the Chairperson of Education. She was also appointed to the Board of Directors of SHAREing & CAREing, a support group for breast cancer survivors in western Queens, and is the Chairperson of Fundraising. Ms. Perno's strength in education and youth made her a partner in SHAREing & CAREing's educational and youth outreach program. Ms. Perno serves as President of the Broadway-Astoria Merchants & Professionals Association.

Mr. Perno also joined the fight against breast cancer and provided his input in designing all of SHAREing & CAREing's printed matter.

Mr. Perno is a member of the Board of Directors of Astoria Civic Association and is currently a Vice President. He is Sergeant-at-Arms for the Astoria/Long Island City Kiwanis and is a thirty-five year member and a past Deputy Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Spellman & Colon Councils.

Mr. and Mrs. Perno are the proud parents of two and the grandparents of three. In 2001, they sponsored their grandson's baseball team for Elmjack Little League.

In recognition of these outstanding achievements, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Linda and George Perno as Kiwanians of the Year. The Pernos' dedication to our community serves as a model of commitment to us all.

**BOB STUMP NATIONAL DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FIS-
CAL YEAR 2003**

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 4546) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2003 for military activities of the Department of Defense, and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes:

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, as a member of House Armed Services Committee, I fully support H.R. 4546, the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed by Committee on a bipartisan vote of 57-1. This bill readies our military for threats posed to our national security, now and in the future. I would like to mention four provisions that are particularly important to the people of Connecticut.

First, from my work to provide clinics for veterans in Waterbury and Danbury, I understand the urgency in providing concurrent receipt for disabled veterans. This bill contains a provision to authorize military retirees who are 60 percent or greater disabled to receive their full retirement pay and disability compensation benefit by fiscal year 2007. Through a transition program, military retirees will receive increasing amounts of monthly compensation. Transition payment levels will increase annually until fiscal year 2007, when all retirees with a disability rating of 60 percent or greater will receive their full retired and VA disability pay. The concurrent receipt provision in this legislation could not come soon enough for the veterans of Connecticut.

Second, Connecticut does not currently have a Civil Support Team. Section 1026 of the Authorization contains language I offered in Committee, which is consistent with my legislation (H.R. 3154), to deploy National Guard Civil Support Teams (CST) in each state and territory. CSTs are federally funded assets under state control. To date, Congress authorized only 32 Civil Support Teams. According to a September 2001 GAO report entitled Combating Terrorism, "The Department of Defense plans—and officials suggested—that there eventually should be a team in each state, territory, and the District of Columbia." The war on terrorism makes this a matter of utmost priority. The Civil Support Teams are strategic assets, stationed at the operational level, as an immediate response capability to assist in the event of a weapons of mass destruction emergency. Since September 11, 2001, Civil Support Teams have responded to more than 200 requests for support from civil authorities for actual or potential weapons of mass destruction incidents. Civil Support Teams have also supported national events including the World Series, Super Bowl and the 2002 Winter Olympics. Section 1026 expresses the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Defense should establish 23 additional teams, so as to ensure there is one in each state and territory of the United States. Having one of these critical teams in Connecticut will provide a high degree of preparedness and improve the ability of first responders to act in times of crisis.

Third, the bill contains \$56.5 billion in crucial funding for military research and development, \$649 million more than the President's request. Outstanding research companies in the 5th District carry out a number of these important programs. Just one example is the new U.S. Army equipment being developed to take advantage of a wide range of battery technology advancements. The bill contains \$2 million for rechargeable bipolar wafer-cell

Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) replacement batteries for the SINGCARS radio system, as well as for the service's fleet of trucks and armored vehicles. This cutting edge battery technology as well as other advanced technology is being developed in Danbury, CT.

Fourth, I am proud to stand in support of this bill as it has \$10 billion to improve military construction and housing. This funding is urgently needed to address the conditions under which we force our fighting men and women to reside. If we want to improve readiness we must improve the living conditions of the men and women of the armed services. I have received many letters from constituents over the state of military quarters. Let me quote just one example from Lieutenant Sapiro, a Connecticut Police Officer who has been called up for active duty as part of Operation Noble Eagle . . .

"We are now in our third month of living in quarters that were slated for demolition. The condition of our quarters is relative and varies unit to unit. There may or may not be a mold spore problem in some of our quarters. We cannot get a definitive answer and members of our families at home are concerned for our welfare. In my section alone, I have had sergeants report back from sick call with bronchial pneumonia, bronchitis and chronic sinus and respiratory distress which developed and persists since their arrival here at Fort Leonard Wood. . . . Several of the sergeants I write about are New York City Police Officers who have lost friends at the World Trade Center."

The problem of cramped and unsanitary living conditions cannot be ignored. We ask so much of our troops, like this Lieutenant from Shelton, CT. That is why I support this bill, which increases funding for military construction, including troop housing, by \$500 million above the President's budget.

As proud as I am of the readiness provisions in this bill, there are sections of the legislation, which deeply concern me. Specifically, I object to sections 311 and 312, in regard to which I joined Congressman RAHALL in offering an amendment to strike those sections, which provide exemptions to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act for the Department of Defense. The Endangered Species Act requires, with limited exceptions, the designation of critical habitat for all endangered or threatened species. Federal agencies are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to avoid actions that destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act already provides an exemption for any agency action for reasons of national security. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Secretary of Defense has never sought an exemption. A blanket legislative exemption to the designation of military lands as critical habitat for endangered species is not needed. Similarly, section 311, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, allows for administrative flexibility in regard to the incidental taking of migratory birds, including reference to military training activities. It is regrettable that we did not have the opportunity to debate this issue on the floor.

Despite my concern with these particular environmental exemption provisions, I support the bill as a whole. The \$383.4 billion legislation authorizes an approximately \$40 billion in funding increase from fiscal year 2002. The bill prioritizes the welfare of our troops by authorizing \$20 billion for military health care.