

secured language in H.R. 2500 that extends the Defense Advisory Committee on Investigation, Prosecution, and Defense of Sexual Assault (DAC-IPAD) for an additional 5 years and expands its mandate to cover restorative justice models and interpretation of the Rules for Courts-Martial 1001(c) that affect sexual assault survivors. I also fought for and passed a provision to direct the Department of Defense to provide a report on how the Department can establish a clear standard for victims and victims' counsel to have access to all non-privileged court filings and related materials derived directly from and pertaining directly to the victim such that victims' rights can be enforced. Additionally, I am proud to have sought language to address the issue of protective orders—the FY 2020 NDAA now requires unit commanders to notify civilian authorities of the issuance of a military protective order against a member of the Armed Forces and would require unit commanders to notify a receiving unit of the issuance of a military protective order in the event a member is transferred to another unit. And I am happy to have helped secure language to create the new Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and I cosponsored an adopted amendment that prohibits the Department of Defense from contracting with companies that do not have a sexual harassment policy that penalizes instances of sexual harassment.

Another key challenge H.R. 2500 tackles is climate change. I am grateful that language I requested to have the Department of Defense explore the possibility of maintaining plug-in hybrid and electric government vehicle fleet on defense installations and building a microgrid infrastructure to support them was included in the bill. The Department of Defense must do its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and this language moves the Department in that direction. I am also pleased that the bill includes provisions to require all proposals for military construction projects to consider long-term changes in environmental conditions, mandate the Department of Defense to report on progress towards meeting the goal of 25 percent renewable energy for military facilities by 2025, and direct the Secretary of Defense to develop a climate vulnerability and risk assessment tool.

Puerto Rico recently felt the impact of climate change's most severe forces in Hurricane Maria, and I am proud to have cosponsored language led by Representative Nydia Velázquez that was included in H.R. 2500 that will support Puerto Rico's recovery by increasing the value of Puerto Rican subcontractors in the federal government's contracting goal. Increasing the value of Puerto Rican subcontractors will incentivize the contracting and subcontracting of Puerto Rican businesses—supporting the Puerto Rican economy and business as it recovers from Hurricane Maria.

H.R. 2500 also includes language to help shape a foreign policy that is consistent with American values. I was happy to work with my colleagues to increase oversight and transparency of civilian casualties resulting from strikes outside areas of active hostilities and direct the Department of Defense to work with a federally funded research and development center to conduct an independent assessment of processes and procedures related to civilian casualties. Additionally, I was proud to cosponsor adopted amendments that tackled priority foreign policy challenges that our nation

faces. These amendments reasserted congressional authority to authorize the use of force, including vis-à-vis Iran, and called for an end of war declaration and peace agreement that will formally and responsibly end the Korean war.

I would also like to note that the FY 2020 NDAA includes important education related provisions. I am grateful to see the amendment I cosponsored with several of my colleagues to enable the Secretary of Defense to make grants to Department of Defense schools or those with Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs to support world language study was included in the bill. I am also proud to have secured language in the bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to explore how the Department may carry out a program under which the Secretary makes grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to carry out STEM educational events for military communities across the United States.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, H.R. 2500 is a strong defense bill that supports our troops, protects our nation, and reflects American values. I was proud to vote in favor of this bill and encourage my colleagues in the House and Senate to maintain these important provisions through the conference process.

COMMEMORATING THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF NORTH HARMONY

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Mr. REED. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Town of North Harmony.

The original town of Harmony was the largest town in Chautauqua County, comprised of approximately eighty-six square miles. In order to ensure the efficient administration of the town's affairs, the County saw fit to create a new town. On December 19, 1918, the Chautauqua County Board of Supervisors passed an act to establish the Town of North Harmony. The Town became official on January 1, 2019, dividing the original town of Harmony in two.

Whether they are lifelong residents or new in town, the citizens of North Harmony love their town. When asked for their favorite memories of the town, they provided a variety of answers. Some recalled fun times spent on Lake Chautauqua, while others recounted community celebrations like Asheville Days. For some, growing up in North Harmony brought back fond memories spent with family and tractor rides with a grandparent.

One hundred years as a community and a town is certainly a cause for celebration. I congratulate the Town of North Harmony for withstanding the tests of time and look forward to many more years of North Harmony providing a community for our friends and neighbors.

Given the above, I ask that this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations and join me to celebrate the Town of North Harmony's one hundredth anniversary.

