Not surprising, many of the veterans unknowingly exposed to deadly agents are suffering from serious medical conditions. Yet for over 40 years the Department of Defense denied the existence of these tests. All the while, these veterans continued to suffer. Finally, in 2001, DOD admitted to conducting Project 112 and Project SHAD, but they still refused to take responsibility for their care.

Enough is enough. As we approach the end of this Congress, we can do our part to care for these veterans by extending an expiring provision which allows for Project 112 and Project SHAD veterans to receive care at VA facilities without proving service connection.

My constituent, John Olson, a veteran of Project SHAD, spent all day Tuesday undergoing tests for a possible aneurysm. This is the latest in a long line of medical problems since leaving the service. Yet, as my friend from California will state, the VA is approving claims at an embarrassingly low rate. We can and should do everything we can to care for these veterans.

I want to thank Mr. THOMPSON of California for keeping this issue in front of the press, keeping this issue in front of the Congress, and keeping this issue in front of the American people.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for all your work on this bill and all that you have done over the years for both veterans and those currently serving in the military. I value greatly all the work that you have done. But as Mr. REHBERG said, 45 years ago, the Department of Defense began more than 50 chemical and biological weapons tests on U.S. servicemen without their knowledge. The government called these top secret tests Project SHAD. For the next 40 years, the Department of Defense denied Project SHAD even took place.

Ten years ago, I was able to prove that in fact they did take place, and the DOD said they only used simulants and at no time were these veterans exposed to anything harmful. Finally, after 3 more years of work, the DOD admitted they used live and extremely dangerous agents, such as Vx nerve gas and sarin.

More alarming than the lies and the coverup, we are not giving these veterans the care they need and deserve today. A recent Associated Press article revealed that only 6 percent of claims made by Project SHAD veterans and other veterans involved in these secret government tests have been accepted by the VA. That is only 39 out of 641 claims. These brave men served our country and they served it with distinction, and in return they were unknowingly used as human guinea pigs by their own government. Now they are denied care.

The extension of treatment authority would go a long way towards increasing the VA's dismal record in helping our veterans exposed to these harmful agents, a record that the veterans service associations in this country have called shocking, disgraceful and disappointing.

I hope that the chairman can assure me that he will work together with us to find the appropriate vehicle to extend this important provision.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Let me thank Mr. REHBERG of Montana and Mr. THOMPSON, a distinguished Vietnam veteran, for raising this important issue. I am glad the House has taken action on this issue in another measure. I am disappointed the other body has not. Given that fact, we could not add this provision to this bill under the rules of the House, but I will make a good faith effort to work with both of the gentleman to address what is a serious problem.

These great Americans should be honored by our actions. I hope at the end of the day we can look them in the eye and say we have served them, just as they have served our country so honorably.

Mr. REHBERG. We thank the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. I thank the gentleman, Mr. EDWARDS. I would just remind everybody that these veterans are sick today, they are dying, they need the medical care that they deserve and the medical care that they earned. I appreciate your willingness to work with us on this.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Indiana is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise to engage the gentleman from Texas, my good friend Chairman EDWARDS, in a colloquy, and I would like to thank the chairman for agreeing to engage in this. I also want to thank Mr. STUPAK for his continued support and dedication on the issue of steel safety, and look forward to working with both gentlemen on requiring that all iron and steel purchased by the Federal Government be made in the United States. This will keep Americans safe and help our country prosper.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that there is a provision in this measure that requires American steel producers, fabricators and manufacturers to have the opportunity to compete for steel funded through the Department of Defense under this act. While I am encouraged and grateful for this provision and believe that it is a critically important aspect for all government procurements, frankly, I do not believe it is enough.

China disobeys international trading rules, for example, and the playing field is not level. Therefore, it is not possible for our steel producers to compete fairly.

This last April, the Congressional Steel Caucus held a hearing on substandard steel from China. We learned from U.S. Customs and Border Protection about how our government does not have an established process to monitor the safety of steel imports. We also heard from representatives of the domestic steel industry about how some Chinese steel companies do not adhere to international standards and guidelines when they manufacture steel, and that the steel may be used in our military barracks, veterans hospitals, and other vital infrastructure.

I also would mention that this last October it was reported that substandard Chinese steel was used in the construction of a gymnasium at San Pedro High School in California, prompting the California Department of General Services to post an alert on defective Chinese steel tubing fabricated for school construction projects.

Last year, China had a major earthquake and we saw pictures of how their schools and hospitals survived. We cannot wait to take action on this issue until a hospital or school collapses in the United States. Does it cost too much to require the use of American steel if it saves lives? The government that we fund must set an example and make sure that the buildings we build use American steel that can stand the test of time.

When considering the construction of facilities that hospitalize, house and take care of our veterans, we owe them every possibility to ensure their health and safety. We owe them the requirement that safe American steel is used, and that is why Representative STUPAK and I have raised this issue.

Again, I thank the chairman for engaging in this colloquy and for his good work on this bill.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. I would like to thank Chairman VISCLOSKY for his leadership on this issue and Mr. STUPAK as well. We all know that a healthy steel industry in the United States is not only terribly important for our economy, but it is critical to our Nation's defense. It is an industry we must have.

So I look forward to working with the gentleman in good faith to see if we can take the language in this bill that already is supportive of the use of U.S. steel and see if we can't improve that language as we go forward.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. I thank the gentleman very much, and would yield back my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FILNER) assumed the chair.

## FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4040) entitled ''An Act to establish consumer product

safety standards and other safety requirements for children's products and to reauthorize and modernize the Consumer Product Safety Commission.''.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4137) entitled ''An Act to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The committee will resume its sitting.

## MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

The committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I rise today to enter into a colloquy with my colleagues, the chairman of the Military Construction Subcommittee, Mr. EDWARDS, and Ranking Member WAMP, about an issue of significant importance to my constituents in Ridgecrest, California.

China Lake, the large naval installation in Ridgecrest, was slated to become the Navy's Center of Excellence for weapons development as part of the 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure. This news confirmed what those of us familiar with China Lake have always known; China Lake's location, access to airspace, 350 days of flying a year and exceptional personnel make it an excellent place for the military to develop the tools for the men and women serving on the front line.

Unfortunately, since the recommendation was made, I have had concerns that it is not being implemented as consistently with the original recommendation as it should be. I am concerned that the number of jobs slated to move and overall construction plan has decreased more than would be expected.

For these reasons, I come to the floor today to ask the chairman that he work with me to ensure that Congress continues its oversight of the BRAC implementation process.

I would yield to the subcommittee chairman.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. I want to thank Mr. MCCARTHY for mentioning this issue. I was one of those several years ago who raised serious questions about whether BRAC was adequately funded or not. We were told it was. It turns out construction costs have skyrocketed in fact above original estimates.

I would look forward to working with the gentleman to see that our subcommittee, working with Mr. WAMP in good faith, exercises the oversight that we have a responsibility to carry out to see that BRAC dollars are spent, spent wisely, spent efficiently, and that we do everything humanly possible to keep the BRAC process on time.

Mr. WAMP. If the gentleman will yield, I thank the gentleman from California for raising this issue before the House tonight. As the gentleman has seen firsthand, dealing with this multiyear, multibillion-dollar BRAC process, some of the business plans that were initially adopted have changed. He is doing everything he can to make sure that the Department of Defense sticks as close as possible to those plans. I join Chairman EDWARDS and commit to working to ensure that we conduct proper oversight of the BRAC process.

I want to thank the chairman for this commitment to fully fund the BRAC process, which was a major point of discussion throughout our 100 hours and 19 hearings this year, to make sure BRAC is fully funded on time.

I am grateful the gentleman from California has taken this initiative tonight.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I want to thank Chairman EDWARDS and Ranking Member WAMP for their leadership on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

### AMENDMENT NO. 24 OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent to offer the amendment of Mr. BOEHNER, the minority leader, at this point in the reading.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

Mr. OBEY. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Chairman, it is 9:15 at night. We don't know how long it is going to take us to complete this bill tonight. And what we are being asked to do, as I understand it, is to give unanimous consent so that the gentleman may be able to offer an amendment which he otherwise would not be able to offer because we have already moved past that point in the bill. That is my understanding.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Would the gentleman yield to a question?

Mr. OBEY. Go ahead.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. It was our understanding as I was waiting for the proper time to offer this amendment that the body would take the two colloquies first, and then we would have the opportunity of presenting this in this form. So I think actually going through this form in the long run was probably more timesaving than doing other kinds of actions if this was not allowed.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, continuing under my reservation, I am not interested in the reason why the gentleman's request is tardy. I simply want to repeat, it is my understanding that what the gentleman is asking us to do is to allow him to offer an amendment which we have already passed in the reading of the bill.

I will not object to that request, provided we have certain understandings about how long we are going to drone on on these issues. Since this is already a non-germane amendment, I want to make sure I understand what the full request is going to be.

My understanding is that Mr. BURGESS also has an amendment which he wants to offer which has also been passed in the reading; is that correct?

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Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I don't know that one.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. I believe the gentleman is correct.

Mr. OBEY. If that is the correct understanding, then I simply want to make certain that if we grant this request, that there will be only one speaker on that side on the subject of the amendment that the gentleman from Utah wants to offer and one speaker on that side of the aisle on the amendment that Mr. BURGESS desires to offer.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If the gentleman will yield on that issue? That was always our intent. I think I am enough.

Mr. OBEY. But is that the understanding?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. That is my understanding.

Mr. WAMP. If the chairman would yield.

Mr. OBEY. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. WAMP. I just want to say, in all fairness, Mr. Chairman, the Chair allowed the reader to read past this point with people on their feet for the colloquy, with an understanding on both sides that the colloquy would go first and then we would start this point in the bill.

The reading was an accidental reading, not that someone wasn't here ready to offer the amendments. Mr. BURGESS was sitting right here. And points of order are going to be raised against both. So, with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, if we can get on with it, we will dispose of it quickly.

Mr. OBEY. If I can take back the time. I know Mr. BURGESS was here. I saw him sitting here for a considerable length of time, and I am not trying to pin a tail on anybody. My point is simply that this has not been a day noted for its courtesy across the aisle. And I am perfectly willing to grant courtesy, provided that we have a clear understanding that the House is not going to be abused, in terms of its time, in the process.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my reservation.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from Utah is the designee of the gentleman from Ohio and may offer his amendment at this time.

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 24 offered by Mr. BISHOP of Utah: