

Lakes Regional Board of Directors. The Lansing Area APRI Chapter recognized him earlier this year as a Role Model for his work in Civil Rights and the community.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me and applaud the work of a dear friend, Bruce G. McAttee. For many years an important member of my own campaigns, I consider Bruce a dear friend and skilled analyst. I value his capable, proficient expertise on a broad variety of subjects. I wish him the best as he enters this next phase of his life.

CONGRATULATING THE NATIONAL
JOINT APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING
COMMITTEE ON THEIR 20TH
NATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC) on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of their National Training Institute, which will be held this weekend at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. It will also be my pleasure to address this gathering back home in Michigan's 15th Congressional District.

I wish to commend the NJATC's National Training Institute for what they do for working men and women across the country. I believe they serve as an example of the good work labor unions have done for this country. I think it is entirely appropriate that the 20th annual National Training Institute will be held in Michigan, the state that most have deemed the birthplace of the American labor movement. This is a point in which I take great pride, as Michigan has long had a history of looking out for our workers and supporting the growth and success of our labor unions.

The partnership of the National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is unique and it has led to a special training institute that puts a value on skilled trade and allows apprentices to "earn while you learn." This is critical for those in Southeast Michigan and across the country, as they start their second career, or even begin their first. Skilled trades provide our families with respectable and fair wages, benefits that will provide for their families and training that will allow them to successfully complete various jobs within the electrical industry.

As the National Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee enters its 68th year, I would like to once again commend them for their fine work and congratulate them for the more than 350,000 apprentices which they have skillfully trained. I look forward to their 20th National Training Institute and I am so pleased that they will be holding this special event in Michigan's 15th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING GENERAL AVIATION

SPEECH OF

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 508 recognizes the contributions of general aviation and encourages general aviation activities. General aviation is a little recognized, major sector of the airline industry, which contributes \$150 billion to United States direct and indirect economic output. I also want to mention the Transportation Security Administration Reauthorization Act of 2009, which included an important section setting up a general aviation working group within the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, to advise the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on security issues in general aviation. This advisory group was established after the TSA began rulemaking on the Large Aircraft Security Program that threatened to swallow general aviation amidst burdensome and unnecessary regulations, suited for large commercial aircraft. Longstanding unattended issues and insufficient attention to the nation's important General Aviation sector are finally getting the attention they deserve. Along with other members of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I intend to see that General Aviation security issues are treated uniquely for the sector they administer.

However, as most members who have sat in on any hearing with the FAA, TSA, DHS or any other security agency may now know, the District of Columbia's main airport, the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), is uniquely hampered by impossibly restrictive regulations that have destroyed general aviation in the nation's capital, and arbitrary practices may be spreading to others. In the Homeland Security Committee, we have taken the important first steps to give detailed attention to this major section of the airline industry to the new administration.

After 9/11 the restrictions on General Aviation in the nation's capital, in particular, became symbolic of arbitrary action against general aviation that could happen anywhere. Even though New York City was the epicenter of 9/11, the nation's capital is the only location that suffers under unique restrictions that have crippled general aviation here. In fact, there was no general aviation for four years. After joining in my complaints at hearings, the former Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, DON YOUNG, threatened to subpoena any agency that did not comply with a bill that aimed to compel the resumption of general aviation flights at DCA and to hold them in contempt if they refused to appear before the committee to report on progress. As a result, a plan finally was put in place with requirements, but the DCA Access Standard Security Program (DASSP) was almost worse than no plan at all. Before 9/11, general aviation activity at DCA accounted for 1/3 (approximately 30,000) of the total annual operations at DCA. In contrast, in October 2005 when program DASSP began, operations averaged about one flight per week. Today, activity averages about three to four flights per day, about 1000 a year. The requirements in the DASSP include:

General aviation operators must adopt a security program, background checks on flight

crews, identify a security coordinator, and train on security procedures

All DASSP flights must carry an armed security officer

(ASO) on board (very few such accredited officers are available.)

Flights must depart from one of 27 TSA approved DASSP gateway airports. Full departure screening of crew, passengers, baggage, and aircraft by TSA security inspectors

Flights must request permission to operate in DCA no sooner than 72 hours in advance of the flight (due to DCA slot requirements) and no later than 24 hours in advance of the flight (for TSA security reviews) for each flight into DCA.

