

restrictions that result in disparate access to these constitutionally protected rights.

Certainly, if the state has a legitimate interest in requiring a woman to wait several days, undergo a physical examination, receive counseling and education about alternative options before making the decision to terminate a pregnancy, then it has an equally compelling interest in requiring a person seeking to obtain a firearm to demonstrate the mental, physical, and emotional fitness to possess an instrument that is used to kill more than 30,000 Americans annually.

I hope that one day soon in America it will not be harder for a woman to exercise her fundamental right to choose than it is for a person on the terrorist watchlist to lawfully purchase and possess firearms.

At a minimum, I urge the Congress to rededicate itself to the critically important but unfinished task of ensuring equality of opportunity and protection of law for women.

CONGRATULATING JOE RITCHEY
AND PROSPECTIVE, INC.

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Joe Ritchey and his company, Prospective, Inc. on being named one of the 2015 BCA 10: Best Businesses Partnering with the Arts in America honorees. Presented every year by Americans for the Arts' Business Committee for the Arts (BCA), the BCA 10 awards honor U.S. companies for their exceptional commitment to the arts.

Joe Ritchey and his firm actively support a vibrant local arts scene in Reston and throughout Fairfax County. Mr. Ritchey helped form the Initiative for Public Art—Reston (IPAR), where he still serves as President and Chair. IPAR consists of a group of civic leaders who represent Reston's key community organizations and seek to inspire and expand the community's commitment to public art. In 2008, IPAR launched a process that led to the adoption of the Public Art Master Plan for Reston which strives to incorporate art into public spaces. Anyone strolling through the many parks and public squares in Reston can readily see the impact of the Master Plan.

Mr. Ritchey's contributions and influence extend far beyond Reston and have benefited our larger Fairfax County community. A passionate lover of the arts, he has served on the boards of the Arts Council of Fairfax County (Board Chairman in 2013 and 2014), Children's Museum of Northern Virginia, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts Associates, and the Greater Reston Arts Center.

A successful businessman, Mr. Ritchey also shares his knowledge and expertise with numerous other organizations. He serves or has served on the boards or in other leadership roles of the Reston Hospital Center of HCA Virginia Health System (Board Chairman in 2011 and 2012), the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, the Dulles Corridor Rail Association, the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, and he is an active supporter of Reston Interfaith, Nature House, and the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis.

Mr. Ritchey has received numerous awards and accolades in recognition of his service to our community. These awards include the NAOIP 1995 Award of Excellence for Economic Development, 2003 "Best of Reston" designation, the 2004 Fairfax County Federation of Citizen Associations Citizen of the Year, the 2006 Times Community Newspapers Reston Citizen of the Year, the 2009 inaugural Robert E. Simon Community Service Award, the 2011 Jinx Hazel Arts Citizen of the Year, and in 2013 he was the Grand Marshal of the Reston Holiday Parade.

Northern Virginia is a vibrant region where countless people donate their time, energy, and financial support for the betterment of our neighbors and our community as a whole.

In this region where so many do so much, Mr. Ritchey stands out and is an example of what one person can do. He has created a legacy that will live on for future generations to enjoy and has truly been a force in Reston and Northern Virginia being considered among the best places in the country in which to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Joe Ritchey and Prospective, Inc. on being honored as a BCA 10 recipient, and in thanking him for his unwavering and tireless efforts on behalf of our community.

SUPPORT FOR OMNIBUS AND TAX
EXTENDERS LEGISLATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I voted for both the omnibus and tax extender bills that came before the House this week. They represented hard work and compromises by many on both sides of the aisle and across the advocacy community. I commend so many of my colleagues for reminding us of what we can accomplish when we work together on behalf of the American people.

These bills don't just do the bare minimum to keep the government open and continue the policy status quo as we have done many times in recent years. Instead, they actually invest in important programs, many that I have supported for years and that are priorities for Oregonians.

I am pleased to see the extenders legislation support research and development, and provide important tools—such as an extension of the New Markets program—to invest in our communities. The tax package increases the benefit for transit riders to the same level as the parking tax benefit, providing much-needed tax fairness, strengthening options for commuters, and eliminating an incentive to drive to work. This provision will ease congestion and road wear and make our transportation system more sustainable.

The omnibus also contains robust funding for public broadcasting, animal welfare enforcement, and health and scientific research. It includes the highest-ever levels of funding for the implementation of the Water for the Poor and Water for the World Acts, for which I have fought for years. I am pleased that the bill contains many provisions that I helped champion, including language to ensure the

Department of Justice stay out of the way of state medical marijuana laws, language that supports industrial hemp research programs, and increased funding for brain research.

There are also many positive provisions for the environment in these bills. I am delighted that the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been reauthorized and funded at a significant increase of \$144 million. This program is one of the most important tools we have to protect land and habitat, construct parks and purchase other outdoor spaces that are cherished in communities.

Both bills take important steps to help us transition away from fossil fuels and allow us to meaningfully contribute in the global fight against climate change. In particular, the long-term extension of tax credits for wind and solar energy development will significantly expand the development of clean renewable energy across the country at a critical time in our struggle to reduce carbon emissions. With this support, the solar industry estimates that by 2020, it will deploy more than 20 GW of solar electricity annually.

The provisions supporting wind energy will free that industry from a repeated boom-and-bust cycle caused by inaction in Congress, and will strengthen the build out of low-cost, emission-free renewable energy from coast to coast.

The elimination of many of the damaging environmental riders that were proposed during the appropriations process was a major victory, measures that would have defunded the Clean Power Plan, or reduced protections for endangered species among many others.

There are certainly provisions in both of these bills that I do not support. It is troubling that we are drifting away from discipline in terms of dealing with the deficit. There were many missed opportunities to reduce wasteful spending and redirect those resources to where it is more needed. We will continue to spend billions of dollars every year on a nuclear arsenal we can't afford and will not use. Through tax breaks and direct subsidies, we will also continue to directly support wildly profitable industries that do not need this support—such as agribusiness and the petroleum industry.

The bills also fail to address the need for new and different revenues, such as a carbon tax and a gas tax increase to rebuild crumbling infrastructure, to protect our environment and to properly invest in social safety net programs over the long run.

Both bills include provisions that on their own, I would not support. I remain unpersuaded that we need to lift the crude oil export ban. I have voted against such legislation in the past since it will not help us transition to a cleaner energy future. The inclusion of the Cybersecurity Information and Sharing Act is troubling because it fails to strike the right balance between privacy and security, or between the responsibility of the private sector and the government. The omnibus also continues an irresponsible policy rider that interferes with the District of Columbia's ability to manage the sale of marijuana to ensure safety and appropriate regulations. Finally, the extenders legislation imposes new rules and responsibilities on the overburdened staff at the Internal Revenue Service. We currently have the most efficient tax collection system in the world among developed nations, but we have been systematically destroying its ability to serve taxpayers by doing its job.