

Administration, and Related Agencies program. I regretfully do so even though agriculture is second only to tourism in terms of revenue for my home state of Florida.

By passing this legislation in its current form, the House of Representatives is almost ensuring a veto from the White House. This bill would spend \$91.5 billion including \$18.8 in discretionary spending, and is \$993 million over the President's budget request. I am concerned that if we send this bill to the President's desk with the current excessive spending, it will be vetoed along with many of the other fiscal year 2008 Appropriations bills. It is imperative that we write a bill with real reform and realistic spending levels. My constituents of the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, along with the rest of America deserve legislation that contains realistic funding levels to ensure the safety of their food, promote conservation, provide assistance to those in need and protect the health of plants and animals through research.

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL J. SPIRITO

### HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 20, 2007*

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Michael J. Spirito for his long-time service to the Tredyffrin Township Police Department and surrounding communities.

Lieutenant Spirito began his career in law enforcement as a police officer in West Bradford Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania in March 1972. On his way to the Tredyffrin Township Police Department, Lt. Spirito served four years with the West Chester Borough Police Department. Lt. Spirito joined the Tredyffrin Township Police in August 1977 and has been a proud member of that force from that day on.

Lt. Spirito is a graduate of Newnan College and is also a graduate of the 253rd session of the National Academy of the FBI. Born in Brooklyn, New York and raised in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, giving back to the community has always been a priority with Lt. Spirito. In addition to his service as a police officer, Lt. Spirito volunteered his services to the Aston Fire Company. In his spare time, Lt. Spirito is an avid pilot and a technology expert.

His leadership will be missed at the Tredyffrin Township Police Department, however I expect the entire County of Chester to benefit by his recent appointment as Deputy Director of Computer Services with the Chester County Government Services Department.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring Lieutenant Michael J. Spirito for his exemplary and dedicated service to the Tredyffrin Township Police Department and citizens it serves. His commitment and energy to make his community a better place is an example for all citizens to follow.

DR. JAMES H. BILLINGTON: TWENTY YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AS LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 20, 2007*

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, on September 14, 1987, Dr. James H. Billington, who had already distinguished himself as one of this nation's most eminent cultural historians, was installed as the 13th Librarian of Congress. As one of Dr. Billington's many admirers, I want to extend to him my warmest congratulations on his 20th anniversary in that distinguished post.

As a youngster in his native Pennsylvania, Dr. Billington began what was to be a life-long pattern of exceptional intellectual accomplishment. He was one of those habitual valedictorians—first at Lower Merion High School and then, at Princeton University. He next went as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford University, where he completed his Ph.D.

Dr. Billington has been a professor at two of our most famous universities—Harvard and Princeton.

He is the author of several notable books on the cultural and political history of Russia—The Icon and the Axe and Fire in the Minds of Men, to name just two. Another of his books—The Face of Russia—became the basis of a three-part television series on PBS.

At last count, Dr. Billington had been awarded 33 honorary degrees from institutions all over the world, including Oxford, Moscow State University and Tbilisi State University in the Republic of Georgia.

It is in his present job, however—that of Librarian of Congress—that Dr. Billington has made truly monumental contributions to our nation's cultural and intellectual life.

"This place has a destiny to be a living encyclopedia of democracy," he said in his inaugural address, "not just a mausoleum of culture, but a catalyst for civilization."

For two decades, he has worked to fulfill that destiny.

During Dr. Billington's tenure, the holding of the Library of Congress have grown from 86 million to over 135 million items. The Library's budget has grown in that same period by over 200 percent.

In the Billington years, the Library has launched many new services—THOMAS, for example, is familiar to all of us here in Congress and the American Memory Program is being used in schools and libraries around the country.

Just recently, the Library's Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation began operations in Culpeper, VA. The Packard Campus, which is the result of the largest private gift ever made to the Library, is dedicated to transferring the Library's priceless, but deteriorating, collection of moving images and recorded sounds to digital files and placing these materials in a digital storage archive.

But of all the Billington era projects, the most-far-reaching is the National Digital Library. This massive effort, funded by a public-private partnership, has already placed 135 million items on the Library's web site—with many, many millions more to come.

In Japan, Madam Speaker, a person who has made exceptional cultural contributions

can be designated as a living national treasure. We don't have that tradition here in America, but if we did, I do not think that I would be alone in submitting for that honor the name of James H. Billington.

I congratulate Dr. Billington on his 20th anniversary—and I thank him for the great things that he has done for our country.

H.R. 3162:—THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND MEDICARE PROTECTION ACT

### HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 20, 2007*

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my displeasure with H.R. 3162—The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP). The CHAMP Act would expand the existing State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by giving nearly 5 million children who come from middle-income families access to free healthcare. This proposal pays for this expansion by cutting 3 million senior citizens' access to Medicare. This legislation would nearly double the 6.6 million children who are currently enrolled in the SCHIP program.

In my home state of Florida, the current SCHIP program level covers children in families who earn up to 200 percent above the poverty level, which amounts to a \$41,200 annual income for a family of four. I support the SCHIP program in its current form. However, I cannot support an over-expansion of the program that uses hard-earned tax dollars to provide free healthcare to children and adults who come from middle-income families that make 300 to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

The CHAMP Act is nothing more than a veiled effort to develop a single-payer healthcare system. In order to pay for this gross expansion of socialized medicine, this proposal would cut Medicare funds for 9,746 seniors who live in the Fourth Congressional District of Florida and are currently enrolled in the Medicare Advantage Program. I believe that my constituents would be unsupportive of any measure that compromises healthcare to the elderly in an attempt to give free healthcare to middle-class children and adults who were already covered by private health insurance plans. Finally, the funding mechanism for this expansion incorporates an increase in the federal cigarette tax from 39 cents to 84 cents per pack and increases taxes on many other forms of tobacco products.

In the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, 27,416 families, or 31 percent of all families with children under the age of 18, are already eligible for either Medicaid or SCHIP under current law. Despite this fact, the Medicare cuts to seniors are exacerbated by the fact that the CHAMP Act would cover individuals up to the age of 25. Once again, the very nature of the program, which is intended to provide medical care to children, is compromised by the expansion plan to cover young adults as well.

In addition to all the concerns I mentioned above, I was unable to support this legislation due to several additional concerns I had during the consideration of this legislation. First of all this bill was clouded in secrecy until hours