These same screening procedures must be used for flights departing DCA

Charges approximately \$230 are assessed to cover TSA's screening costs plus \$15/passenger for screening names against the No-Fly and Selectee lists

Requirements for an Armed Security Officer and use of a gateway airport are predictably, and we think, deliberately impossible for most operators to meet. TSA has approximately 200 registered operators in the DASSP, making the wait for an ASO intolerable.

However, the Department of Homeland Security has determined "that general aviation presents only limited and mostly hypothetical threats to security . . . (and) that the steps general aviation airport owners and managers have taken to enhance security are positive and effective." DHS goes further in its report on general aviation:

"The current status of [general aviation] operations does not present a serious homeland security vulnerability requiring TSA to increase regulatory oversight of the industry."

"Although [TSA's Office of Intelligence] has identified potential threats, it has concluded that most [general aviation] aircraft are too light to inflict significant damage, and has not identified specific imminent threats from general aviation"

Nevertheless, the nation's capital has been singled out as the only jurisdiction under particularly onerous, unnecessary and wasteful program restrictions. As the initial approach of TSA to general aviation in general showed, however, the entire general aviation sector was about to be buried by the Large Aircraft Security Program, until our committee said "NO!" The thoughtless creep mission of the TSA into General Aviation, and the total failure to weigh actual security risks against the implications of draconian security measures, was stopped by our Committee on Homeland Security. The District of Columbia general aviation community deserves the same respect and attention.

General aviation at DCA is not the only industry in the District of Columbia that has been wiped out by arbitrary and restrictive airspace regulations. The South Capitol Street Heliport is a commercial heliport that once served east coast cities such as New York, Miami and Boston. It continues to serve the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit and the U.S. Park Police. The Heliport is also the point of evacuation for the Supreme Court and part of the Department of Defense Nightingale program. In fact, on 9/11 this heliport actually became the Air Control Command Tower when DCA was evacuated. Moreover, having shown it was a vital asset, not a liability, for two years after 9/11, under an agreement with the Secret Service—an agreement that was later

adopted by the TSA to develop its Civil Aviation Security Rules—the South Capitol Heliport continued to receive corporate commercial clients and news gathering helicopters. Yet, without explanation, beginning in October 2003, commercial operators have been altogether restricted from using the heliport, despite the fact that the heliport owners have been clear that they are willing to comply with any and all security demands.

The nation's capital has all but lost helicopter service, even for the vital security purposes our heliport has performed. Without corporate commercial clients the South Capitol Heliport cannot generate enough revenue to survive. The owner has submitted the highest level security plans, but the TSA and the Department of Homeland Security have failed to respond. At my request, the Committee on Homeland Security has added heliports specifically to the list of entities on the general aviation working group. This heliport is vital for both security and commercial helicopter operations that the District of Columbia cannot afford to lose. While we pause to recognize the importance of general aviation to the U.S. economy, I use this occasion to remind my colleagues in the Congress and the Administration to recognize the importance of general aviation to the nation's capital.

CITY OF NEWCASTLE

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the City of Newcastle, Washington, which was recently ranked seventeenth by Money Magazine on their list of "America's Best Small Towns." I'm proud to represent Newcastle, a city that affords residents a unique opportunity to live near the "hustle and bustle" of everyday life while retreating into a rural small town setting.

It is fitting that Money Magazine released its rankings the same week that Newcastle held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a multi-year, multi-phase public works project that shows the city's true colors: leadership, patience and encouragement. Although I couldn't be at the celebration personally, I once again congratulate them on the expansion of the Coal Creek Parkway, to help alleviate the flow of traffic for its businesses and citizens.

Newcastle has grown by leaps and bounds, developing and offering new attractions and conveniences for citizens and businesses alike. Officially incorporated in 1994, Newcastle's population at the time was 7,000. 15 years later, Newcastle's population has grown to about 10,000 and the city's amenities continue to grow as well. A new YMCA will open in September, complete with swimming pools, community rooms, and gyms. A new transit center currently under construction will provide new bus shelters and improve the city's main intersection, benefiting commuters, pedestrians and bicyclists.

