

Church, and myself in recognizing Reverend Clement Cardillo for touching the hearts and souls of so many in his parish.

COAST GUARD AND MARITIME  
TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. CORRINE BROWN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 5, 2003*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2443) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes:

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Chairman, I commend the efforts of the Chairman of the Subcommittee and the Ranking Minority Member for their leadership in the effort to establish a dedicated West Coast Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON).

As former Ranking Member of Coast Guard Subcommittee, I was deeply involved in the creation of the HITRON program. The current HITRON squadron is composed of eight leased and armed helicopters and is based in my district just outside Jacksonville. I have inspected the squadron on several occasions and have been very impressed with the level of training they have received and their state of readiness to pursue the "go-fast" boats. The "go fasts" have traditionally been a highly effective method for smuggling large volumes of drugs into the United States. HITRON has posed the first real threat to this mode of transportation. In the short life of this program there have been 41 fast boat chases and 41 drug busts which have prevented nearly \$3 billion in cocaine and other illegal drugs from reaching our kids on the streets. Thus the Sting Ray HITRON program has a remarkable success rate of 100 percent. Today, HITRON aircrews routinely deploy aboard U.S. Coast Guard cutters patrolling the high seas in the Caribbean to stem the tide of illegal drugs flowing into the United States. As intelligence reports dictate they are diverted to the Pacific.

The MH-68A HITRON helicopters have been named the Sting Ray. Since 9-11, Sting Rays have been pressed into the anti-terrorist mission, defending our ports and waterways from waterborne terrorist attack, and even providing protection for presidential visits. Not even these wonderful pilots with their feisty little aircraft can be in more than one place at a time! Two years after 9-11 there are only 8 armed Homeland Security helicopters authorized for airborne use of force over our tens of thousands of miles of ports and waterways which are dotted with strategic facilities such as nuclear plants. Shame, Mr. Speaker! Shame!

I agree with those advocates in Congress who feel it is time to acquire a new larger state-of-the-art cutter capable helicopter that

can perform multiple airborne use of force missions. We could at any day be confronted by suicide terrorists headed toward a port or critical bridge on a small boat or a container ship. We must have a helicopter that can transport and support six-man tactical teams and can deliver and retrieve sea marshals as well as engage in port coverage and drug interdiction. In other words we should have a bigger helicopter with cutter capability in the inventory. The Coast Guard should waste no time initiating a competition for a new multi-purpose helicopter.

Under the best circumstances, if a competition were initiated today and executed with vigor, we would only have a limited number of such helicopters by January, 2006. For the interim period we need more Sting-Ray helicopters. In fact, the Sting Rays are the only helicopters authorized for airborne use of force over civilian populations. Thus, the Sting Rays are the only interim solution available until new Multi-purpose Cutter Helicopters can be acquired.

One year ago I worked diligently with our former colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Borski, the gentleman from North Carolina Mr. COBLE, and the gentleman from California, Mr. FILNER to assure there would be no interruption in the HITRON program. At that time HITRON was threatened by looming lease expiration on the armed helicopter fleet. