

November 18, 1999

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116,  
VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH  
CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 16, 1999*

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the final version of legislation that deals with a comprehensive and complex set of veterans' healthcare and benefits issues. Without question, this conference report on H.R. 2116, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, deals constructively with a significant portion of the substantive matters considered at length by the Veterans Affairs Committees in both the House and the Senate.

I want to recognize the efforts of Senator SPECTER, Senator ROCKEFELLER, Senator STUMP, and Ranking Member EVANS for their demonstrated leadership in crafting collaborative compromises in the most productive manner as the conference allowed.

This agreement makes significant steps forward in defining the VA's mission in a number of critical health care areas: Extended care, emergency services, mental health services, and chiropractic treatment to name a few. This agreement also moves in the right direction in terms of addressing the lingering need for additional national veterans cemeteries and long-term care facilities, as well as needed renovations at various VA medical centers.

This agreement also provides constructive direction in the areas of veterans' education and housing, in meeting the needs of homeless veterans, and improving the administrative structure of the court of appeals for veterans claims.

I am disappointed however, that many of the provisions that were originally included in the House version of the bill pertaining to employee and veterans organizations participation in various VA decision-making and planning practices were not made part of this final package. I also think that the conference could have produced a better work product in terms of providing strong language that speaks to the need for cost-benefit analysis, employee protections, stringent hospital closure guidelines, and heightened oversight measures throughout the entire VA network. Inclusion of such provisions would have greatly improved the agreement's overall intentions and would have made them less susceptible to inconsistent treatment system wide.

So in summary, while the conference agreement is not a perfect piece of legislation, it is nonetheless worthy of members' support. And as Representative EVANS pointed out earlier, the conference agreement in many ways represents the need to demonstrate our concerted interest in reaffirming our commitment to our nation's veterans. But as I have repeatedly stated, the most well intentioned efforts in terms of authorizing language are only as good as the amount of adequate funding that is appropriated. I have very serious concerns that next year we will find ourselves in the same vicious circle of logical debate. And the circle begins and ends with the need to have

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adequate resources to sufficiently support our responsibilities in meeting the needs of our veterans.

It is my hope that all members who cast their vote in support of the conference agreement will maintain their focus on veterans issues so that in the next fiscal year we can reverse the course we have been on for far too long and begin our work on matters concerning veterans with enhanced resources, not severe budgetary cuts.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL HARRY  
SUMMERS

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 17, 1999*

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., United States Army, died this week. In his passing, the Army and the Nation have lost a soldier and scholar, who ranks among the preeminent military strategists and analysts of this century.

As an Army officer, who began his professional life as an enlisted soldier, and later as a military analyst, author and commentator, Colonel Summers knew personally the bayonet-point reality of war and thought and wrote widely about strategic issues. He was a decorated veteran of combat in Korea and Vietnam, awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star for Valor, and the legion of Merit; twice awarded the combat infantry badge; and twice awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat.

An infantry squad leader in the Korean conflict, he served as a battalion and corps operation officer during the Vietnam war, and later as a negotiator with the North Vietnamese in Saigon and in Hanoi. Instructor of strategy at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, he was a political-military action officer on the Army General Staff, a member of the then Army chief of staff Creighton Abrams' strategic assessment group, and served in the Office of the Army Chief of Staff from 1975 to 1980, before joining the faculty of the U.S. Army War College.

At the war college, Colonel Summers was at the heart of the rebirth of strategic studies in the professional military education of our Armed Forces in the early 1980's. His book *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* provided a critical strategic appraisal of American strategy in that war and a seminal American work in the relationship of military strategy to national policy. *On Strategy* has been characterized as being "about" the Vietnam war in much the same way that Clausewitz is "about" the Napoleonic wars or that Mahan is "about" 18th-century naval struggles between France and England. That is, Harry Summers used the Vietnam war as a vehicle for analysis and illustration of principles of war that apply universally.

After his retirement from active service, Harry Summers continued to contribute to the professional development of the officer corps and to the development of strategic thought and military strategy as a lecturer, visiting professor, columnist, editor, and commentator.