In true Pacific Northwest tradition, Newcastle also boasts a vast array of accessible natural resources and outdoor activities. Lake Boren Park, the city's best known location in its parks and trails system, offers walking trails, tennis and basketball courts, playground

equipment for children and is home to special events: the Fourth of July fireworks celebration and Newcastle's summer series of "Concerts in the Park." Of course, I must mention Newcastle's wonderful golf club; perhaps the city's most marketable asset as well as a terrific place for civic engagement and community fundraising. The course is truly beautiful and attracts attendees from all over the Pacific Northwest.

Newcastle is a beautiful city filled with a great mix of small town charm, big city access and natural, fantastic neighborhoods and open spaces, and is very well-deserving of this award to one of America's best small towns in the country. I look forward to continuing to support the goals and ideals of Newcastle residents and its elected leaders.

AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of real health care reform for the American people. As a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I have been working hard to develop a bill that really makes health care better.

What stands out to me the most from my work are the stories I hear from my district in California. Neighbors like Blasa Ochoa, who lost her insurance when her employer went bankrupt, and who has been unable to get another policy because she has a pre-existing condition.

Or Denise from Lakewood who told me that doctors treat her special-needs son like a number and not a person.

The other night, I spoke to several hundred of my neighbors during a telephone town hall, and they told me about the problems with the current system: high costs, exclusions for pre-existing conditions, and the flat out inability to find a plan for those 60 and older.

I'm working so hard on this issue because I know health care reform is what my neighbors back home in California want and need.

America's Affordable Health Choices Act will fix these problems and more.

But sadly, there are still many misconceptions out there.

So let me clear some things up.

This bill will put a stop to abusive insurance company practices, so that you can get a policy no matter what your age or whether you have a pre-existing condition.

This bill will control skyrocketing health costs and make health insurance more affordable. Its strongest cost-control tool is the public health plan option.

We need a strong and stable public option because the private plans, busy seeking profits, have been unsuccessful in controlling the growth in healthcare costs. Their idea of controlling costs is denying care!

But a robust public plan, like the one in this bill, will give the private plans real competition and persuade them to change their ways. This makes health care cheaper for you.

A strong public plan will show how investing in comprehensive, high-quality care, including preventive care, will make Americans healthier and save money at the same time.

An NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll from earlier this year showed that 76 percent of American voters want a public health plan option. And I am proud to have worked on a bill that gives them just that.

But the public plan option is not the only standout provision in this bill.

This bill will protect small businesses and their employees.

This bill is going to help small businesses offer health insurance to their employees—something most small employers want, but can't afford to do right now.

Currently, small businesses pay an average of 18 percent more for health coverage than large businesses.

But with the America's Affordable Health Choices Act, small businesses will have access to the new Health Insurance Exchange, giving them the benefits of lower rates that only large businesses now enjoy. The exchange will also give small businesses more plans to choose from.

The bill also creates a new tax credit—worth up to half the cost of health insurance premiums—to assist small employers who want to offer coverage.

Finally, small businesses will be exempt from the "pay or play" requirements that will apply to large employers. Small businesses with a total payroll of \$250,000 or less—that's \$250,000 in employee payroll, and doesn't count the owner's take home pay—will be exempt from "pay or play."

Altogether, the bill makes it easier for small businesses and their employees to afford high quality care while protecting their bottom line.

I encourage my colleagues in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle to stop the bickering—and stop spreading misconceptions that are delaying this much-needed reform bill.

Americans cannot wait any longer. They're counting on us to get this done. We need to pass reform that lowers cost, promotes choice and provides care for all, no matter where they work or how large—or small—their paychecks.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Fiscal Year 2010 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 2996). This important bill makes timely investments to protect and preserve our country's natural resources, enhance climate change research and adaptation efforts, empower Native American communities, and support the arts. I thank Chairman OBEY, Chairman DICKS, my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, and the House leadership for their hard work on this legislation.

This legislation upholds America's leadership in environmental stewardship. It includes an 8 percent funding increase for the National Parks Service and a 6 percent increase for the National Wildlife Refuges. I am pleased that the bill includes my language for the first ever