

twenty years as the Senior Pastor at the First Baptist Church of Milton. Dr. Spencer tirelessly served the Lord and communities all along the Gulf Coast, and his leadership will be deeply missed.

Dr. Spencer was born in Senatobia, Mississippi and graduated from Senatobia High School in 1965. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from William Carey University in 1969, his Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1973, and his Doctor of Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979. Over the last 45 years, Dr. Spencer has served throughout the Southeastern United States, including North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida, with his wife of 46 years, Connie, at his side.

Dr. Spencer answered the call in 1996 for what would be his final assignment. After 16 years of service at the First Baptist Church of Long Beach, Mississippi, the First Baptist Church of Milton welcomed Dr. Spencer as pastor. In addition to being known for his love for preaching and his ability to capture his congregation through storytelling, Dr. Spencer played a major part in inspiring his congregation to give back to the local community. Under his leadership, the church grew both spiritually and physically. Countless individuals in Northwest Florida and overseas have been touched by the passion and service of First Baptist Church of Milton. The dedication of its people is evidenced by the eight churches they helped establish in Santa Rosa County, Florida, and the churches and foster homes they built and renovated as part of their mission trips.

In addition to his seminary work, Dr. Spencer has served on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, as a trustee for William Carey College, and as an adjunct professor at the William Carey campus in Gulfport, Mississippi. In 2007, Dr. Spencer was also elected to the State Board of Missions as a representative of Santa Rosa County, where he served until 2013.

While Dr. Spencer's time as pastor has officially come to a close, he understands that God's work is never done, and in addition to spending time with his family, pursuing his love of writing, music, wood-working, and golf, Dr. Spencer hopes to continue playing a role in the success of the Church.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Dr. Spencer for his dedication and service to Northwest Florida. My wife Vicki and I wish him and Connie, their two sons, and two grandchildren all the best as they embark on this next journey in their lives. May the Spirit of the Lord continue to bless the Spencer family and the congregation of the First Baptist Church of Milton.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in reluctant opposition to H.R. 4974, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017 (MilCon). MilCon funds military construction projects for the Department of Defense and health care and other important services for the country's veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This is a vital piece of legislation that we must get right so that our veterans get the benefits they earned and deserve and that our military has the facilities they need. Unfortunately, the bill has a major shortcoming—it cuts \$1.5 billion below the President's request for the VA, including more than \$1.2 billion from the Veterans Health Administration. The VA serves over forty-three million Americans a year and over a billion dollar in cuts will make it harder for the VA to provide for our veterans. It is for this reason I cannot support the bill.

Over the years, the VA has faced a number of challenges. The VA faced funding shortfalls and was unprepared to meet the demands of a new generation of returning veterans. Access to quality health care and veterans' benefits has been an ongoing challenge for the VA, highlighted by the claims backlog and by veterans waiting long periods for health care appointments. However, these challenges are made more difficult to overcome when Congress provides insufficient funds to the VA or shuts down the government, as it did in 2013—which led to furloughs at the VA. Many of my constituents are active duty or veterans who receive services through the VA and they deserve a fully funded VA that can quickly and accurately manage their claims.

We simply must do better. As the Ranking Member on the House Budget Committee I proposed budgets that reversed sequestration for not just defense programs, but also for nondefense programs because they include important priorities like veterans' health care. I also proposed extending advance appropriations for all of VA's discretionary programs so that veterans' programs are insulated from the possibility of future government shutdowns. I am going to continue to fight to ensure that the VA gets the resources it needs to provide for the nation's veterans and I am hopeful that more funding will be provided to the VA when this bill returns from conference.

COMMEMORATING TERENCE J. O'SULLIVAN

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember an extraordinary advocate for workers of all kinds, Mr. Terence J. O'Sullivan.

Terence dedicated his life to advocating on behalf of workers and, more important, negotiating collective bargaining agreements that helped workers earn pay to support their families, good benefits, and the opportunity for advancement and better lives. He was the Gen-

eral Secretary-Treasurer of the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), one of the most diverse and effective unions representing public service employees.

Terence dedicated his life to fighting for workers' rights and for social and economic justice. He chose this path because of the strong working tradition that grew out of his Irish heritage and a dedication to assisting those in need, which he found as a man of deep faith. Following in his stead, his son Terry continues as the General President of LIUNA, continuing his father's strong leadership tradition and example for the American labor movement.

Terence was a positive force in the lives of thousands, if not millions, of workers across the nation through his advocacy and the positive changes he supported. Terence recently passed away in the 11th District of Virginia in what would have been his 86th year. Although he will be greatly missed, his legacy will endure through those he touched, those he helped, and the societal changes he championed.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the important work of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in its 40th anniversary year. The American Folklife Center was created by Congress in 1976 to "preserve and present American folklife" through research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibitions, publications, and training. The Center collects and preserves living traditional culture and makes its valuable resources available to researchers and the general public in a celebration of American culture.

Many of my colleagues are familiar with the work of the American Folklife Center because of the Veterans History Project, created with unanimous, bipartisan support in 2000. In this model oral history project—now the largest oral history project in America—volunteers across the country are recording interviews and collecting diaries, photographs, letters, and scrapbooks about veterans' wartime experiences, from WWI to the present day. The growing collection tells the personal stories of more than 100,000 veterans and enables current and future generations of Americans to understand their sacrifices.

A similar Congressional initiative through the American Folklife Center is the Civil Rights History Project, concluding this year. The Folklife Center partnered with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture on a project to record the experiences and memories of heroes across the country who participated in the historic struggles to secure freedom, equality and full citizenship for African Americans.

The American Folklife Center's archive is the largest of its kind in the world, preserving the cultural practices of American families,