

2014 Chief Real will relinquish his position and retire after 39 years of exemplary public service.

Manny has served as the Chief Probation Officer of Monterey County since February 12, 2004 and has overseen a staff of approximately 300 along with an all administrative budget, operational aspects of the Probation Department's Divisions of Administration, Adult Juvenile Hall and Youth Center and Alternative Programs. At the time of his appointment, Chief Real was already a 30-year veteran of the Monterey County Probation Department having worked in various capacities in both the adult and juvenile divisions. He worked in investigations and field supervision. At various times "Manny" served as a juvenile traffic hearing officer, a child custody investigator and a court officer. His tenure as Chief began in the middle of a series of financial crises. Chief Real worked tirelessly to with the CAO's budget office to mitigate any negative side effects, preserve the progress made, and ultimately restore balance between available resources, community needs and effective interventions.

Chief Real has worked hard in strengthening relations and collaborations County Social Services, Behavioral Health, education, law enforcement, criminal justice, behavioral health and community organizations. Chief Real was integral in securing the use of the old Natividad Hospital to establish the Silver Star Gang Prevention and Intervention Program a one-stop gang prevention and intervention program. The program is unique as it combines probation supervision, educational, vocational and job training, counseling services and truancy abatement, along with mentoring and community outreach strategies to help decrease gang activity. It was a pleasure having worked with Chief Real at the federal level to bring in \$1.5 million dollars to assist with anti juvenile violence and the programs at the Silver Star Resource Center continues to serve many families in Monterey County.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for the whole House in extending our most sincere gratitude for Chief Real's service. I want to wish Chief Real the best as he embarks on a new chapter in his life and know he will enjoy spending more time with his wife, children and grandchildren.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE FY15 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION (NDAA) CONFERENCE REPORT

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 16, 2014*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Conference Report for the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act.

For the last 53 years, Congress has passed—and the President has signed into law—an annual Defense Authorization bill to provide critical resources our Armed Forces need to maintain the best military in the world. While I recognize that there are many important programs that are authorized in this legislation, this NDAA also contains many major policy decisions affecting our country and our armed forces. Unfortunately, Congress was

not allowed to consider a single amendment dealing with very consequential policy issues to this 1648-page bill.

The NDAA Conference Report also authorizes funding to deploy an additional 1,500 troops to Iraq. I support the core pillars of the President's plan to fight ISIS, including the use of American surveillance, intelligence assets and air power against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria and the arming and training of the Iraqi Army and Kurdish forces to stop the ISIS advances in Iraq. I also believe we should supply weapons to those groups in Syria, such as the Syrian Kurds, who have consistently fought ISIS, and whose priority is to defeat ISIS. However, I believe the Congress should make it clear that American ground troops should not be used in a combat role in Iraq or Syria.

The President has asserted that the 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force (Public Law 107-40) provides the Executive with broad authority to take all military action necessary in both Iraq and Syria to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. While the President has indicated that he does not intend to deploy U.S. ground forces into combat, there is nothing in current law to prevent him from doing so. Congressman MCGOVERN, Congressman JONES, and I asked the House Rules Committee to allow us to offer an amendment to ban the use of U.S. forces in ground combat in Iraq, with the exception of rescue operations for Americans. Unfortunately, this request was denied.

The NDAA Conference Report also provides a two-year authorization to deploy American troops to train and equip the so-called "moderate" Syrian rebels. In September, a majority in Congress voted to temporarily authorize preparation for such a mission for a short period ending December 11th. This bill extends that authorization for two more years and is written so that the four defense committees can exclusively decide how much funding should be allocated for this mission. Congressman DENT and I led a bipartisan letter to Speaker BOEHNER urging him to give us the opportunity to vote on that provision. We also presented an amendment to the House Rules Committee which would have presented this authority. Once again, we were not provided the opportunity to vote on this measure.

My primary concern with the proposal to arm the so-called "moderate" Syrian opposition is that it will have unintended negative consequences that will not serve our ultimate goal of defeating ISIS.

First, the primary objective of these Sunni Islamist fighters is the defeat of Assad and his Alawite dominated regime—not the defeat of ISIS. Since the start of the war there have been shifting alliances among these Sunni Islamist forces that include the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, different elements of the Free Syrian Army, the Islamist Front, Ahrar al-Sham and ISIS, among others. Their common cause and overriding objective is defeating Assad. Indeed, the commander of the Syria Revolutionaries' Front, Jamal Maarouf, one of the most militarily proficient commanders of the FSA, recently said that, "It's clear that I'm not fighting against al-Qaeda. This is a problem outside of Syria's border, so it's not our problem. I don't have a problem with anyone who fights against the regime inside Syria."

While there is no doubt that Assad is a brutal dictator, he does not pose the same threat to the United States as ISIS, and his forces

have recently been battling ISIS. At this point, arming fighters whose primary purpose is to weaken Assad has one unintended result—strengthening ISIS. Indeed, I fear that the arms we provide to the so-called Syrian opposition are more likely to end up in the hands of ISIS or al Nusra.

I also have significant concerns about other measures in the NDAA Conference Report. I was disappointed that it includes a provision to continue funding restrictions on the construction or modification of detention facilities in the United States to house Guantanamo detainees. It also removes the prohibition on transfers of Guantanamo detainees to Yemen that was included in the SASC-reported bill.

Despite my overall opposition to this legislation, it does authorize many important programs. I was pleased that the Women's Small Business Procurement Parity Act, S. 2481, was included in the final Conference Report. This language provides much needed guidance to assist federal agencies in reaching the goal of awarding 5 percent of federal contracts to women-owned small businesses.

Today's bill also restores more than \$818 million in cuts made to military readiness accounts. This will allow our military to invest in critical repairs and upgrades to many mission-critical facilities such as electrical and fire protection system upgrades.

I am also encouraged that this bill builds on a number of provisions passed in last year's NDAA and continues to address the problem of sexual assault in the military. In particular, it would eliminate the so-called "good soldier defense" in court-martial proceedings, prohibiting a soldier from using good military character as a defense in a sexual assault case. These proceedings should be based on the specific evidence presented in the case.

Finally, I am pleased that the bill contains many long-delayed public lands conservation measures to protect more than one million acres of public land, including 245,000 of new wilderness.

While I support each of these measures, the fact remains that without the amendments I proposed, the bill could create a very slippery slope that would drag American troops even more deeply into Syrian war and renewed conflict in Iraq. For those reasons, I regretfully am unable to vote in favor of this year's NDAA Conference Report.

CONGRATULATING FYFFE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

**HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 16, 2014*

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Fyffe High School Football Team on winning the Alabama High School Class 2-A Championship on December 5, 2014.

Coach Paul Benefield, his players, and staff achieved the very difficult task of a 15-0 record during the 2014 season. I would officially like to congratulate them on their victory.

Coach Benefield has spent 34 years in the coaching and teaching profession, winning many games and awards. In 18 years as the head coach at Fyffe, Benefield has won more than 200 games and 13 region and area