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When Harry Summers testified before the House Armed Services Committee in December 1990 before Operation Desert Storm, he reemphasized the need for clarity of purpose and the relation of means to objective as this House wrestled with the decision to go to war against Iraq and commit U.S. military forces to protect the vital interests of the United States. He appeared before the committee again as we reviewed what happened to U.S. forces in Somalia in 1994 and provided valuable insights on the relation of military force and commitment to our national objectives and commitment in that country.

Harry Summers was justifiably proud of his sons and their service as Army officers and of his daughter-in-law who served as a warrant officer in the Persian Gulf War. In all this, he was supported by his wife, Eloise. My good friend, Floyd Spence, the chairman of the House Armed Services, joins me in sending our sympathies to them at this time.

Colonel Harry Summers made a tremendous contribution to the rebirth of the study of military strategy and to the professional military education of our armed forces, and that legacy lives on after him. His commitment to the Nation and the Army that he loved was unstinting. The Nation and the Army are poorer for his passing.

IN HONOR OF MS. JAMILA DEMBY,  
NCAA WOMAN OF THE YEAR

**HON. DOUG OSE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 17, 1999*

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to acknowledge University of California Davis student, Jamila Demby, who was recently named NCAA Woman of the Year.

Ms. Demby, the first UC Davis athlete to earn this NCAA honor, was selected as a national finalist from among 50 state winners. Representing California, she was one of two Division II finalists.

It was a perfect ending to a perfect career at UC Davis. A seven-time All-American, Ms. Demby won eight conference championships in four years. During last year's California Collegiate Athletic Association championships, Ms. Demby established a new UC Davis 800-meter record of 2 minutes, 10.8 seconds. In addition, she ran the final leg of the 4400 relay team, which set a UC Davis record of 3:45.33.

In addition to her athletic achievements, Ms. Demby has been active in student and community activities. In addition to serving as a UC Davis Aggie team captain and sitting on the student-athlete advisory committee, Ms. Demby finds time to regularly visit children at the Shriner's Hospital and tutor at local schools. In fact, her work with children has become such an influential experience that she changed her career path from advertising to serving underprivileged and underrepresented youth.

As NCAA Woman of the Year, Ms. Demby was chosen from a group of highly accomplished women. Ms. Demby will graduate from UC Davis this December with a degree in rhetoric and communications and will continue to give back to her community.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Ms. Demby for a job well done.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATION TO THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

**HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 17, 1999*

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill with Mr. TAUZIN and the entire Louisiana congressional delegation that will bring closure to an issue that has lingered long enough concerning our home State of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government have a long history of working together to develop our abundant natural resources in a cooperative manner that protects our unique habitat and spurs economic development. I am pleased that we have been able to rectify our differences when they occur in order to reach sensible and judicious decisions that foster goodwill and the efficient use of our resource base.

Mr. Speaker, there remains before this House an obligation on the part of the Federal Government to satisfy an authorization that was included in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. This authorization was crafted to resolve a unique dispute between the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government over the development of the oil and gas resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. Unfortunately, this authorization has never been satisfied and my home state has lost literally millions of dollars as a result.

Today, I am joined by members from Louisiana, Texas, New York and Pennsylvania in introducing legislation directing the Minerals Management Service (MMS) to grant the State of Louisiana and its lessees a credit in the payment of Federal offshore royalties to satisfy the authorization contained within the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 for oil and gas drainage in the West Delta Field.

I will be brief with the history of this matter, but I feel compelled to clarify for all our colleagues why the language contained in OPA must be satisfied both out of concern for the treatment of the State and for the protection of our coastal environment.

In November of 1985, the State of Louisiana began to notify the MMS that a federal lessee was draining the West Delta Field at the expense of the State and its lessees. The Governor made this request based on the entire history of cooperative development agreements between the State and Federal government. The State sought to "unitize" the field by allocating the appropriate shares of the field's resources to each lessee. Unitization is standard practice in cases where multiple producers share common reservoirs. Much to the State's amazement, officials at MMS disagreed with the State and the entire Louisiana congressional delegation regarding the need and availability of relief for the State.

