

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3064,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. MELVIN L. WATT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report on fiscal year 2000 appropriations bill for the District of Columbia and the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

Let me first say that the process by which this bill came to the floor is very troubling. We are here today voting on a conference report for fiscal year 2000 for Labor-HHS and Education when the bill was never considered or voted on by the House of Representatives. This unheard of procedure has not provided sufficient time for debate and consideration of amendments to allow us to participate in the process. Bypassing the normal procedures has shut Members out of having any opportunity to assist in crafting and improving this bill.

I am also troubled by some of the funding levels included in this bill. This bill makes funding cuts to programs which are vital to the well being of many American families. The people most hurt by this bill are the very people who need our assistance and support the most. This bill would cut funding by over \$1 billion to social service programs for the elderly and low-income Americans; would not provide funding to immunize over 300,000 children against childhood diseases; and would cut funding for over 5,000 teachers who provide educational assistance to disadvantaged children.

Perhaps my biggest concern with this bill is that it does not include emergency assistance for those people in the eastern part of my state who are suffering from the floods of Hurricane Floyd. Thousands of people in North Carolina are still dealing with the aftermath of the floods. Entire towns have been destroyed, thousands have lost their homes, and many farmers have lost all of their crops and livestock. While this bill includes over \$2 billion in emergency spending, it cuts out the \$508 million in emergency assistance for agricultural damaged caused by Hurricane Floyd. This assistance would have been a start in providing people in North Carolina with the opportunity to begin to rebuild and recover. This bill represents an opportunity lost. I urge my colleagues to oppose the conference report.

WIND HAZARD REDUCTION
CAUCUS.

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to alert my colleagues to the formation last month of a very important new organization, the Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus. The caucus

is cochaired by our colleagues, Representative DENNIS MOORE of Kansas, and Representative WALTER B. JONES of North Carolina. Both of these gentlemen have a great deal of first hand experience in helping their neighbors recover from the ravages of tornadoes and hurricanes. These Members are to be commended for their efforts to sensitize their colleagues to the extent to which the problems these storms cause are avoidable with proper planning. This caucus will be dedicated to achieving a 75 percent reduction in damage from windstorms by the end of the coming decade. Remarks of Mr. James E. Davis, executive director of the American Society of Civil Engineers and also the remarks of Congressmen JONES and MOORE, which were made last week at a reception celebrating the formation of the caucus are found below.

WIND HAZARD REDUCTION CAUCUS RECEPTION

REMARKS BY REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS MOORE
(D-KS) CAUCUS CO-CHAIR

October 27, 1999

To paraphrase Mark Twain, everybody talks about the weather but *this caucus* does something about it. All 50 states are vulnerable to the hazards of windstorms. During Hurricane Floyd alone, North Carolina lost 48 lives, more than twice the number of deaths along the entire Eastern Coast for the 1998 hurricane season and is now faced with staggering economic damages in the billions of dollars. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew resulted in \$26.5 billion in losses and 61 fatalities. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo resulted in \$7 billion in losses and 86 fatalities. In 1998, a calm year according to experts, due to wind related storms there was more than \$5.5 billion in damages, and at least 186 fatalities.

The federal government invests \$5 million to develop and promote knowledge, practices, and policies that seek to reduce and where possible eliminate losses from wind related disasters. In contrast the federal government invests nearly \$100 million per year in reducing earthquake losses through the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program. A federal investment in Wind Hazard Reduction will pay significant dividends in lives saved and decreased property damage.

The Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus or "Big Wind" will develop a program to reduce loss of life and property by 75% by 2010. Damage can be substantially reduced through the development and implementation of an effective National Wind Hazard Reduction Program. This program will address better: design and construction methods and practices; emergency response; use of modern technology for early-warning systems; building codes enforcement; and public education and involvement programs.

We are focused on increasing the awareness of Members of Congress about the public safety and economic loss issues associated with wind, increasing public safety and decreasing the economic losses associated with tropical storms, thunderstorms, and tornadoes.

In my own hometown of Wichita, Kansas, a tornado rated F4 intensity, plowed through the suburb of Haysville on May 3, 1999. It was responsible for 6 deaths, 150 injuries and over 140 million dollars in damage.

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported across the United States, resulting in 80 deaths and over 1,500 injuries. A tornado is a violently rotating column of air ex-

tending from a thunderstorm to the ground. The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.

