

districts that govern the affiliate and charter schools in all 50 states. The purpose of the National Forensic League is to promote interscholastic debate, oratory, public speaking, and interpretation of literature by encouraging a spirit of fellowship and by conferring upon deserving candidates a worthy badge of distinction. The National Forensic League works to accomplish this mission by promoting debate and speech through a nation-wide network of competitive tournaments and by honoring students for their achievements. The culmination of the year is a National Speech and Debate Tournament in the month of June. This year's topic will be whether or not the U.S. government should reduce its authority to detain without charges or search without probable cause.

The Flower Mound High School speech and debate team has 25 students traveling during weekends from speech to debate tournaments. At Flower Mound High School, each member of the speech and debate team is guaranteed to compete in at least five rounds per year. If a student performs well, he or she can enter additional tournaments. Students are awarded a degree of merit for each round they compete in, which then gets accumulated by the team. Flower Mound was the 13th team nationwide with the most accumulated degrees of merit.

Today I congratulate the Flower Mound High School speech and debate team and Head Debate Coach, Eric Mears, on ranking 13th out of the top 50 speech and debate teams in the country. Their dedication and hard work in perpetuating intellectual debate, oratory and public speaking deserves the highest recognition and praise.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2862,
SCIENCE STATE, JUSTICE, COM-
MERCE, AND RELATED AGEN-
CIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, this week, the House of Representatives passed the conference report to H.R. 2862, the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations bill on a vote of 397–19.

I voted for this conference report because it provides funding for important law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. However, I was reluctant to support this conference report during final passage because I was extremely disappointed and concerned that this legislation drastically cuts funds for the Community Oriented Policing Services program, or COPS program, and subsequently eliminates all federal funding for the hiring of police officers. The passage of this conference report has placed an undue burden on local law enforcement's ability to ensure the safety and security of our communities and our families.

H.R. 2862 contains only \$478 million in funding for COPS, which is \$120 million less than last year's funding level. When the House first considered H.R. 2862 on June 14, 2005, I supported an amendment offered by Con-

gressman OBEY to increase the COPS funding level to \$666 million. Unfortunately, the House chose to put our law enforcement and the safety of our street and communities at risk by rejecting the amendment.

This conference report contains only \$416 million for the Byrne Discretionary and Justice Assistance Grant Programs, also known as Byrne-JAG grants. This is \$386 million less than the FY '05 amount of \$792 million. Byrne-JAG grants provide vital funding for multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, anti-drug education programs, treatment programs, long-range corrections and sentencing strategy programs, anti-terrorism training programs, and for the enforcement of child abuse and neglect laws, and the improvement the criminal justice systems' response to domestic and family abuse. When the House first considered H.R. 2862, I offered a bipartisan amendment to increase Byrne-JAG grants funding, but unfortunately, my amendment failed to garner enough votes.

As a former Escanaba city police officer and Michigan State Trooper as well as co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, I understand how much our local communities need and rely on COPS and Byrne-JAG grant program monies. Post-9/11, our Nation's public safety officers are faced with more challenges than ever before in performing their duties, and we must do everything in our power to support their effort. We should be providing public safety officers with the resources necessary to keep our communities safe from both terrorist threats and daily crime, and unfortunately this conference report shortchanges these men and women who protect and serve our Nation.

COMMENDING EFFORTS OF
CROHN'S AND COLITIS FOUNDA-
TION OF AMERICA

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the efforts of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America in fighting Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). Today, the Foundation will visit Capitol Hill and ask for our support of H.R. 3616—The Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research Act.

Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic disorders of the gastrointestinal tract that afflict approximately 1.4 million Americans, 30 percent of whom are diagnosed in their childhood years. IBD represents a major cause of morbidity from digestive illness and has a devastating impact on both patients and families. The cause is unknown, and there is no medical cure.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the bipartisan Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research Act that I'm sponsoring with the gentleman from Illinois, JESSE JACKSON, Jr. The IBD Research Act builds upon legislation we sponsored last Congress, which garnered 183 cosponsors. This Congress—we look forward to even more support. Together we can help millions of children and adults that suffer from these devastating diseases.

