was also glad to see readiness issues appropriately addressed. Accordingly, I voted in favor of the Department of Defense Appropriations bill which was considered yesterday by the House, even though I had some reservations concerning other provisions of legislation. It was my hope that, during the conference committee process, the bill would be strengthened and framed in an honest and responsible manner. Sadly though, I could not vote for the Department of Defense Appropriations Conference Report. Instead of making a sincere commitment to our troops and an honest accounting to the taxpayers, the Congressional leadership in both houses resorted to budget tricks and gimmicks to hide the fact that it had failed to make the needed difficult decisions during the entire budget process in order to stick to the 1997 balanced budget agreement. The defense report designated $7.2 billion of routine operation and maintenance appropriations as “marginal,” thus exempting an additional $10.5 billion from the federal budget caps. Through that bill, the Congressional leadership tried to convince the public that a $267 billion budget only costs $249 billion. I simply could not support that tactic.

The budget trickery used by Congress to keep federal spending in check and to help reach the goal of a balanced federal budget. House Republican leaders, in an attempt to circumvent the budget caps, have repeatedly designated traditional budget items as emergency funding. Any spending in excess of the budget caps threatens our ability to insure the long term solvency of Social Security and Medicare and to pay down the national debt.

To call routine operations and maintenance an emergency item is an insult to every American. It is the same kind of budget trick the House leadership used when they say the upcoming 2000 Census is an emergency. The taxpayers should not, and will not, be fooled by this accounting sleight-of-hand.

Furthermore, pork-barrel projects permeated the bill, including $1 billion for a ship to be built in Mississippi that the Navy did not request, and $275 million for F–15 aircraft not requested. As Senator John McCain said on the floor of the Senate: “I would have liked to have been able to . . . support the defense appropriations bill. Unfortunately, the smoke and mirrors budgeting at the core of this bill is too pervasive, the level of wasteful spending . . . is too irresponsible for me to acquiesce in its passage.” The House should find the cuts needed to keep spending within the budget caps, rather than using monies that should be going down our national debt and preserving Social Security and Medicare for future generations. These budget gimmicks only serve to erode public confidence in the process and threaten the future of Social Security and Medicare. It was fitting that the vote on the defense conference report came just before Halloween. Congressional leaders tried hard to trick the public into believing the government’s budget is all treat.

Ultimately, I am very glad our troops are getting the pay raises, and I am very glad needed investments were made in the infrastructure which maintains our military readiness. I only wish I could have voted in favor the defense appropriations conference report as a symbol of my support for our troops and our national security interests. But such a symbolic act, when in my heart I believed the American people were being deceived, would have flown in the face of the very ideals for which our men and women in uniform carry out their duty.

HONORING ALEX K. “BUD” GEREN

HON. LOIS CAPPS OF CALIFORNIA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues an extraordinary man, who will be honored by family and friends on November 20th as he celebrates his retirement from the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transportation Department and Spirit of 76 Association.

Alex K. “Bud” Geren faithfully served the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transportation Department for twenty-five years. Bud also served as coordinator, recruiter, and volunteer driver for MTD buses on the Fourth of July. For Bud’s dedication to safely transporting members of the community each year after the Fourth of July fireworks, he earned the title “Mr. Fourth of July.” Too often, people who work in the public transportation community are not given proper credit for the service they provide. Without the leadership and service of people like Bud, our quality of life would be diminished.

Bud also served the community on the Board of Directors for the Sparkle and Traditions Committee. In addition, Bud was co-founder of the Santa Barbara Family Fourth Coordinating Committee. I believe that his dedicated service in these organizations earned the sincere appreciation and admiration of the people of Santa Barbara County.

Mr. Speaker, Bud has made immeasurable contributions to his community. He was proudly honored to represent Mr. Geren in Congress. I send my most heartfelt appreciation for his hard work and dedicated service.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION HONORING THE UNITED STATES SUBMARINE FORCE ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SAM GEJDENSON OF CONNECTICUT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce, along with my colleagues, Representatives TAUZIN, DINGELL, MARKEY, and OXLEY, the Telecommunications Development Fund Improvement Act.

This bill will resolve technical deficiencies that are affecting the operation of the Telecommunications Development Fund (TDF), enacted as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. It will address the following issues: (1) the need to maximize the interest earning potential of all FCC spectrum auction bidders’ deposits; and (2) lack of specific language authorizing TDF’s participation in government-sponsored capitalization programs.

Specifically, this bill:

1. Directs the FCC to place all spectrum auction bidders’ deposits in interest-bearing accounts; and

2. Provides explicit instructions that the TDF may participate in the SBA’s SBIC program to assist in generating additional capital. Implementing these two items will effectuate my original intent as the author of the 1996 provision. The TDE provision was intended to maximize the availability of investment capital for entrepreneurs seeking to provide telecommunications services to underserved communities. These technical oversights are depriving the TDF of millions of dollars of additional revenue.