Through we still can not control the weather, with this caucus we will at least be able to do something about it. Thank you for coming to the kick-off reception for the Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus. I also want to thank the American Society of Civil Engineers especially Brian Pallasch and Martin Hight for their insight into the development of this caucus along with Jim Turner, Democratic staff of the Science Committee. Legislation is not created in a vacuum; Congressman Jones and I look forward to working with all of you in the months to come.

REMARKS BY REPRESENTATIVE WALTER JONES

(D-NC)

Thank you for your warm welcome. I am pleased to be a co-chair of the Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus, also known as Big Wind. My district and many other districts in North Carolina are extremely vulnerable to the hazards presented by windstorms. The most recent string of hurricanes to sweep the Eastern seaboard is testament to the severity of these storms.

In North Carolina alone, Hurricane Floyd took 48 lives, more than twice the total number of deaths along the entire eastern coast during the 1998 hurricane season. And it is predicted that the economic damages will reach well into the billions of dollars. Still we have yet to realize the full impact of these hurricanes, both financially and environmentally. For these reasons I am pleased to be part of the Big Wind Caucus. It is vitally important to increase awareness for public safety and decrease the enormous economic loss associated with wind hazards. I look forward to working with Congressman Moore and the members of this caucus to increase public education and the use of effective prevention measures to deal with windstorms.

On that note, I would like to introduce my distinguished colleague and co-chair, Congressman Dennis Moore. He has first hand experience dealing with the devastation of wind hazards, as he represents a district frequently struck by tornadoes. I applaud his efforts and enthusiasm to make this Caucus a reality.

REMARKS BY MR. JAMES E. DAVIS

Good evening, and welcome to the Inaugural Event of the Congressional Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus. I am Jim Davis, Executive director of the American Society of Civil Engineers, one of the sponsors of tonight's event. We are very pleased to be working with the many Members of Congress, here tonight, on reducing the hazards associated with tornadoes, thunderstorms and hurricanes.

Representatives, Walter Jones Jr., of North Carolina and Dennis Moore of Kansas have taken the lead and created the bipartisan Wind Hazard Reduction Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives. To support the Caucus efforts, ASCE will organize and lead a Wind Hazard Reduction Coalition of related professional societies, research organizations, industry groups and individual companies to leverage research and development activities. These groups to date include the following: Structural Engineering Institute of ASCE, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Portland Cement Alliance, Anderson Window Corporation, Applied Research Associates, Clemson University, International Code Council, and Texas Tech University.

Again, thank you all for being here, and we look forward to working with all of you to increase Congressional awareness of the public safety and economic loss issues associated with tornadoes, hurricanes, tropical storms and thunderstorms, and to develop and implement an effective National Wind Hazard Reduction Program.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JOHN
VOELKER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask that we all pause for a moment to remember a man who will live forever in the hearts of all that knew him and many that didn't. John Voelker was a man who stood out to those around him. Friends remember him as a man who gave selflessly to the community. But, most of all, he enjoyed his family and friends. His wife, Louise, and two sons brought him endless joy. He was known as a good and up-right man.

People enjoyed working with him. He had many new ideas, he was willing to work hard and was regarded as a first class person in everything he did. Mr. Voelker was a civic leader. He presented new and innovative ideas for ways to make the community a better place. Recently, he had taken on a pet project which would have connected low-income residents to LEAP, a state program which helps them pay for utilities. Charity was his passion. For thirty or so years he has been involved in everything from the local civic boards to environmental groups which fought for preservation and deregulation.

Tragically, when John Voelker was on his way to Egypt for a sightseeing trip, his plane EgyptAir flight 990 crashed just off the coast of Massachusetts.

John Voelker is someone who will be missed by many. His friends and family will miss the man that they all enjoyed spending time with. The rest of us will miss the man who exemplified the selfless dignity that so few truly possess. It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that we say goodbye to a great American. He will be greatly missed.

EMPOWERMENT ZONES/ENTER-
PRISE COMMUNITIES ENHANCE-
MENT ACT

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to indicate my intent to cosponsor H.R. 2170, the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities Enhancement Act of 1999. The bill is an important step toward fulfilling the promise made to areas designated as Round II Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

I strongly support the concept of Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities. Em-

powerment Zones and Enterprise Communities are designed to reverse the downward economic trends in urban and rural areas alike. Through the utilization of tax credits and social service credits, designated areas are able to undertake initiatives to spur long-term economic revitalization. In my state of North Dakota, the Griggs/Steele Empowerment Zone in eastern North Dakota was designated last year as a Round II Empowerment Zone. At that time, a commitment was made by the federal government to assist this area and others in creating jobs and economic opportunity. However, Round II Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities have yet to be fully funded, and as a result, these designated areas have been unable to reach their fullest potential.