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION INTRO-
DUCED TO HELP INCREASE EQ-
UITY INVESTMENT IN SMALL
BUSINESSES LOCATED IN LOW-
INCOME AREAS

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer legislation along with my colleague from Kentucky, Congressman HAROLD "HAL" ROGERS, which seeks to increase venture capital investment in small businesses located in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. Our bill, the Securing Equity for the Economic Development of Low Income Areas—SEED—Act, would reauthorize and expand the New Markets Venture Capital (NMVC) program of the Small Business Administration (SBA).

The New Markets Venture Capital Program was established in 2000 for the purposes of making equity investments in small businesses located in economically distressed communities through the creation of NMVC companies. Many conventional venture capital firms have been unwilling to invest in economically disadvantaged areas. NMVC companies aim to help fill the access to capital gap that exists for many small firms in these communities.

New Market Venture Capital companies will leverage equity capital backed by SBA-guaranteed funds to invest in small businesses in depressed areas. NMVC companies can also apply for matching operational assistance grants to provide entrepreneurs with the services and technical support needed to help their businesses grow and succeed.

Through the program, 6 New Markets Venture Capital companies have been formed and are currently still operating and making quality investments in small businesses throughout the country. For example, the Southern Appalachian Fund located in Congressman ROGERS' Congressional District was one of the original New Markets Venture Capital companies established during the initial round of funding. The Southern Appalachian Fund (SAF) is a \$12.5 million venture capital fund offering equity capital and operational assistance to eligible small businesses located in the Appalachia regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In 2004 alone, SAF invested over \$1 million in three companies, which helped attract an additional \$1.7 million in venture capital funding for these firms. As a result, these investments assisted in the creation of over 50 new jobs in the region.

Unfortunately, though authorized, this worthy program has not received funding in each of the last 3 fiscal years. The SEED Act would reauthorize the New Markets Venture Capital program by providing \$100 million in debenture guarantees and \$25 million in operational assistance grants to fund the creation of a fresh round of NMVC companies. In addition, our legislation would incorporate small manufacturers into the mission of the program by encouraging the SBA to set up at least one company that is primarily involved in the investment and development of small manufacturing firms. The bill also seeks to diversify venture capital investments beyond the typical Silicon Valley and Northeastern corridors by

encouraging the formation of NMVC companies in each of the ten geographic regions of the SBA.

Many of my constituents have fallen on hard times and are in need of help. A large portion of my district is in the midst of an economic crisis at this moment. In 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 59 percent of working age African American males in Milwaukee were either unemployed or out of the workforce. In the past five years, Milwaukee has lost 33,000 manufacturing jobs, an industry that was once the lifeblood of the local economy. And, according to a study conducted by the University of Kansas, Milwaukee ranks 49th out of the 50 largest U.S. cities in terms of per capita venture capital dollars.

Small businesses create nearly 75 percent of all new jobs and account for 99 percent of all employers. It is not a stretch to conclude that increased investment in small businesses leads to the creation of new jobs and sparks much needed economic development in areas that have experienced better days. And given the high levels of unemployment that exist in many distressed urban and rural communities throughout the country, the New Markets Venture Capital program would provide a crucial source of investment capital to small firms and help create new jobs.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this very important bipartisan bill.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BLUNT RESERVOIR AND PIERRE CANAL LAND CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2005

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal Land Conveyance Act of 2005.

The origins of the bill stretch back to The Flood Control Act of 1944 which authorized a 190,000 acre irrigation project surrounding the Oahe dam and reservoir. As part of this project, the Bureau of Reclamation acquired approximately 19,000 acres of land in two South Dakota counties before organized opposition halted the project in 1977. Since then, the Bureau of Reclamation has retained ownership of the land and, even today, the original landowners continue to lease the land from the department.

Recognizing that the project will not be restarted, the State of South Dakota initiated talks to resolve the ownership situation. Working with the South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks, local stakeholders, the Bureau of Reclamation, and others, a general consensus emerged that the best way to deal with the associated economic, tax base, wildlife mitigation, and public access concerns would be to allow the original landowners to buy back the land. Years of negotiations and meetings led to the bill I am introducing today.

Under this bill, former Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal landowners would be allowed to repurchase their former lands, on which they currently hold preferential leases, from the Bureau of Reclamation. The bill also will transfer non-preferentially-leased lands and unleased lands to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, GFP, as part of its

broader plan to restore wildlife habitat that was lost due to the construction of the Missouri River dams.

