

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2361,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as a strong supporter of our Nation's veterans, I support the additional \$1.5 billion provided in the FY 2006 Interior Appropriations bill that addresses the current shortfall in funding for veterans' health care. These funds are urgently needed to care for troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the heroes from former conflicts who rely upon the VA for their health care. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, currently, there are 24.8 million veterans of the U.S. armed services. They served their country in one of the military branches—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard—or in one of many smaller groups that supported the military services, primarily during World War II.

Approximately 769,000 veterans live in Georgia serving in every major conflict and during peacetime. About a quarter of the nation's population, approximately 70 million people, are potentially eligible for VA benefits and services because they are veterans, family members or survivors of veterans. The benefits include: medical care, payments to compensate for disabilities suffered during military service, rehabilitation and employment assistance, pensions to low-income disabled veterans, guarantees on loans to help veterans buy homes, financial aid to help them attend school, burial in a national cemetery and special headstones or markers for their gravesites.

Slightly less than half of all Americans who ever served during wartime in our country's history are alive today, and nearly 80 percent of today's veterans served during a war or an official period of conflict. There are widows and children of veterans of the Civil War and the Indian War of the last century who still receive VA benefits. The largest group of veterans fought in World War II. Approximately 550,000 Georgia veterans served during wartime during either World War II, the Korean conflict, during the Vietnam era or during the Gulf War. These veterans deserve our support especially due to the extraordinary sacrifices and contributions that they have made so that peace and freedom could exist around the world.

I also encourage Congress to provide much needed additional funding for veterans' health care in FY 2006 so that the VA's resources are sufficient to meet the increased demand for its services from our Nation's veterans and their families. It is critical that at all times, and particularly during a time of war, the quality of care for veterans must be a clear and unmistakable priority. We must fulfill our commitment to those who helped build America's strength and security. Our veterans should not have to wait any longer for the benefits they deserve.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO STAFF SER-
GEANT CHRISTOPHER M.
FALKEL

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fallen soldier from Highlands Ranch, SSG Christopher M. Falkel. Staff Sergeant Falkel died during combat operations in Deh Afghan, Afghanistan. He was just 22 years old.

Chris was a member of the elite Green Berets, and was affectionately known by his colleagues as "little brother." He was well known by his peers for his principle, toughness, patriotism, love of country and his bravery.

Staff Sergeant Falkel was a 2001 graduate of Thunder Ridge High School in Colorado. He enlisted that October with the goal of serving his country in the Special Forces. After completing courses in Arabic language and survival, evasion, resistance and escape he began Special Forces training in 2002.

Ultimately, Christopher was assigned to the 1st Special Warfare Training group, where he served his country with honor and distinction, earning—among other awards and medals—the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

Mr. Speaker, my deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences go out to friends and family of Staff Sergeant Falkel.

Christopher served his country with bravery and distinction, fighting against the forces of tyranny and oppression. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

All Americans owe Christopher and his family a great debt of gratitude. We honor his service and his sacrifice.

CONGRATULATING MAGEE RIETER
AUTOMOTIVE SYSTEMS OF
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
ON BEING NAMED SUPPLIER OF
THE YEAR TO GENERAL MOTORS
FOR THE 13TH CONSECUTIVE
YEAR

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to Magee Rieter Automotive Systems of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of their being named worldwide "Supplier of the Year" to General Motors for the 13th consecutive year.

Of GMs 30,000 suppliers, Magee Rieter Automotive Systems is the only company in North America to achieve this remarkable record, a fact that should make its nearly 800 employees exceedingly proud.

Magee Rieter is the leading supplier of carpets to General Motors in America. The company has been in business in Bloomsburg since 1889 and has been supplying General Motors for more than 90 years, first with hand draped tapestries for Fisher Body carriages and, today, with fully molded carpet floors and integrated acoustical systems.

For more than a century, the company has endured and overcome numerous challenges including floods, fires and the rapidly changing business environment. After World War II, the company received the Army/Navy "E" award for excellence in recognition of its production of high quality materials for the war effort.

