

support, and community service. I am so proud that this unit is in the Fourth Congressional District and going above and beyond in its defense of the United States of America. May God bless them for their service.

A TRIBUTE TO FORMER REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES E. BENNETT OF FLORIDA

**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 10, 2003*

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as Chairman of Florida's Congressional Delegation to honor the extraordinary life of former Congressman Charles E. Bennett. I would be hard pressed, Mr. Speaker, to find a better and more compelling individual dedicated to ethical reforms than Mr. Bennett in his 44 years in the House. Mr. Bennett was a long time proponent of such reforming legislation as the creation of the House Ethics Committee and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Earning the title of "Mr. Clean" for his unwavering determination to financial disclosure, Mr. Bennett set an example for all public servants as early as 1950.

Mr. Bennett attended the University of Florida and graduated in 1934 with both a Bachelor and Law degree. During World War 11, Charlie defended his country with undying patriotism and fearless courage in the South Pacific, earning the Silver and Bronze Stars for his distinguished service. In 1948, Mr. Bennett was elected to the 81st Congress representing the Jacksonville metropolitan area. Forty-four years later, Charlie remains Florida's longest serving member of Congress. Despite contracting polio from his Army days, Congressman Bennett served his country with such fervor and passion rarely seen before or since.

In the early 1990's, Charlie's advocacy for the disabled community translated into his strong support and sponsorship of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Despite the use of crutches, Charlie only missed one legislative vote in 41 years; a remarkable legislative accomplishment. Mr. Bennett was also an accomplished author of seven books, as well as a passionate advocate of the preservation of Florida's natural resources and history. A well-respected member of his community, Mr. Bennett has a Federal building and a school dedicated in his name for his remarkable service to his country.

Mr. Speaker, Charlie and I served side-by-side for 12 years before his retirement in 1993, and the news of his death has greatly saddened our State, our country, and me. I am honored to have called Charles Bennett a friend and colleague during his remarkable life and our prayers go out to his surviving family; his wife Dorothy; his children Bruce, James, and Cindy; and his three grandchildren. Charles Bennett will always have a place in the hearts of everyone he represented and his memory will no doubt live forever in the State of Florida.

TRANSPORTATION AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 9, 2003*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2989) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of full funding for the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). Congress made a commitment to election reform with the passage of this Act last year and should provide the funding required for HAVA-mandated improvements.

An amendment offered by the Honorable ALCEE HASTINGS to H.R. 2989 would have increased HAVA's funding to its authorized level of \$727 million. This was offset by eliminating \$165 million from Internal Revenue Service (IRS) information system funding. While I support efforts to increase HAVA funding, necessary maintenance and improvements to the IRS' information system are critical. For these reasons, I was compelled to vote against H. Amdt. 357.

I look forward to considering further legislation regarding HAVA funding in the future. Election reform is important to democracy in our country and in North Dakota. It is my hope that Congress will find a way to fully fund HAVA without reducing support for the necessary work of the IRS.

LEGISLATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VA FACILITY IN EAST-CENTRAL FLORIDA

**HON. CORRINE BROWN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 10, 2003*

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as a Congresswoman from Florida, to offer legislation that authorizes \$170 million for construction of a much-needed VA facility in East-Central, Florida.

The legislation comes about after VA released, to the Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services Commission, a draft report for VA review. The draft report recommends that Florida's East-Central Market receive a new hospital.

Florida's Central Market has the largest workload gap and the greatest infrastructure investment need of any market in the United States. The CARES draft report states that the logical choice for a new hospital in Florida is Orlando. There is a former 150-bed Naval Hospital in Orlando, originally designed for two additional floors, which can be restructured to take on additional services.

This will mean a big difference in many veterans' lives because currently more than 50 percent of them must travel 60 miles or one

hour to the nearest VA facility. This is a problem that must be addressed now. Veteran population growth within a two-hour radius continues unabated. If a new facility is not available to veterans in East-Central, Florida soon, the hardship of long drives and waiting periods will grow even greater for our veterans.

As the Congresswoman from Florida's third district, I know firsthand of the need for a new VA facility in Orlando. I have been there for our veterans time and time again. I personally escorted former VA Secretary Jesse Brown to the old Naval facility in Orlando and told him what a perfect site it would be for a VA outpatient clinic. The James V. Haley VA Hospital in Orlando, Florida was later opened, and it is proving to be the best location available to provide even greater services to our veterans.

The goal of the CARES commission is to modernize the VA health care system. This is an important first step in making certain that the needs of our veterans are met. They are indeed, the best of the best, and deserve to be treated as such.

I abhor the treatment of America's veterans under this administration. From the shabby effort to provide for full funding of concurrent receipt, to the exclusion of new Priority Eight veterans from the VA health care rolls, this administration has proven that it is a miserable failure at treating our veterans with the honor and gratitude that they have earned.

ANIBAL ACEVEDO-VILÁ, of Puerto Rico, and SHELLEY BERKLEY, of Nevada, join me in sponsoring this measure that additionally provides \$250 million for the construction of a VA hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada, and \$30 million for seismic upgrades at the VA medical center in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

I would like to thank Senators BOB GRAHAM of Florida, and HARRY REID of Nevada for introducing the companion legislation to this bill in the United States Senate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 10, 2003*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall No. 481, I would have voted "no." On rollcall No. 482, I would have voted "no." On rollcall No. 483, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 484, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 485, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 486, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 487, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 488, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 489, I would have voted "yes." On rollcall No. 490, I would have voted "no." On rollcall No. 491, I would have voted "no."

A TRIBUTE TO BARUCH TENENBAUM

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 10, 2003*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to pay tribute to Baruch Tenenbaum, a truly