In order to bring some unbiased perspective to the debate, the Congress authorized an independent fact finder to review the situation and to determine if unauthorized drainage oc-

curred and to what extent, if any, loss had been identified. In 1988, the Congress, in the Interior Appropriations Act for FY89, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to appoint an independent fact-finder to determine if Louisiana had been drained of its gas and oil reserves and, if so, the market value of those confiscated reserves.

That independent fact finder reported to Congress in 1989 that drainage had indeed occurred and quantified the resulting loss. At that point, the congressional delegation sought and obtained an authorization of appropriations for compensation that matched the determination of the fact finder. It is important to note that during the 4-year period of study, the federal lessee continued to drain the sacred reservoir and actually continued to drain the field until the Federal wells ceased producing in 1998.

Why is that important to note? Because the State is seeking compensation only for the drainage that can be empirically determined by the fact finder's report for those initial 4 years. All drainage that occurred for the next decade has basically been written off by my State although they would have every right to seek their share of those revenues siphoned by the Federal Government. In short, my State is knowingly leaving money on the table in order to make a good faith effort to resolve this issue.

In addition, we believe it is important to point out that satisfying this obligation in no way opens the doors to a myriad of similar demands on the Federal budget. From early on, the uniqueness of this situation was recognized when the Department of Interior wrote to then-Senator Johnston on September 19, 1991, that "To the best of our knowledge, the West Delta dispute is the only (emphasis added) situation in which the Department did not agree to unitization, or a similar joint development agreement on the Outer Continental Shelf when requested to do so by the Governor of a coastal State." To verify that this situation is unique, the State of Louisiana thoroughly reviewed its records and has confirmed that there are no other similar cases anywhere along the OCS boundary. In fact, in that same letter the Department wrote, "The Department agrees with your understanding that Section 6004 (c) of the Oil Pollution Act does not create a precedent for the payment of any funds to any parties other than the State of Louisiana and its lessees."

As for the environmental concerns raised by the Federal government's inappropriate actions, the record is clear. In OPA 90, the Congress specifically reiterated the harmful effects of "unrestrained competitive production on hydrocarbons from a common hydrocarbon-bearing geological area underlying the Federal and State boundary." The logic behind this language is simple. Why would we encourage the construction and operation of more oil and gas wells in U.S. waters than are necessary? If a field can be produced with one well, having two only doubles that chances of an accident. The concept is common sense and has been at the root of all Federal and State policies for decades. I see no reason to abandon that intelligent precedent now.

Mr. Speaker, after years of waiting, my State is interested in putting this issue behind

us and moving on. What makes that statement so intriguing is that is the exact line the MMS stated in a letter to the dean of the Louisiana delegation over 9 years ago when they too wrote, "We are also very interested in putting this matter behind us."

Our legislation is simple. It will allow the State and its lessees to recover a portion of what was lost by the unauthorized development of the West Delta Field and will do so in the most benign of methods. The State and its lessees have proposed an alternative method for providing compensation by foregoing payment of federal royalties due by the lessee on other federal leases and distributing those withholdings to the State and lessee until the federal obligation is satisfied. Upon restitution, the lessee will resume their payments to the Federal Government. By withholding royalty payments and sharing those revenues proportionately between the State and its lessees we expect the Federal obligation will be satisfied within 2 to 3 years.

After more than a decade, it is time for the federal government to settle this outstanding obligation and, at the same time, protect the rights of my home State. In addition, we must reaffirm that this Congress does not support policies that may well create precedents that would needlessly and recklessly endanger our coastal environments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JAMES H. MALONEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 17, 1999*

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote No. 588.

Had I been present I would have voted yea on rollcall No. 588.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. AGNES VENETTA STANDBRIDGE

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 17, 1999*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Mrs. Agnes Venetta Standbridge, who will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 20, 1999.

As a young adult, Mrs. Standbridge observed first hand the effects that both World War I and World War II had on family and friends. She saw the world turned upside down as many of her friends, neighbors and family went off to the trenches in Europe and never returned or returned scarred by injury and the nightmares of battle. During World War II, Mrs. Standbridge was a young mother raising her four children in Lemington Spa near Coventry, England. There, she and her husband, Albert Standbridge did their best to protect their children from the sights and sounds of German aircraft bombing factories in the area. During these tumultuous times