Magee Rieter records annual sales in excess of \$175 million and has an annual payroll of more than \$37 million that provides its employees with family sustaining incomes that average about \$39,000 annually. Overall, Magee Rieter is responsible for a \$168 million annual impact to the local economy.

The current employees of Magee Rieter are carrying on traditions of pride and success handed down by their parents, grandparents and great grandparents who worked at this remarkable company.

Under the leadership of president and chief executive officer Mike Katerman, Magee Rieter continues to be a cornerstone of the Bloomsburg community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Magee Rieter for demonstrating superior performance and for serving as a shining example for other businesses to emulate.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WHITE
LAKE TOWNSHIP LIBRARY ON
ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the White Lake Township Library, which is celebrating 30 years of service to the White Lake, MI, community.

On April 5, 1975, a resolution was adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Electors of White Lake Township, establishing "a free public library in accordance with Act 164, P.A. 1877." The six-member Provisional Library Board was appointed on May 20, 1975 and the first permanent board was named shortly after. The Library Board is composed of non-partisan elected officials who serve 4-year terms.

Library service was originally provided through a contract with the Waterford Township library. In 1980, White Lake Township's voters provided permanent support for the library by approving a perpetual operating millage of 0.3 mills in property taxes. In 1998, voters approved 0.5 mills for 8 years to add, maintain and improve library service.

The library has been housed in several locations around the township including the White Lake Community Hall and Brooks School. The core of the current building was built in 1984–1985, using local funds and a Library Services and Construction Act grant. The library was extensively remodeled and expanded in 2001 and now contains approximately 10,000 square feet and over 50,000 library items. Use figures have doubled in 5 years as the number of registered borrowers has grown to over 10,000 individuals. Long-range plans call for additional library space and expanded print, electronic and staff resources to meet the information and cultural needs of a rapidly growing township.

Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years the citizens of White Lake Township, MI, have continued

to support the White Lake Township Library. I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking the citizens of White Lake Township, Library Board members and employees of the library for their outstanding service to the people of Michigan, and wish them well in the next 30 years.

HONORING MR. DONALD G.
WALDON

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Donald G. Waldon on the occasion of his retirement as the Administrator of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority. I am honored to stand before this body of Congress and this Nation to recognize his many accomplishments. He is truly a man who embodies the American principles of hard work, dedication to one's family and service to one's community.

Don is a native of Columbus, Mississippi but grew up in Mobile, Alabama. He graduated from Mississippi State University in 1961 with a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and completed post graduate studies in science and engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1963 and Texas A&M in 1964. He is a 1994 graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute and the recipient of the Southern Industrial Development Council's 1994 Robert B. Cassell Award for Best Research Thesis.

Don joined the Army Corps of Engineers in 1961, where he worked in Mobile until 1966, conducting feasibility studies for water resource projects such as ports and waterways, including some early ideas for the Tenn-Tom Waterway. In 1966 he went to work for the Office of Management and Budget of the Executive Office of the President where he advised OMB and White House officials, including the President, on major budgetary, policy and legislative matters involving natural resources.

Don worked for OMB until 1974 when he was appointed as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of the Interior, a position he held until September, 1975. His duties included management responsibilities for all land and water resource agencies within the Department of the Interior, which at the time had a budget of nearly \$2 billion and approximately 12,000 employees. He had oversight over reclamation projects and the development of oil fields, coal mining on public lands, the Alaska Pipeline, the measures taken under the Nixon Energy Initiative, and served on a number of White House task forces, involving energy.

In 1975, on the advice of Tenn-Tom project Administrator Glover Wilkins, Don entered an exchange program inside the Federal Government and came to the Tenn-Tom on a 2-year basis, but ultimately stayed for 30. In 1979 Don resigned from the Federal Government and remained with the Tenn-Tom, taking the position of Deputy Administrator. When Glover Wilkins retired in 1984 Don was appointed to the post of Administrator, a position he has held ever since.

As Administrator of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority

Don has worked tirelessly to promote the development of the Waterway, exploring economic and trade opportunities, and addressing potential barriers to the Waterway's beneficial use. Under Don's leadership the Waterway has resulted in approximately \$5 billion in expanded industry. The Waterway has had a tremendous impact on the local communities, not just with industrial development, but by bringing in recreation and tourism dollars as well.

