

have the opportunity to say "no" to more money for our own offices without opposing needed increases for our veterans. This isn't the way to do business.

Third, I regret that the first appropriations priority of this Congress is the legislative branch. While spending bills to support veterans, border security, and our men and women in uniform languish, we are sending a bill to increase our allowances to the President. Our veterans should be first in line, not us.

Because of this failure, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will, for the tenth time in 11 years, get its budget late. Late funding threatens the quality of care at the VA and hinders the VA's ability to recruit well-trained medical professionals, maintain facilities, and acquire new equipment.

During testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on July 27, 2007, former VA medical center directors stated that most VA budget cycles began via a continuing resolution. As a result, decisions were made on the basis of cost rather than on the basis of the highest quality. The expression, "a day late, a dollar short," comes to mind.

By passing advanced appropriations for veterans in this year's budget, we will make sure the VA isn't playing a waiting game with its budget next year. But that doesn't mean we can fall down on the job of supporting our nation's veterans this year. We should be passing legislation to support our veterans, not this.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO  
THE PEOPLE OF AMERICAN  
SAMOA, SAMOA AND INDONESIA  
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE  
EARTHQUAKES AND TSUNAMI  
DEVASTATION

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 1, 2009*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deep condolences to the people of American Samoa and Samoa on Tuesday suffered a devastating tsunami triggered by a powerful earthquake of 8.0 on the Richter scale. The destructive path of the tsunami has flattened villages and caused the deaths of over a hundred people. I am truly saddened by this devastating turn of events. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims' families during this most difficult time.

While hundreds of people are being treated for injuries and as rescue efforts continue, I am glad to see that relief supplies are getting to the Pacific islands right away.

Madam Speaker, I also would like to extend my condolences to the people of western Indonesia who regrettably suffered a powerful earthquake on Wednesday, where at least 1,100 people have been killed. The aftermath of this earthquake has caused landslides and trapped thousands under buildings, including two hospitals. I send my deepest sympathies to the families who have lost loved ones from this devastating earthquake.

The valiant efforts of local authorities and the Red Cross to rescue victims must not go unnoticed. These brave individuals are on the frontline and face many grave dangers to help

those in need. I would also like to commend my colleague and friend, Congressman ENI FALEOMAVAEGA for his quick response to this terrible tragedy. His leadership during this difficult time will undoubtedly help the people of American Samoa and Samoa rebuild the Pacific islands and restore it back to its beautiful heritage.

Madam Speaker, the coming weeks and months will be a very trying time for all those affected by these natural disasters. I wish the people of American Samoa and Samoa as well as Indonesia a safe recovery.

RECOGNITION OF CITY YEAR NEW  
YORK ON OPENING DAY

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 1, 2009*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of City Year and especially City Year New York to celebrate the Opening Day of the '09-'10 City Year class. Tomorrow is Opening Day for all 19 City Year sites, deploying 1,500 corps members in service to our country's high-need schools, including those in my district.

The '09-'10 City Year New York class has more than 230 young leaders representing 38 out of the 50 states, bringing a diverse group of service-oriented individuals to help New York's children succeed. Being from the great state of New York, I am proud that City Year New York runs the largest City Year program in the country.

I admire City Year for its continued service and dedication to our New York communities. Its goals to help students and schools succeed, build stronger communities, break down social barriers, develop young leaders, and foster active citizenship are what lead to make our nation's youth better equipped for tomorrow's challenges. City Year New York does these things and more at several schools in my community of Harlem, including Vito Marcantonio, James Weldon Johnson, Luis Munoz Rivera, and Jose Celso Barbosa elementary schools, and Jackie Robinson and John S. Roberts middle schools.

Education is the most critical factor for determining the future well-being of our children. President Obama, City Year, and our partners recognize that we cannot afford to fail in this area because our economy and, more importantly, a united democracy depend on it. City Year recognizes this success requires a whole community effort and serves our students with a team comprised of government officials, school staffs, corporate partners, and youth leaders.

Harlem was able to provide space for corps training at The Minisink Town House of the New York Mission Society. I am pleased that community partnerships like these, and the support of corporate partnerships, will ensure that City Year New York is able to continue its efforts and succeed in Harlem.

Let's continue to applaud and support City Year, especially City Year New York, and all service organizations as they continue building better communities. I call upon my fellow Members of Congress to join me in celebrating the Opening Day for these 1,500 corps members as they embark on their missions of service.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS  
WHO SERVE OUR NATION IN THE  
U.S. ARMY

**HON. SPENCER BACHUS**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 1, 2009*

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and admiration that I rise today to honor the Non-Commissioned Officers from the great state of Alabama who serve our Nation in the United States Army.

NCOs from the my state have served in defense of our freedoms, in support of our democracy, and in service to the citizens of the state of Alabama during times of natural disasters and to our Nation in times of national emergencies at home and abroad.

Since 9/11, Army Reservists from Alabama have deployed over 6,000 times and members of the Alabama Army National Guard have made over 15,000 deployments to the Global War on Terror, many for the second, third, and fourth time.

The U.S. Army has designated 2009 as the "Year of the NCO" to pay tribute to the leadership qualities and contributions of the Non-Commissioned Officers charged with executing the military organization's mission and training for personnel and equipment maintenance that make their units function. Those values are embodied in the NCO Creed, which reads:

No one is more professional than I. I am a Non-Commissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Non-Commissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as 'The Backbone of the Army'. I am proud of the Corps of Non-Commissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety;

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind—accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Non-Commissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment;

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Non-Commissioned Officers, leaders!

It is an honor to draw attention to these brave soldiers, and I commend Alabama's Army Non-Commissioned Officers for their service to our State and the Nation.