SUPPORT OF H.R. 2500, THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Mr. DeFAZIO. Madam Speaker, last Friday I voted in support of H.R. 2500, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

While I have consistently opposed this legislation in previous years and still have concerns about a number of provisions included in this year's legislation—including yet another spending increase to an already bloated Pentagon budget—this legislation also contains numerous policy priorities that I strongly support and which have not been included in recent Republican-led NDAs.

First, this legislation grants our men and women in uniform a well-deserved pay raise of 3.1 percent—the largest pay raise for our troops since the last Democratic House majority in 2010. Those who serve in uniform continue to make extraordinary sacrifices for our country and the very least we can do is grant them a pay raise.

I am pleased that this legislation also includes numerous provisions that require the Department of Defense (DoD) to address the existential threat of climate change, including updating military construction standards to promote energy and climate resilience. It also requires DoD to report on its progress towards meeting the goal of 25 percent renewable energy for military facilities by 2025.

Additionally, I am pleased that this legislation prevents the president from diverting defense funding to pay for an unnecessary border wall, prohibits funding for the deployment of dangerous low-yield nuclear weapons, nullifies President Trump's discriminatory military transgender ban, and helps protect our veterans from being taken advantage of by predatory, for-profit colleges. Moreover, it ends the unfair Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)/Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset—which currently reduces spouse survivor benefits by an average of \$1,250 per month. I am also strongly supportive of the inclusion of twelve weeks of paid family and medical leave for all federal employees.

This legislation also includes several provisions to strengthen our national security, including requiring the DoD to enhance our election security, countering Russian aggression and election interference, enhancing security cooperation with our allies in Europe and Asia, and protecting against the increasing risk of cyber attacks.

I have always advocated for strengthening Congress's constitutional authority to declare war and limiting the president's authority to engage in armed conflict without the consent of Congress. That's why I voted in support of amendments to prevent the president from using unauthorized force against Iran, to prohibit U.S. support to and participation in the Saudi-led coalition's military operations in Yemen, and to repeal the long-outdated 2002 authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) in Iraq. I am proud that these amendments passed with bipartisan support.

This year I have once again introduced legislation to amend the War Powers Resolution

of 1973 and reassert Congress's constitutional war powers. I have also consistently supported legislation to repeal the 2001 AUMF, which the Pentagon uses to continue to justify the 18 years our troops have been fighting in the Middle East. President Trump has sent troops to Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere without seeking a new AUMF, which in my view is a violation of the War Powers Resolution.

Furthermore, I am pleased that this legislation accelerates closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility by prohibiting new detainees and allowing transfer of detainees to secure facilities in the United States. This unnecessary facility costs almost \$450 million each year to house 40 prisoners and has been used as a top recruiting tool by terrorists. The prison at Guantanamo Bay has been a black eye for the United States, eroding relationships with our allies, undermining U.S. missions abroad, and putting U.S. citizens and our troops at risk of retaliation.

However, I believe this legislation could have made responsible cuts to our defense budget without jeopardizing the safety of our troops or undermining our national security. For years, Congress has continued to increase the Pentagon's budget despite overwhelming evidence of its waste and abuse of taxpayer money. This year's legislation—with its outrageous top line defense budget of \$733 billion—is yet another example of Congress's habit of increasing the defense budget every year.

I have long supported a financial audit of the Pentagon. Unlike every other federal agency, the DoD has yet to pass a financial audit. In November 2018, the Pentagon spectacularly failed its first full audit, which highlighted numerous examples of waste and abuse. While I am pleased that this year's NDAA requires an annual audit of the DoD in order to help identify waste, it is ridiculous to provide the Pentagon a massive spending increase—as this bill does—when the Pentagon cannot even account for how it spends taxpayer money.

In particular, I have always opposed the DoD's Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) account, a fiscally irresponsible fund that is not counted in the budget, recklessly adds to our mounting debt, and has no congressional oversight. OCO is a Pentagon slush fund that gives a blank check to fund endless wars that Congress hasn't authorized. That's why I co-led an amendment to cut OCO funding in the bill by approximately 25 percent. I am disappointed that this amendment failed to pass.

