

debt in Cambodia. What about Americans' with medical debt; more than \$23 million to help college graduates in Morocco find jobs. How about college grads in Kentucky; \$273 million in grants to help people learn how to apply for grants. Really? U.S. taxpayers are being fleeced to teach people how to get more of our money; \$20 million to teach Laotians how to speak Laotian. Makes me want to utter Laotian profanities. But I will likely need a government grant in order to learn to swear in Laotian; \$1 million to produce a comedic variety TV show in Afghanistan. I don't know about you but I don't find that funny at all; almost \$15 million to produce foreign versions of "Sesame Street" that would teach children in other countries about climate change. Next year, I am sure the taxpayer will be sending Muppets in Masks to Madagascar; and \$153 million in development assistance that included subsidies for low-income mortgages in Nigeria.

So Americans are losing their homes, but Congress has already spent the money buying Nigerian mortgages.

Americans are losing their livelihoods, but Congress has already spent the money on economic support funds in places like Bosnia.

American infrastructure is crumbling, but Congress spends billions on roads in Afghanistan.

We could have rebuilt the Brent-Spence Bridge in my State, which has been a priority for some time, but Congress can't stop spending the money overseas.

Again, the war in Afghanistan costs \$50 billion per year. Our mission is complete. Al-Qaida is diminished. Osama bin Laden is dead. It is time to declare victory. The American people want the war to end. So many of our veterans want the war to end. The President is trying to bring it to an end. But Congress is standing in the way.

Today we have the chance to act as the people's representatives instead of acting like 535 generals. We should not override the veto. We should remove the language that tries to block the President's drawdown of troops.

I urge a vote against the veto override.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I voted against the motions to proceed and invoke cloture on overriding the President's veto of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 because, at this time of national crisis, the Senate's first order of business should be getting more relief to struggling American families. That means the Senate should have held a clean up-or-down vote on the House-passed measure to increase the amount of the individual stimulus payments from \$600 to \$2,000. The Senate could have easily passed both the additional payments and completed the business of the NDAA veto override this week had Senator McCONNELL and the GOP majority been willing to do so. Given

the President's purported support of this relief, it could have been signed into law this week. But instead of delivering this additional help to struggling American families, the Republican majority repeatedly blocked requests to pass the additional relief by unanimous consent and refused to schedule an up-or-down vote.

That said, I support the underlying National Defense Authorization Act. The President's veto of this legislation put at risk a number of important measures, including a pay raise for our troops; critical investments for Maryland's military installations; a process to rename those military facilities that bear the names of individuals who fought with the Confederacy to preserve slavery; limits on the transfer of military equipment to local police forces; and support for key national security priorities. While the NDAA bill is not perfect and includes a number of provisions I oppose, on balance it is an important measure for our country. That is why I voted for it in the first place and why I voted in favor of overriding the President's veto.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING ED GOMES

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Edwin "Ed" Gomes, an exemplary public servant, community leader, and advocate for equality and justice. Sadly, Ed passed away on December 22, 2020, at the age of 84. He will be remembered for his outstanding legacy of dedication to Connecticut as a statesman and an activist.

Ed began his impressive career on behalf of our country in the U.S. Army, serving for 5 years. A dedicated steelworkers' union representative, he was first elected to the Bridgeport City Council in 1983. Throughout his decades on the council, Ed quickly earned the respect of constituents and colleagues, alike.

In 2004, Ed was elected to the Connecticut Senate, where he served for a total of 12 years. As State senator, Ed fought tirelessly for the people of Connecticut, always going the extra mile to help his constituents. He knew that government could instill positive change for working families and constantly advocated on their behalf.

Committed to social reform and civil rights, Ed participated in the March on Washington in 1963. His activism touched countless lives across our State and was an inspiration for all of us. Known for his passionate efforts to help others and strong principles, Ed was also respected across the aisle and warmly recognized for his positive spirit. Those who had the chance to work with him know well his respected, straightforward style and readiness to bolster advocacy by pulling from his personal experiences.

I had the privilege of attending the annual L'Ambiance memorial cere-

mony, recognizing those workers who died in a horrific construction accident, with Ed, who unstintingly continued his advocacy for workplace safety. There was always an opportunity to do more and raise greater awareness of issues facing Connecticut's working families. His dedication to fighting injustice was a model across our State, and he never hesitated to initiate change from the frontlines. I can attest firsthand to Ed's unfailing attitude, which was equal parts joy and determination. His commitment to bettering our State and loyalty to his friends and family have left a lasting, positive mark on Connecticut's legacy.

My wife Cynthia and I extend our deepest sympathies to Ed's family during this difficult time. May their many wonderful memories of Ed provide them solace and comfort.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

##### REPORT OF THE VETO OF S. 906, THE DRIFTNET MODERNIZATION AND BYCATCH REDUCTION ACT—PM 63

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk:

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I am returning, without my approval, S. 906, the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. America's fishermen have made great sacrifices to ensure that our Nation's marine fisheries are a sustainable economic engine for coastal communities. Under my Administration, the number of United States fish stocks subject to overfishing is at a historic low. This achievement is the result of a transparent and collaborative regulatory process that is supported by regional fishery management councils. At council meetings, fishermen work with Federal Government and State government representatives to meet their statutory obligations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

In passing S. 906, the Congress has ignored the fact that the regional fishery management process has had strong, bipartisan support since its creation. By forcing the West Coast drift gillnet fishery to use alternative gear that has not been proven to be an economically viable substitute for gillnets, the Congress is effectively terminating the fishery. As a result, an estimated 30 fishing vessels, all of which are operated by family-owned small businesses,