

Together, these investments will serve over 1.5 million citizens without health care coverage in the coming year.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Sunday is Veterans Day. With our Nation at war, this conference report honors our brave men and women in uniform by proposing the largest single increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the institution's 77-year history. The \$43.1 billion this legislation appropriates will enable us to provide quality care to 5.8 million patients, add 1,800 processors to tackle the outstanding backlog of 400,000 claims, and invest in needed treatment for increasingly prevalent conditions like traumatic brain injury, TBI, and post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. It is the least we can do—and now is the time for us to do it.

Madam Speaker, these two bills both passed the House with strong, bipartisan majorities. Together, they set the right priorities for America. They comply with our five-year balanced budget plan. And they deserve our support today.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for overriding the President's misguided veto of the Water Resources Development Act.

This bill is long overdue. The projects funded in this bill are critical to the health, safety and quality of life in our communities around the country. This bill is necessary to better protect Americans against severe weather and flooding—and also ensure all Americans have access to clean, safe drinking water.

The President's veto of WRDA is another example of misplaced priorities. We continue to spend \$10 billion in Iraq, but won't spend the money necessary to make sure we never have another Katrina. This bill is about saving lives. In my district we have perchlorate contamination in much of the drinking water. H.R. 1495 invests money in researching and solving this problem—because no parent should ever have to worry that their child is going to get sick from drinking tap water.

I urge my colleagues to cast a vote to keep America safe and healthy—and override this mistaken veto.

TRIBUTE TO DR. RICHARD SHEEHAN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Richard Sheehan on the completion of his 50th marathon by the age of 70. Dr. Sheehan reached this goal at the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC. An impressive achievement for anyone but even

more so for this 70-year-old dentist from Orchard Park, NY, who didn't start competing in marathons until 1986.

A self-proclaimed "accidental runner," Dr. Sheehan began running at the age of 48 when a grieving family member needed his support. With only 8 weeks of training before reaching the starting line for his first Marine Corps marathon, Dr. Sheehan helped his brother-in-law through a difficult time while discovering his love for long-distance running. After completing more marathons, Dr. Sheehan set a long range goal of completing 50 races before turning 70.

This determined dentist has now run 12 Marine Corps races, completed marathons in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, as well as Cleveland and Chicago, and once, in Boston.

Running is a family event for the Sheehans, and 16 family members and friends joined Dr. Sheehan in DC for the occasion. This is the 10th year in a row that Dr. Sheehan has participated in the Marine Corps Marathon but none, I'm sure, as memorable as this one in which four of his children ran portions of the race with him as he completed number 50.

Congratulations and best wishes for continued success to Dr. Dick Sheehan for setting and reaching his goal. What began as a run to help a family member has become a remarkable accomplishment that should inspire us all to pursue our goals with devoted persistence.

QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the framers of our Constitution empowered the U.S. House of Representatives to impeach the President in cases of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." They gave Congress a sacred responsibility to check the power of the President in order to preserve the liberty of the American people. With this responsibility came an equally important obligation to use congressional power only to advance the interests of the Nation. I am not convinced that an impeachment proceeding is in America's best interests at this time. That is why I recently voted to give the House Judiciary Committee time to substantively consider the articles of impeachment before bringing them before the full House for debate and a vote. At a time when Congress has so much work to do to repair the damage caused by this administration, Congress will best serve the American people by focusing our efforts on ending the war in Iraq, protecting civil liberties from executive overreaching and passing needed legislation to move America in a new direction.

With a little over a year left in office, attempting to bring impeachment charges against President Bush, or Vice-President CHENEY, at this point, would prove counterproductive to the aggressive agenda our new majority in Congress has put forth. With many issues needing attention, Congress should focus on implementing the agenda the American people elected us to pursue.

As part of the new agenda, the 110th Congress has begun to do what the previous Congressional leadership would not do, and what many in this Congress still refuse to do: Stand up to this President. Under Representative HENRY WAXMAN, CA, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has launched more than two dozen investigations of Bush administration actions. The committee's 75 investigators have probed everything from the behavior of contractors in Iraq to the politicization of the Federal Government here at home. Congress's efforts have already led to needed reforms in a variety of executive branch programs.

You may recall that in late July, it became apparent to me that Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's contradictory statements and actions raised serious concerns about his integrity and his respect for civil liberties. At the same time, Bush administration stonewalling was making it impossible for Congress to fully investigate Gonzales and restore America's respect for the Justice Department. On July 31, 2007, I joined with other former prosecutors serving in the U.S. House in calling for an investigation to determine whether Gonzales should be impeached. At the time, I believed investigation and, potentially, impeachment by the Congress provided the only way to hold Gonzales accountable.

In August, Alberto Gonzales did something he should have done long before: He resigned. His resignation provided needed change at the Justice Department, but it did not provide the answers that the American people demand and deserve. Congress still has an obligation to determine the legality of Gonzales's confusing, conflicting and misleading actions and statements. Just this week, Representative JOHN CONYERS, MI, took another step towards getting the truth about the Justice Department's actions under Gonzales. CONYERS demanded the White House release key information regarding the Justice Department's firing of Federal prosecutors or face a congressional contempt citation. I and my colleagues will do everything in our power to compel the White House to cooperate with our investigation. I will continue to work with my colleagues to uncover the truth about the Gonzales Justice Department and its treatment of Americans' civil liberties, and I will fight to hold this administration accountable.

While Congress exercises its oversight role, we must also support a framework of laws that protects Americans from violations of our liberties and our right to privacy. I have always defended civil liberties. In 2001, I joined just 65 of my colleagues in standing up to post-9/11 fearmongering and voting against the USA PATRIOT ACT. I have cosponsored legislation to restore the right of habeas corpus and undo the Military Commissions Act. And, most recently, I opposed changes to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA, that would have given this administration more power to spy on Americans.

