

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in thanking the people of Azerbaijan for their friendship and in congratulating Azerbaijanis around the world on the anniversary of Republic Day.

HONORING THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION RECEPTION

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand before you to recognize the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) as members come together for the annual AHEPA/Daughters of Penelope District #12 and #13 Convention, which will take place at Dynasty Banquets in Hammond, Indiana, from Friday, May 30 to Sunday, June 1, 2014.

The Order of AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922, in Atlanta, Georgia, joining the NAACP and B'nai B'rith in a joint effort to end racism, bigotry and discrimination against all immigrants. AHEPA's mission is in accordance with the principles of ancient Greece, to promote civic responsibility, education, philanthropy, family, and individual excellence through community service. AHEPA is the largest American-based Greek heritage organization and is made up of over 500 chapters throughout North America.

The AHEPA organization has continuously and passionately supported many charitable organizations throughout the region and abroad. AHEPA has raised thousands of dollars for Greek relief programs, feeding hundreds of families and children in Greece. They support national efforts, including the Saint Baldrick's Foundation for children's cancer research, the National Hellenic Foundation, and the National Hellenic Museum, among many others. Through each chapter, AHEPA serves as an inspiration to local communities.

As a proud member of AHEPA Chapter 78, based in Merrillville, Indiana, I can attest to the tireless efforts our local chapters, which serve more people and raise more funding for charitable organizations than ever before. The many organizations throughout the region that have been assisted by the extraordinary generosity of local AHEPA chapters include the Ross Township Food Pantry, Boys and Girls Club, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, Veterans Life Changing Services, and Rebuilding Together, among many others. One example of the tremendous contributions of AHEPA Chapter 78 is the completion of six apartment complexes in Merrillville, which provide accessible housing for senior citizens. Chapter members also give unselfishly of their time through volunteer efforts, delivering meals to the elderly and serving in local soup kitchens. For enthusiastically helping so many families, children, veterans, elderly, and those in need, the members of AHEPA are worthy of the highest praise.

I would also like to recognize my dear friend Sam Benjamin for his continued commitment to advancing AHEPA's mission as he assumes the role of District 12 Governor. Sam's exceptional leadership and dedication to philanthropic efforts will prove invaluable to chap-

ters throughout the district. In addition, I congratulate Matthew Kochevar who is completing his term as District 12 Governor. Matthew has dedicated his time and efforts to AHEPA. He is an outstanding public servant and has had a tremendous impact on many lives through his work with the organization.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. For their remarkable leadership and commitment, as demonstrated through their service to so many in need throughout Northwest Indiana and across the nation, AHEPA's members are an inspiration to us all, and the organization, one to be emulated and admired.

HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. ANN WAGNER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank Chairman MCKEON and the Members of the House Armed Services Committee for the Committee's work on the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. I support the final bill; it is crafted thoughtfully and carefully to reflect the needs of the warfighter while enjoying bipartisan support from this body. Its passage is a testament to the Committee's leadership and hard work to support our men and women in uniform.

I am particularly thankful for the support of the United States Navy's "unfunded priority" request of additional EA-18G Growlers. Early in the budget cycle, following the release of the Administration's Department of Defense budget, the Navy Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Jonathan Greenert testified that there is a growing demand for electronic attack capabilities. Specifically, he requested 22 additional EA-18G Growlers above the President's Budget request to meet that demand.

The EA-18G Growler provides the Navy and all Department of Defense forces with the ability to control the entire electromagnetic spectrum, the only aircraft in the entire inventory with that capability. With warfare increasingly operating within the cyber, information and electronic domains, there is increasing importance in not just understanding, but dominating the electromagnetic spectrum. For this reason, CNO Greenert testified why he believes that the Growler is essential to the warfighter. From the Committee's work, we also understand that the Navy is undertaking further analysis this year to determine the final requirement for the airborne electronic attack (AEA) capability.

Without additional aircraft, the EA-18G Growler manufacturing line is likely to be shut-

tered before the Navy can fulfill its requirements for additional electronic attack. If this scenario is allowed to occur, the Department of Defense would also lose its ability to produce F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters, which are manufactured alongside the Growler in the same production line. Such a loss would affect our Nation's ability to surge strike fighters, meet increasing demand in electronic warfare, and provide competition in tactical aviation. The Growler program has been a model defense acquisition program, meeting all of its cost targets and delivering ahead of the Navy's schedule deadlines. Moreover, the F/A-18 and EA-18G production lines support 60,000 jobs, including 13,000 jobs in my home state of Missouri.

I am pleased that the Committee included support for 5 EA-18G Growlers above the President's Budget Request. While this overall increase will not meet the Navy's total unfunded priority, it demonstrates the Committee's position that the Growler is an essential resource that our Nation requires. Further, the Committee urged the Navy to take steps to keep the manufacturing line solvent until the Department can meet the basic needs of the warfighter in electronic attack. I will continue my work with the House Appropriations Committee to ensure that the Navy receives a sufficient number of Growlers to meet its emerging requirements and keep the manufacturing line open throughout Fiscal Year 2015.

My voice is not alone in trying to support the Navy unfunded priority for additional Growlers. The request has strong support across Congress, as evidenced by a letter circulated earlier in the year that collected 109 House signatures in support of the Growler. This is a strong showing for any program, and one that received significant bipartisan validation. That letter is attached at the conclusion of my remarks.

In closing, the Nation faces many challenges as we send our sons and daughters into harm's way to defend our freedom and liberty. The Committee's bill is always a statement about its judgment on how best to serve those warfighters. I am glad that they have made EA-18G Growlers a high priority, and I look forward to working with them over the course of Fiscal Year 2015.

Additionally, I have included a support letter for the EA-18G Growler that I authored with Representative LACY CLAY that is signed by 109 Members of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, April 11, 2014.

Hon. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ADAM SMITH,
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN,
Chairman, House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PETER VISCLOSKY,
Ranking Member, House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee,
Washington, DC.

GENTLEMEN: It has come to our attention the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request of the President does not include funding for the United States Navy F/A-18 program, which includes the EA-18G Growler. If accepted by Congress, the result would be the premature end to this critical production line.

As you know, the EA-18G Growler is the Nation's only full spectrum airborne electronic attack (AEA) and protection aircraft. It provides this capability not just for the