

PASSING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to commend my colleagues in the House for passing a second National Defense Authorization Act, or the NDAA.

The President's decision to veto Congress' first NDAA was nothing more than a cheap, political ploy, and it marked the first time a President vetoed the NDAA for nonpolicy reasons.

Today's NDAA authorizes funding to expand Fort Gordon to accommodate future growth, and it authorizes defense projects at the Savannah River Site, including the MOX program.

Cybersecurity is critical to the future of international warfare, and its future home in the Army is in Augusta, Georgia, at Fort Gordon. This legislation responsibly prepares Fort Gordon to house the Army Cyber Command and to protect our Nation from cyber threats in the coming years. I was happy to work with many members of the Armed Services Committee to maintain the authorization for these important programs.

Despite the President's unwarranted veto, we again fulfilled our duty to support our troops and their families, who sacrifice so much to protect our Nation.

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, this House will be leaving today. Members will be going back to their districts. We leave after some dramatic changes have taken place in the House.

We elected a new Speaker within the past couple of weeks. There is a new, open process we have heard about. We saw much more debate this week. These are changes that affect this institution; but there is one thing that has not changed: Members of this House will be going home this weekend without this House or our committees having had any opportunity to debate ways to stop the spread of gun violence.

We are going to return home to environments where gun violence continues to plague every corner of this country; yet we cannot even have the debate here. Not only can't we have the debate, but, since 1996, there has been a prohibition on even having a study about the effects of gun violence in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to stop putting our heads in the sand. Congress must act. We must take our responsibilities seriously to address head-on the scourge of gun violence. We can do something about it, and it is time that we do.

HONORING OUR NATION'S VETERANS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, next Wednesday, we will observe Veterans Day, which is dedicated to the brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces.

I believe one of the most important things we can do is to instill respect and honor among our Nation's young people for our servicemen and -women. As a part of the Veterans Day activities, the elementary school students in my hometown of Howard will learn about the contributions made by our veterans both in harm's way and here at home.

While educating our young people is important, it is also essential to make sure our veterans have the services and the support that they need. This weekend, I will be speaking with a group that is actively involved in caring for our wounded vets: the Disabled American Veterans chapter, or DAV, in Warren, Pennsylvania. The DAV provides a wide range of services, from transporting the veterans to doctors' appointments to emphasizing the need for better care, both medically and for behavior health services.

November 11 is Veterans Day, but we need to strive to make sure we remember the contributions that these men and women make every day of the year.

VETERANS RECORD RECONSTRUCTION ACT

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that touches veterans in hundreds of congressional districts across this Nation.

In 1973, a fire at a U.S. Government archives facility destroyed as many as 18 million official military records. This loss has made it incredibly difficult for many veterans to prove the details of their service, and it has even prevented some from getting the benefits that they deserve. In the year since the fire, some affected files have been painstakingly reconstructed by using unofficial pieces of information, including postmarked letters and photographs, but this process can be confusing, time consuming, and costly to the veteran.

Somehow, in 42 years, no system has been established to assist these veterans—whose files were lost by no fault of their own—in reassembling their records. We simply must do better. That is why I have introduced the Veterans Record Reconstruction Act: to establish a clear set of guidelines for reconstructing a veteran's service record when it has been damaged or destroyed.

As we commemorate Veterans Day this next week, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, straightforward bill so that every veteran has the opportunity to receive the benefits he or she has earned.

WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATION EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS

(Mr. CURBELO of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the White House Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics and to recognize the bright spots that have been identified in Florida's 26th Congressional District.

The initiative was established in 1990 to address educational disparities faced by Hispanic students. As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, the initiative released the Bright Spots in Hispanic Education catalog to highlight the ongoing efforts in promoting educational achievement. Recognizing these bright spots will encourage collaboration between stakeholders to promote best practices and to develop effective partnerships.

I am proud to recognize two bright spots in the district I represent. Congratulations to Florida International University's Mastery Math Lab and the STEM Transformation Institute.

The Mastery Math Lab is a high-tech, individualized approach to improving student performance in mathematics. The STEM Transformation Institute is a multidisciplinary collaboration to research and develop effective approaches to STEM education. Both of these programs have made a substantial impact to the Hispanic community in south Florida.

I am also very happy to announce other programs in the 26th District that have made commitments as part of the initiative to support educational outcomes for Latinos. These include Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success, Teach: STEM: Miami, and Experience: STEM: Miami.

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(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you to President Obama for working with us to get a real defense authorization bill and for us to be able to fix the broken defense bill that was passed previously in this House. I was prepared to sustain the veto, but through a very instructive and positive budget resolution that we passed just last week, we have been able to plus up the defense, and we have been able to plus up nondiscretionary defense spending.