

NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the National Guard State Partnership Program, SPP, Enhancement Act which strengthens and expands this critical capacity building program. The National Guard provides unique capacity building capabilities to Combatant Commanders and U.S. Ambassadors via 65 comprehensive partnerships between National Guard units across the United States and partner nations. The SPP directly supports the broad national interests and security cooperation goals of the United States by engaging partner nations via military, socio-political, and economic conduits at the local, state, and national levels. The program's public diplomacy effectiveness lies in its ability to leverage the full breadth and depth of U.S. defense and interagency capabilities from within the state-country relationship.

The goals of the program reflect an evolving international affairs mission for the National Guard emphasizing its unique state-federal and civil-military characteristics to interact with both the active and reserve forces of foreign nations, interagency partners, and international nongovernmental organizations. The value of the SPP lies in its ability to concentrate a small component of the U.S. defense structure—a state's National Guard—on a single country or region in support of U.S. Government policies and objectives. This concentrated focus supports the development of long term personal relationships and interagency coordination mechanisms that would not otherwise exist.

The SPP has the potential of being increasingly more important tool for Combatant Commanders and U.S. Ambassadors in achieving long-term US objectives. The program has developed from assistance and partnership with primarily Eastern European nations to a program that supports all the non-CONUS combatant commanders. Of particular interest to me are the opportunities that SPP poses for our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. I believe the SPP brings unique capabilities to US Pacific Command in expanding and strengthening bilateral relations with many Asian and Pacific nations. The program can help to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to the region and our allies.

The bill I introduce today helps the SPP by codifying the program's use of funding and spells out the roles that National Guard units can play in their capacity building. The legislation is needed to ensure the program meets its intended goals. The legislation first establishes the process through which funds appropriated to the National Guard may be used to support the program's goals. This is merely a codification of Department of Defense guidance and National Guard Bureau process. Additionally, the legislation outlines the mechanism through which partnerships may be requested and approved. The bill ensures that Department of Defense, a state National Guard and Department of State's equities are considered in the context of broader program goals. Finally, the legislation expands the roles

that a National Guard may perform when in support of the State Partnership Program. The capabilities and missions outlined in this legislation leverage the very unique capabilities inherent in the National Guard which would strengthen our relations with allies and nations across the globe. The dual role of the National Guard provides them a unique opportunity to support Combatant Commander as well as an Ambassadors needs in a given country. I believe this legislation is necessary to codify current practices and enhance the program's positive impact.

Finally, I would note that a version of this legislation passed by voice vote, last year, during consideration of amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. The program has broad support in Congress and I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2009, the day I took office, the national debt was \$10,627,961,295,930.67.

Today, it is \$16,498,229,961,731.67. We've added \$5,970,268,665,801 to our debt in 4 years. This is a \$5.9 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a Balanced Budget Amendment. We must stop this unconscionable accumulation of debt.

HONORING NATHAN T. ITAO

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Nathan T. Itao. Nathan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Nathan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Nathan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Nathan has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Nathan T. Itao for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

LESSONS FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE

HON. TREY GOWDY

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker I submit the following paper on lessons learned from the

Roman Empire from Rachel Castellani, a 6th grade student from Southside Christian School in Simpsonville, SC. Rachel wrote,

I believe that what I have learned can help me with politics and economics. I think that if the Romans had not gone and taken some of the risks they had taken and maybe had been less violent, the empire might still be alive today. A topic I want to talk about is the economy. If you are trying to encourage the lower class citizens (plebians) why do you raise tax rates higher? This is the same thing happening to America, I don't want to be left in the same situation. Let's lower taxes and form new business in America. Don't let our nation crumble like Rome's!

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE REVIEW ACT

HON. JOHN FLEMING

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing, along with a number of our colleagues, the National Wildlife Refuge Review Act. This legislation is necessary because under current law, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can administratively create a national wildlife refuge regardless of size, location or support from the local communities without any input from the Congress.

There may have been some logic in granting this federal agency an unfettered ability to establish a national wildlife refuge in 1903 when the first was created by President Theodore Roosevelt. However, with our national debt exceeding \$16.5 trillion, it is now imperative that the Congress carefully review each significant expenditure of our tax dollars.

During the past four years, the Fish and Wildlife Service has administratively established more than ten national wildlife refuges including two in Kansas and Florida that involve more than 1 million acres of private property and a price tag exceeding \$1 billion. Under current law, the Service first establishes these refuges and then comes to the Congress seeking funds to actually obtain the lands through either fee title or conservation easements.

On October 25, 2011, the Service testified before the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs and stated that requiring a Congressional authorization would "Impede the Service's ability to be strategic, flexible, nimble and responsive to strategically grow the Refuge System."

Mr. Speaker, this is the same federal agency that has an operations and maintenance backlog exceeding \$3 billion, with dozens of refuges infested by invasive species, with overgrown trails and full of potholed roads. By their own admission, they lack the financial resources to fix more than 3,300 mission critical projects. During the past two years, it has become increasingly clear that the Service is incapable of effectively managing what they already own. The Congress has a responsibility to curb their insatiable appetite for property acquisition. For far too long, this agency has placed too much emphasis on growing the refuge system rather than maintaining it.

What I am suggesting is neither a new or radical idea. In fact, under current law, no Administration can create or expand a national