The proposals in this legislation were included in an identical bill that passed the Senate by unanimous consent last year. This legislation is an important opportunity to resolve a land ownership issue left open for over 3 decades. I urge my colleagues in the House to give this bill their swift consideration.

TRIBUTE TO ERNEST C. FORD, AN AMERICAN VETERAN

HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, Veterans Day is a special day we set aside to honor all of our brave service men and women both past and present. It is a day to remember, a day to honor and a day to reflect upon our fellow citizens who, risking their lives, were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. It is a day to honor those we know and those we have never met.

It is my privilege to honor one of our veterans in the Third Congressional District of California, Ernest C. Ford. Mr. Ford's story was brought to my attention some months ago. Like many of my fellow colleagues in Congress, we represent our constituents and are honored to have veterans among them. It is their story that humanizes the importance of Veterans Day.

In May of 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field, Long Island, New York and flew into aviation history and into the imagination of a 5½ year old boy, "Ernie" Ford. With the onset of World War II, the young farm boy from Dodge City, Kansas left his family and friends to join a cause larger than himself.

Fifteen years later to the day of Lindbergh's faithful flight, Staff Sergeant Ernest C. Ford graduated from advanced flying school at Luke Field in Phoenix, Arizona. Like many, in what has been referred to as the greatest generation, he served with honor and distinction to preserve Liberty and Freedom throughout the world. Flying over 6,500 hours and 364 combat missions, the most of any pilot in the USAAF during World War II, he showed his dedication to duty, honor and country.

On February 6, 1943, Staff Sergeant Ernie Ford, a transport pilot, is credited with saving three C-47 planes, their crews, and 87 Australian infantry during the battle of Wau in New Guinea, Australia. While the battle raged around him, Mr. Ford proceeded to takeoff on a bombed out airstrip while under enemy fire. Witnessing his lead plane shot down on ascent, he decided to keep his plane low for maximum speed. With the plane only 10 to 15 feet off the ground, Ernie Ford escaped the fate of his comrades before him and showed the remaining C-47's a way to escape the battle.

For his exceptional service, he won a battlefield commission and was promoted to the rank of 2nd lieutenant. At the end of the war in the Pacific, Mr. Ford earned 6 Distinguished Flying Crosses, one garnering a V for valor, 2 Air Medals, and was recommended for our nation's third highest military honor, the Silver

Star for his actions at Wau. Along with personal recognition, his squadron received three Presidential Unit Citations and two Battle Stars. Following World War II, he helped stem the tide of communism during the Korean Conflict by flying 21 combat missions. After 23 years of service, Mr. Ford eventually retired with the rank of Major with over 15 decorations.

The gratitude that all Americans owe to Mr. Ford cannot be expressed in mere words alone.

I will tell you everyday that I go to work; I am reminded of our veterans and the sacrifices they made by the sight of the many beautiful memorials erected in their memory. These memorials represent the dogged determination of our veterans and are a reminder of the heartfelt gratitude all Americans owe them for their service.

As President Ronald Reagan on the 40th anniversary of D-Day said, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

I thank you, Mr. Ford, and all our honored American Veterans for your service to our country.

TRIBUTE TO THE MARCH-WESTIN COMPANY AND THE ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the March-Westin Company of Morgantown, West Virginia and the St. James Catholic Church for their exceptional achievement in the field of occupational safety and health.

Incorporated in 1984, the March-Westin Company is a full-service engineering and general contracting firm located in Morgantown, WV. March-Westin has worked on over 600 projects throughout West Virginia, establishing themselves as one of the best firms in all of West Virginia. After a rigorous review by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, March-Westin has been awarded the agency's approval as a Star participant in their Voluntary Protection Program, VPP. Since 1982, this demanding award has been given to fewer than 1,000 worksites across the Nation and I am pleased to recognize March-Westin and the St. James Catholic Church for their work in receiving this award. In fact, this exemplary small construction company had no employee injuries or illnesses during the qualifying period for the program. VPP sites serve as a model for what can be accomplished through a commitment to workplace safety, as these sites achieve a level of worker protection that goes far beyond compliance with already strict government regulations.

In Charles Town, WV, the March-Westin Company is constructing a 55,000 square foot, old style church which includes a parish hall, library, classrooms, a chapel, bell tower, and a kitchen. This \$10 million project will serve not only as a model for workplace safety but also as a wonderful place for worship and a welcome addition to the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.