

Colonel Lawrence was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Defense Artillery following his graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1981. He has served in the 82nd Airborne Division, the United States Army Air Defense Artillery School, 1st Cavalry Division, 4th Infantry Division, III Corps, V Corps, United States Army Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Colonel Lawrence assumed command of the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade in Giebelstadt, Germany in 2003. In 2005, he was hand selected to serve as the Executive Officer to the Commander, Allied Land Component Command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in Heidelberg. Afterwards, Colonel Lawrence was assigned as the Deputy Chief of Staff to the United States Army European Command. In 2008, he was assigned as the Executive Officer to the Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army European Command. Within these assignments, Colonel Lawrence has successfully commanded every unit from a Battery to a Brigade in the United States Army. He is a decorated combat veteran and has been awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal.

Mr. Speaker, It has been a pleasure to work with Colonel Lawrence over the last decade. Twice he has served as the United States Army Congressional Budget Liaison Chief. Both times while in this position, Colonel Lawrence has served the Army and Nation exceptionally well during a time of protracted war. He served first in 2002, after the initial attacks on September 11th 2001, Colonel Lawrence labored to man, arm and equip our Army Soldiers from one at peace to one committed in two separate wars. In January of 2009, he returned to this strategic assignment and has been instrumental in significantly improving our Armed Forces equipment modernization efforts and funding critical systems affecting the Department of Defense and the Combatant Commanders everyday.

As the Congressional Budget Liaison Chief, Colonel Lawrence gathered information, prepared strategies and recommended Army positions for corresponding with Congress on all appropriations issues. Additionally, he organized briefings and responded to requests for information across all appropriations for Congressional Members, their staff and the Committee Staff Directors and Professional Staff Members. Colonel Lawrence coordinated and traveled with Congressional delegations for fact-finding opportunities and education on a multitude of Army programs. The impact of his efforts will benefit the United States Army for decades to come. Throughout his time in the Capitol, Colonel Lawrence has been a trusted liaison to myself and my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Army had the resources it needed to fight and win our nation's wars.

This Commissioned Officer has continued the traditions of the United States Army and is an American hero who has been selfless in his service to the Nation through war, peace, and personal trial. When history looks back at this leader and his legacy it will be clear that his abilities as a trainer, leader, advisor, Commander and Soldier produced the best Army in the world.

Mr. Speaker, On behalf of a grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in saying thank you

to Colonel Robert "Kirk" Lawrence for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to this country throughout his distinguished career in the United States Army and we wish him, his wife Lisa and two sons, Jake and Adam, all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

VOTE ON H.R. 1954, THE DEBT
LIMIT EXTENSION

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed when the Majority moved up the vote on the debt ceiling limit. I was in my hometown today, serving as a pallbearer for my uncle, Lyle Nesselroad, a Navy veteran of World War II. I grew up next door to Lyle, and he was like a second father to me.

While I regret missing this important vote, I don't regret my decision to be there with my family. Had I been present, I would have voted against the Debt Limit Extension.

I'm reluctant to raise the debt ceiling when we have no fiscally responsible plan to address our national debt. The American people have spoken loudly and clearly—they want us to take immediate action to rein in spending and find new revenues to get our deficit under control. Congress must develop a fiscally responsible plan that makes tough choices and reduces our debt.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1540) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, which provides \$690 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy.

I thank Chairman McKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their hard work in bringing this bipartisan piece of legislation to the floor.

Mr. Chair, I support this bill for three reasons: (1) it restores and enhances the readiness of our troops, equipment, and defense infrastructure; (2) it takes care of our military personnel and their families; and (3) it authorizes the needed investments to keep our nation strong, safe, and respected in the world.

Let me briefly highlight some of the key provisions. This legislation:

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Observes the President's request to provide a 1.6 percent pay raise for all service members.

Provides new rights and protections for victims of sexual assault in the military by ensuring that victims have access to a military lawyer and makes certain that conversations between victims and DOD Safe Helpline counselors are maintained confidential.

Allows sexual assault victims to transfer out of their base or unit.

Requires more training of personnel for sexual assault prevention and recovery at all levels of our armed forces.

This bill would also make students who are enrolled in a course of study that results in a degree in clinical psychology or social work eligible to receive a stipend.

Protects against disproportionate increases in TRICARE Prime fees by stipulating that the percentage fee increase in any future year may not exceed the percentage increase in military retired pay for that year.

PROTECTING OUR TROOPS AND SUPPORTING TROOP
READINESS

Provides \$2.8 billion for measures to counter IED activities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Provides \$3.2 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles.

Provides an increase of \$425 million for modernization of Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles.

Authorizes \$23 billion for the training of all active-duty and reserve forces to increase troop readiness.

Provides \$4.5 billion for Army and Marine Corps equipment reset and depot maintenance.

Authorizes \$6.6 billion to fund Navy ship and aircraft depot maintenance for both the active and reserve components.

RICHARDSON AMENDMENT #1

I also support this bill because it includes an amendment that I offered to increase the effectiveness of the Northern Command ("NORTHCOM") in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in the event of war and in providing support to local, state, and federal authorities in times of national emergency. Specifically, my amendment would ensure that NORTHCOM (1) develops and has in place a leadership strategy that will strengthen and foster institutional and interpersonal relationships with state and local governments and (2) develops an instructional program to train key personnel how to lead effectively in the event of a disaster when they do not have command authority to dictate actions.

The purpose for NORTHCOM is to bring the capabilities and the resources of the U.S. military to the assistance of the American people during a catastrophic disaster. NORTHCOM leaders will be much more effective in saving lives, protecting assets, and enhancing resilience after the disaster has occurred if they are trained in the techniques of effective engagement with civilian leadership. My amendment would ensure that such training will be available.

RICHARDSON AMENDMENT #2

However, I am disappointed that a different amendment I offered to this bill was not made in order. This amendment would have instructed the TRANSPORTATION COMMAND (TRANSCOM) to update and expand the PORT LOOK 2008 Strategic Seaports study. This study remains a crucial tool to ensure that our ports are ready to respond in the case of an emergency. As we strive to improve our