

of U.S. combat troops—one that allows for the safe, orderly, and expedited withdrawal of our combat forces. During consideration of H.R. 5856, I voted in favor of amendments offered by Representative LEE and Representative GARAMENDI that would have helped bring our troops home from Afghanistan sooner. Unfortunately, these amendments did not pass. As the White House has affirmed in reference to the Partnership Agreement, the decisions regarding future troop levels and funding will need to be made in consultation with Congress.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate in a bipartisan fashion to reach an agreement in the coming weeks that advances the important priorities I have identified while also fulfilling our commitment under the Budget Control Act, ending the War in Afghanistan as quickly and safely as possible, and recognizing the urgent need to reinvest in our own economy and our own infrastructure right here at home.

RECOGNIZING THE NAMING AND
GROUNDBREAKING OF THE
MICHAEL N. CASTLE TRAIL AT THE
C&D CANAL

HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, the Delaware delegation recognized the vision and tireless efforts of former Congressman Mike Castle of Delaware to develop a recreational trail along the Chesapeake and Delaware (or C&D) Canal by breaking ground for construction of the trail.

The C&D Canal, managed by the Philadelphia District of the Army Corps of Engineers, has been in operation since 1829. Today, it is one of the busiest working waterways in the world, with over 25,000 vessels passing through it each year. The canal is a critical commercial waterway serving the Ports of Wilmington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The C&D Canal is bordered by a 16-mile stretch of flat, uninterrupted land, perfect for a trail, and surrounded by more than 7,500 acres of public land, creating a unique and safe environment for recreationists. In 2004, Congressman Castle saw these assets as an ideal opportunity to enhance the canal's existing resources by adding a recreational trail.

Under Congressman Castle's leadership, a working group was formed in 2004 with representatives from the State of Delaware, New Castle County, the Army Corps, Delaware City, Chesapeake City, the State of Maryland, and recreation groups. In 2005 and 2006, public workshops were held to solicit ideas and comments from local residents regarding potential recreational uses along the C&D Canal. In March 2006, a concept plan was completed by the working group, recommending the creation of a recreational trail along the canal to be used by walkers, joggers, cyclists, and equestrians. In 2007, design work for the trail began and environmental assessments were completed, and in 2009 trail design was completed.

Congressman Castle was instrumental in obtaining resources for the trail. In addition to supporting efforts to acquire state and local

funding, he also secured a total of \$2.2 million in Public Lands Highways Discretionary awards in fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 from the Federal Highway Administration to go toward planning and construction of the trail.

Congressman Castle's vision and years of work to build a trail along the C&D Canal was not forgotten when he left office. Recognizing the tremendous benefits that could be realized by the trail, the delegation picked up the project where Castle left off. Since then, the delegation has worked with the Federal Highway Administration, the State of Delaware, New Castle County, the recreation community, and others to reinvigorate the working group and secure additional funding to build the first phase of the recreational trail along the banks of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

The recreational trail along the C&D Canal will provide a common link to communities across the States of Delaware and Maryland from Chesapeake City to Delaware City. It will create a safe and inviting recreational opportunity along the canal and will bring families and other groups to hike, bicycle, jog, skate, or ride horseback along the trail. Local business, including restaurants and shops, will reap the benefits of this increased tourism to the area. The C&D Canal trail will also support healthy lifestyles through outdoor recreation. The trail will improve safety along the canal and increase the appeal and land value of residential developments in the area. The C&D canal recreation trail will be an attractive asset for the Middletown, Odessa and Townsend region that will draw new residents to the area.

Congressman Castle long ago embraced the notion that the C&D Canal is like an emerald necklace draped across the northern portion of our beautiful state, and we are so very pleased that this jewel will be named after our dear friend.

On July 9, the Delaware Department of Transportation broke ground on Phase I of the recreational trail. This first phase will complete approximately nine miles of the trail from Delaware City to just beyond Summit Marina in Delaware, including the construction of two trail heads, parking areas, and comfort stations.

Honoring Congressman Mike Castle's long-time support of recreational and commuter-oriented greenways and trails in Delaware and across the nation, as well as his vision, leadership, and steadfast support of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal trail, the Delaware delegation hereby dedicates the trail to him, and officially recognizes the name as the "Michael N. Castle Trail at the C&D Canal."

CELEBRATING THE 175TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF MT. VERNON BAP-
TIST CHURCH

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 175th anniversary of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in West Monroe, La.

The church began when a small band of early settlers in southwest Ouachita Parish established a place of worship. These pioneers initially held services in homes, and it is believed the first building of the Mt. Vernon Bap-

tist Church was a simple one-room log house. While the building has changed many times over the past century to accommodate the ever-growing membership, the church has continued to provide spiritual guidance to the Ouachita Parish community since its inception. Today, the sanctuary comfortably seats 600, and the average Sunday school attendance is over 400.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mt. Vernon Baptist Church for its dedication to providing a steadfast place of worship. Countless Sunday morning services, baptisms, and weddings have been held there, and I am confident it will be a strong source of Christian love, comfort and fellowship for well over the next 100 years.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5856) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise in reluctant opposition to H.R. 5856, the FY2013 Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

Last summer, Congress and the President enacted the bipartisan Budget Control Act, BCA, a difficult compromise by both Democrats and Republicans. As a result, caps on both discretionary and defense spending were significantly tightened for Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations. Because this bill fails the test of balance and funds billions of dollars of unnecessary programs within the Defense Department, while disregarding the caps set forth by the BCA, I cannot support it in its current form. I hope to support this bill when it returns from the Senate.

I would refer my colleagues to the Budget Control Act and to Section 302, enforcement of budget goals. It's right there in plain English what the defense appropriation number will be. That was the Budget Control Act that was supported and voted on by the Chairman of the Budget Committee, the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

In fact, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. ROGERS, said last year when we passed it, and I quote: "Tough choices will have to be made, particularly when it comes to defense and national security priorities, but shared sacrifice will bring shared results." He went on to say, "The Appropriations Committee has already started making tough decisions on spending and will continue under the spending limits and guidelines provided in this bill," meaning the Budget Control Act. That was August 1st of last year.

The Chairman of the full Committee was right last year but the bill that's before us violates that bipartisan agreement. As a result of that violation, the Defense Appropriation Bill exceeds significantly what was requested by