The bottom line is that fiscal responsibility and accountability at the Pentagon would allow for funds to be better spent supporting the needs of our troops, meeting our obligations to veterans, and ensuring our legitimate defense needs are prioritized. I strongly encourage my Senate colleagues to keep the strong provisions included in the House NDAA and not water the bill down.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, I regretably missed votes on Friday, July 12, 2019. I

had intended to vote "yes" on vote 468, "yes" on vote 469, "yes" on vote 470, "yes" on vote 471, "no" on vote 472, "yes" on vote 473, and "yes" on vote 474.

IN RECOGNITION OF VIET BAO FOUNDATION'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF WRITING ON AMERICA AWARDS

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Viet Bao Daily News and Viet Bao Foundation to recognize and celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Writing on America Awards.

Founded 27 years ago in Little Saigon, California, Viet Bao Daily News serves as one of the main Vietnamese media outlets representing the voice of the Vietnamese American community in the United States. Today, Viet Bao coverage has reached Vietnamese communities in remote areas including those in Southern California; Northern California; Seattle, Washington; Houston, Texas; Louisiana; and Portland, Oregon. The main editorial office is in the heart of Little Saigon in Westminster, California.

Viet Bao Foundation, a non-profit organization, was founded to support Viet Bao Daily News' mission, to promote Vietnamese culture, literature, language, and arts. The Writing on America Essay Contest is one of many programs that the foundation currently manages and run to support this mission.

Writing on America was established on September 1999, with the first Awards Ceremony held at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, California on November 29, 2000. From there on, there has been a new story published every day on Viet Bao and Viet Bao Online publications.

A Writing on America Anthology, including 600 plus pages is published yearly. The US Congress, in its July 28, 2010 meeting, officially commended Viet Bao for the cultural and historical values achieved by the American Writing Program. In 2016, the Writing on America Anthology officially entered the Library of Congress for all Americans to enjoy and treasure.

The Writing on America Awards is an Essay Contest held annually, which draws several thousand participants. Started in August 1999, in paying tribute to America, Viet Bao asked their readers to share their "American Dream" stories.

Since then, writers from across the country have been sending in their stories retelling their early and hardship days in America as well as their successful stories in achieving their American dreams. The selected stories are published daily on Viet Bao, Vietbao.com website and on the annual anthology title "Writing on America".

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Writing on America Awards has published a total of 22 editions, including more than 14,000 pages of stories, from thousand of writers. Writing on America anthology is known as a book of "live history from thousand writers".

In addition to the official publication by Viet Bao, thousands of articles were also repeat-

edly posted on Vietnamese and foreign language websites and books, many of which were reprinted. Regardless of the number of readers, the total impressions on Viet Bao website alone is over 800 million. Some authors have a record of over 1 million impressions. Nearly 5,800 articles of thousands of writers about America are now available on Vietbao.com. The response and support from the community over the last 20 years have been tremendously significant.

Today, Viet Bao offers annual cash prizes up to \$35,000 to the essay winners, including one first prize winner worth \$10,000 in cash, and many other category prizes worth of \$35,000 in cash.

This year, when Viet Bao celebrates its 20th anniversary, the award-winning writings enter its 12th anniversary collection, becoming the longest-standing writing contest ever in the Vietnamese literature award history of the Vietnamese community abroad as well as in the country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, on July 11, 2019, I was unable to attend votes because I was out of town on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 438; YEA on Roll Call No. 439; YEA on Roll Call No. 440; YEA on Roll Call No. 441; YEA on Roll Call No. 442; YEA on Roll Call No. 443; YEA on Roll Call No. 444; YEA on Roll Call No. 445; YEA on Roll Call No. 446; YEA on Roll Call No. 447; YEA on Roll Call No. 448; YEA on Roll Call No. 449; YEA on Roll Call No. 450; YEA on Roll Call No. 451; YEA on Roll Call No. 452; YEA on Roll Call No. 453; YEA on Roll Call No. 454; YEA on Roll Call No. 455; YEA on Roll Call No. 456; YEA on Roll Call No. 457; and YEA on Roll Call No. 458.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MITCHELL

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2019

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following Op-Ed in tribute to the late John Mitchell of South Windsor, Connecticut.

[From the Hartford Courant]

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? RUN FOR OFFICE. YES, YOU.

(By Kevin Rennie)

Local political parties will nominate their slates of candidates for November's municipal elections this month. In a few communities, there will be ferocious contests for some positions. Democratic races for mayor in some of the state's largest cities, Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven, look competitive as the September primaries grow nearer. Those are the exceptions.

In most towns, politics is mercifully a civic good more than it is a secular religion. Some communities continue to enjoy our New England tradition of electing members