Apart from his leadership of the Tenn-Tom Waterway Authority, Don is active in a variety of organizations devoted to the development of our waterways. He is President of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council, Vice-Chairman of the National Waterways Conference, Inc., Director of the Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc. (a national trade group representing inland ports), Executive Committee member of the U.S. Maritime Administration's Heartland Intermodal Partnership, Vice-President of the Alabama-Tombigbee Rivers Coalition and an Advisory Board Member of the Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor Donald G. Waldon for his many accomplishments and his enduring impact on his country, community, friends and family. He is a man of great dignity and character who takes pride in the accomplishments of those he has helped over the years. Don is an inspiring role model for all of us and I join his friends and colleagues in wishing him God's richest blessings in his retirement.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON
H.R. 3, SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE,
FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION
EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR for their leadership in bringing SAFETEA-LU to the floor. It is an important bill that will help ease congestion throughout the country.

In particular, I applaud their efforts regarding hybrid vehicles in High Occupancy Vehicle lanes. Allowing hybrids in HOV lanes will increase demand for the vehicles, improve air quality, and over time reduce our reliance on foreign oil sources.

Section 166 of SAFETEA-LU allows vehicles meeting certain fuel efficiency and emissions standards to use HOV lanes. The bill, specifically section 166(b)(5)(B)(i), is written to allow states to establish a program that addresses the selection of vehicles under the HOV provision. As long as states meet the minimum standards set out in the bill, they can adjust which vehicles will be authorized to use HOV lanes.

This intentional flexibility will allow California to implement a state law letting hybrid vehicles that get more than 45 miles per gallon in highway driving and meet California emission standards to ride in HOV lanes.

The bill also allows states to choose which HOV lanes will be eligible for use by these ve-

hicles. I call on California to study the issue carefully, so that only HOV lanes that can handle the increase in traffic be eligible for hybrid vehicles.

Again, I thank the chairman and ranking member for their leadership.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL
LARNELL EXUM ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to LTC Larnell Exum, Deputy Chief, Army House Liaison Division, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, who retired September 1. Lieutenant Colonel Exum's illustrious career as an infantry officer embodies all of the Army's values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage and spans 20 years, during which he has distinguished himself as a soldier, leader, and friend of the United States House of Representatives.

Lieutenant Colonel Exum demonstrated his outstanding tactical and operational expertise in numerous command and staff positions overseas and in the continental United States. Continually serving in positions of ever-increasing responsibility, the highlights of his career include serving as a Company Commander with the 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, at both Fort Campbell, KY, and in combat in Kuwait and Iraq during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and then as Aide-de-Camp to the Undersecretary of the Army.

As the Deputy Chief of the Legislative Liaison in the House Liaison Division, his last assignment in the United States Army, Lieutenant Colonel Exum demonstrated the outstanding dedication and leadership skills that have characterized his distinguished career. In particular, he excelled at building relationships with Members of Congress and their staffs.

He escorted over 45 worldwide fact-finding missions for congressional delegations, traveling with over 135 Members to 25 countries. These ventures served to educate Members on subjects as diverse as the global war on terror, Army transformation, magnetic levitation trains, and future transportation technologies.

I traveled with Lieutenant Colonel Exum on several times and was thoroughly impressed with him on each occasion. He is one of the finest people I have worked with during my 17 years in Congress.

From 1986 to 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Exum distinguished himself as one of the top company grade leaders in Alpha Company, 1/22 Infantry Battalion, Fort Drum, NY, serving as a Rifle Platoon Leader and Mortar Platoon Leader in a light infantry battalion. He then was assigned to Alpha Company, 2/187 Infantry Battalion, both at home station and in combat operations in Kuwait and Iraq for Desert Shield and Desert Storm, when he was decorated for valor in combat.

Due to his fabulous reputation as one of the bright young officers in the Army, Lieutenant Colonel Exum was selected as the Aide-de-Camp/Military Assistant for the Under Secretary of the Army. He performed magnificently in this position and was subsequently