The Bush administration has done real damage to the United States through its policies and its executive actions. Congress must respond in the manner that will most effectively protect the American people and promote the interests of our country. We have begun to rein in the president and restore integrity to the Federal Government. We will continue to do so.

CONGRATULATING ST. GERMAINE CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR THEIR SELECTION AS A NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor St. Germaine Catholic School of Oak Lawn, Illinois as they are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a prime example of excellence in education.

Since the establishment of St. Germaine Parish by Fr. Walter Sheridan in 1962, education has been a priority for this community. With the diligent support of the Sisters of the Presentation, the parish school opened in 1964 and began a tradition of exceptional education in not only academics but also the teachings of faith.

In the years since its founding, St. Germaine has consistently been noted for its achievement in bringing quality education to its students. On October 2, 2007, St. Germaine was designated a national Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings.

This distinguished award, given to those schools that are either academically superior or have demonstrated dramatic gains in student achievement, was presented to only 287 schools throughout the country. This award places St. Germaine in the top 10 percent of our Nation's schools.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend St. Germaine Catholic School on this extraordinary achievement. I am proud to have in my district a school that does so much to produce the educated and moral citizens who will lead our Nation in the future.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 760, THE "FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY ACT OF 2007"

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deep support for H.R. 760, the "Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007."

The treatment of Filipinos who fought with the United States Armed Forces in World War II is a dark chapter in American history. The Philippines became a United States possession after Spain ceded it as part of the treaty ending the Spanish-American War in 1898. In 1934, Congress created a 10-year time frame for independence through the "Philippine Independence Act." However, since the Philippines remained a colonial possession until 1946 the United States retained the right to call upon military forces organized by the Philippine Government into the United States Armed Forces.

On July 26, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a military order that brought the Philippine Commonwealth Forces under the control of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. These men bravely fought with our own troops during the war, and

many perished or suffered severe wounds from the battles in the Western Pacific Theater. After the surrender of Japan, Congress required the Philippine Forces to continue their service. Many helped occupy lands, many oversaw military operations, and many made the ultimate sacrifice to secure our victory in World War II. Yet, when wartime service ended formally in 1946 they did not receive the same benefits and the same treatment as other American soldiers.

Yet, for all their heroic and courageous actions, Congress passed the "Recession Act" in February 1946, to the objection of many, including General MacArthur. This essentially denied Filipino Veterans any of the benefits that their American comrades in arms received; including full access to veterans' health care, service-connected disability compensation, non-service connected disability compensation, dependent indemnity compensation, death pension, and full burial benefits. No other group of veterans has been systematically denied these benefits.

Congress has the opportunity to right this wrong. H.R. 760 restores the benefits these brave warriors were denied. This legislation has been introduced since 1992. However, time is running out. In September 2000, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimated that the number of surviving Filipino Veterans is 59,889. However, by 2010, VA estimates that their population will dwindle to just 20,000, because of their advanced age.

Many argue that paying for Filipino veterans is not something Congress should undertake, because they are not U.S. citizens, and that the PAYGO offsets takes money away from Americans. However, such a statement fails to recognize that Filipino veterans served not merely as allies, but as U.S. forces. It fails to recognize that the United States made the same promise to provide for these veterans' needs as it does to any other person who serves in uniform; a promise that we have, up to now, failed to uphold.

Congress must act now for the sake of justice and to show that we Americans truly appreciate the sacrifice these men made. Let us remember the heroism of these veterans by honoring their service and fulfilling our commitments to them. I urge the House to consider and pass this important measure.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, we must help ensure our communities are protected during times of severe flooding that can lead to loss of life and destroyed homes and businesses. This summer we have witnessed devastating floods all across America, including in central and eastern Kansas. Thousands of my constituents lost their homes and their businesses, many of which have not yet fully recovered.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 1495) authorizes many new

projects that will afford our communities protection from catastrophic flooding for generations to come. It will also help ensure that existing flood control structures are properly cared for so our economy can continue thriving in areas currently protected from floods. We must prepare for the future rather than merely respond to disasters after they occur. Prevention is much better than responding to a natural disaster, especially when loss of life occurs.

A WRDA bill has not been enacted for the past 7 years, which helps explain why the price tag is so significant. While I would have preferred to see a less expensive authorization bill, I believe it is time we move forward with many of the needed flood control projects included in H.R. 1495.

Having witnessed the severe flooding in my district this year, I am reminded of the critical need for flood prevention that saves lives and protects communities. I have seen first-hand what a flooded community looks like when adequate flood control is not provided. And I have seen how well Corps of Engineers levees have worked to keep high floodwaters out of homes and businesses.

This is why I support overriding the President's veto. I would have preferred for a compromise to be reached with the Administration; but in this instance, we need to move forward without further delay in the process. Protecting our homes and businesses from flood waters is a bi-partisan priority that trumps Washington politics.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, on November 6, 2007, I was unable to be present for two rollcall votes due to technological complications with my vote notification system.

If present, I would have voted accordingly on the following rollcall votes: roll No. 1044—"nay," and roll No. 1045—"aye."

CELEBRATING PHILADELPHIA-MONTGOMERY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY'S VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT PARTICIPATION

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy in Springfield Township, PA on their outstanding participation in the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress. Students and teachers have contributed their time and skills to preserving the remarkable experiences of our war veterans from all service branches, from World War I to the present day Iraq War, as well as the civilians who supported them. I am privileged to represent these students and teachers in Congress.

The Veterans History Project preserves the legacy of those who have served through the