I believe we have the responsibility to fulfill the commitment by fully funding Round II Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Even though I have concerns about the differences in funding levels between rural and urban Empowerment Zones, I believe we must move forward to provide these areas with the needed assistance to accomplish economic revitalization. However, I hope that as this legislation moves forward we can address the differences in funding between rural and urban areas to ensure each area is provided with the resources necessary to accomplish the economic revitalization the federal government promised.

LACK OF SLEEP CAN KILL

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, while physicians and patients now pay attention to the adverse health impacts of poor nutrition and inadequate exercise, too few people pay attention to the harm that can result from inadequate sleep.

Sleep scientists have linked such ailments as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and brain damage to inadequate sleep. We are all aware that drivers who fall asleep at the wheel can kill; not enough of us realize that inadequate sleep can cause severe physical ailments. The article "Can't Sleep," published in the summer 1998 edition of Stanford Today, outlines the severity of that threat. It should be read by every physician and patient in America.

[From Stanford Today, July/Aug. 1998]

CAN'T SLEEP—ONE OF AMERICA'S LEADING SLEEP EXPERTS REVEALS SHOCKING FACTS ABOUT YOUR SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

(By Chris Vaughan)

It was 1972, and the pediatricians at Stanford Hospital were stumped. Raymond S., an 11-year-old boy with an array of odd symptoms, had been referred to Stanford because his doctors in the East Bay didn't know what to do. Raymond's blood pressure was so dangerously—and inexplicably—high that the 6th-grader was in danger of damage to his internal organs. Because the boy was also pathologically sleepy during the day, he was sent over to the Stanford Sleep Disorders Clinic, the first and only one of its kind in the world then.

The clinic directors—Drs. William Dement and Christian Guilleminault—diagnosed the boy's disorder as a condition they had only recently named: sleep apnea. As Raymond slept, he would literally stop breathing for anywhere between 30 and 60 seconds at a time, they found. Worse still, this would happen hundreds of times each night. When the boy stopped breathing, his brain would panic, interpreting his body's action as suffocation. The result: His blood pressure shot up, his heart pounded, and he awoke just enough to begin breathing again, but still not enough to remember the incident in the morning. Hence his excruciating daytime drowsiness. Raymond was always sleepy because he was not getting any real sleep at night.

None of the pediatricians consulted would buy the sleep clinic's diagnosis. Raymond's condition grew worse. When the boy started showing signs of heart and kidney failure, his skeptical doctors finally allowed sleep clinic physicians to cut a breathing hole in the boy's throat. The difference was fast: The boy's blood pressure dropped and his overall condition improved dramatically.

Dement would have counted this as a victory, except that the boy's primary physicians still refused to acknowledge the problem. After a few months, they wanted to close up the hole. "They still didn't understand that the hole was saving his life," Dement said. Raymond kept the breathing hole and Dement kept in touch with him for a few years. Eventually Dement lost track of him, but he expects that current practices must have allowed Raymond to have the hole closed and to use alternate therapies.

Since then Americans have learned a lot more about the importance of sleep and dangers of sleep disorders to the nation's health. Since the discovery of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep 45 years ago, Dement, 69, has played a part in nearly every major development in sleep research and has attracted star students and researchers, and the money to fund their work. Former Stanford students and fellows have spread the gospel and started their own clinics and research centers around the world. Before Congress and corporations, and on national radio and television talk shows, Dement has brought an unwavering message: "Sleep disorders are killing people, and yet they are tremendously under-diagnosed."

In a report for the House Subcommittee on Health and Environment last year, he declared that sleep disorders represent one of the nation's most serious health problems, and that the need for sleep research is virtually ignored.

The numbers are stunning. More than half of Americans have suffered from a sleep disorder at some time, accordingly to a survey ordered last year by the National Sleep Foundation in Washington, D.C. Approximately 30 percent of adult Americans suffer from moderate to severe sleep disorders, and less than 5 percent are diagnosed and treated. More than 18 million people—7 percent of the population—stop breathing or struggle for breath in their sleep more than five times every hour. In the worst cases, sleepers stop breathing more than 30 times each hour, often for more than a minute. Under these conditions the heart can stop beating for 10 or 15 seconds at a time, and blood oxygen can drop to about one-fifth of normal, equivalent to that of a climber at the summit of Mt. Everest. Patients with such severe apnea can get cardiovascular disease and brain damage.

One would think that such a prevalent and dangerous disorder would receive a lot of attention and be treated aggressively. Yet Dement says that when he used a computer to