

We should follow the lead of over half of our nation's states and ensure a uniformity of rights for all voters.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this effort to strengthen the democratic process and give American voters the choices they deserve.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1017) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of this amendment, which restores critical funding for local first responders and public safety officials. Specifically, it ensures adequate funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (FIRE) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program (SAFER), which improve the readiness of our nation's heroic firefighters and emergency service providers, and help them protect and serve our local communities.

My home state was recently impacted by the horrific tornados that struck St. Louis and Joplin, Missouri. We saw firsthand the vital role that local first responders play in the wake of horrific disaster—searching for and rescuing survivors, clearing debris, and providing much needed support to a community suffering from heart-wrenching loss and destruction.

FIRE and SAFER Grants help local fire departments equip, train, and maintain their personnel, preparing them to respond to all forms of emergencies, from natural disasters to terrorists attacks. The city of St. Louis recently was awarded a SAFER grant that was instrumental in saving up to 30 firefighter jobs during tough economic times in our city. These programs are vitally important to firefighters serving in large towns, small cities and rural areas across America, as they are able to address the immediate, individualized needs of departments efficiently and effectively.

The underlying bill would dangerously cut funding for the FIRE and SAFER grants by nearly 60 percent compared to FY 2010 and FY 2011, and putting at least 1,600 firefighters' jobs in jeopardy. At a time when local fire departments and other first responders already face significant budgetary challenges, these cuts irresponsibly threaten our economic recovery and the safety of our communities.

Our local firefighters and first responders are the backbone of safe communities across this country, which is why I have consistently advocated for sufficient funding of FIRE and SAFER grants in requests to House appropriators. These brave Americans and their critical work deserve our full support, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment.

RECOGNIZING THE FOURTH FIGHTER WING OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Fourth Fighter Wing of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base located in Goldsboro, North Carolina in my Congressional district. Today, the Fourth will be honored at the United States Air Force Memorial with the Air Force Historical Foundation's James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle Award. The award recognizes the Fourth's significant contributions to the history of the United States Air Force, as well as its bravery, determination, discipline, esprit de corps and superior joint operational management.

For over five decades the Fourth Fighter Wing has earned a distinguished place in both American aviation history and world military history. This distinction began prior to the United States officially entering World War II with pilots who volunteered to fly as part of the Royal Air Force Eagle Squadrons. Upon entering World War II, these pilots formed the Fourth Fighter Group and set records throughout the War, earning the motto, "Fourth but First." The Fourth continued to contribute to its legacy and Air Force history during the Korean conflict by engaging in the first major all-jet fighter battle in history.

The Fourth Fighter Wing proved to be a superior combat force in Southeast Asia during Vietnam with more than 8,000 combat missions. The Fourth further used their skills during the Persian Gulf War by conducting precision nighttime strikes against Iraqi forces. The Fourth Fighter Wing provided life-saving close air support in Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda, and contributed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Despite risking their lives daily, the Fourth Fighter Wing has always served selflessly, courageously and with great distinction.

The Fourth Fighter Wing has been a source of great pride for eastern North Carolina for the past 50 years while assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. I am very proud to see the dedication, sacrifices, and historical contributions of the Fourth Fighter Wing recognized with this award. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Fourth Fighter Wing on receiving the James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle award and offer my sincere appreciation for their service to the United States of America.

ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE DEREK M. HODGE, FORMER LT. GOVERNOR OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, It is with deep sadness that I rise to pay tribute to a

lifelong friend and political colleague from my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, our former Lt. Governor and President of the 16th Legislature, the Honorable Derek Michael Hodge who passed away on May 31, 2011 after a lengthy illness.

Mr. Speaker, Derek Michael Hodge is being eulogized as a "man of integrity and enthusiasm, a brilliant attorney and politician," and I can testify that this is true of the man who spent his adult life serving his community in the public and private sector. After higher education at Michigan State University and Georgetown University Law Center, he returned to the Virgin Islands in 1972 and joined his brother's law firm, the legendary Hodge, Sheen and Finch. He entered the world of elective politics in 1974 and became District Chairman of the Democratic Party. He first ran for governor in 1982, and though unsuccessful, it was seen as a win for all of us who worked for him as it gave the Virgin Islands electorate a glimpse of his ideas and his intellect. Never one to give up, he successfully became the top vote getter in the race for the Virgin Islands Legislature in 1984. Although a freshman, his colleagues recognized his political and legal acumen, and elected him President of the 16th Legislature of the Virgin Islands. His skill and his love of the Virgin Islands was recognized by the late Governor Alexander Farrelly and he tapped Derek to be his Lt. Governor, a post that he held for eight years and to which he brought professionalism, innovation, efficiency and accountability. As Lt. Governor, he spearheaded efforts to improve the territory's infrastructure, improving the airport, health care facilities, and hazard mitigation projects. As Lt. Governor, Derek served as the territory's Commissioner of Insurance, Chairman of the Banking Board, Overseer of the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Tax Assessor's Office and Corporations Division. He has been credited with re-establishing the territory's bond rating in the municipal bond market which bolstered the Virgin Islands capital improvement program. Throughout his lifetime, Derek wore many other hats, to include college professor, center on the Virgin Islands national basketball team, and President of the Virgin Islands Bar. His life was one of commitment to his beloved Virgin Islands.

Mr. Speaker, Derek's passing is a personal loss for me. He was "like a big brother," as we grew up together in St. Croix and were political allies and friends who worked on many issues and campaigns together including each other's campaigns for office. I will miss his friendship, his counsel and most of all his sense of humor which could soothe and tickle as well as sting. I extend my condolences to his wife Monique, his children Marisol and Jonathan and the wider circle of his family and many friends. Derek lived with passion and integrity. His days among us were well spent and while we will sorely miss him, there are many memories that will make us smile, laugh and be glad that we are among the fortunate ones whose lives he touched along the way. May he rest in God's comfort and peace.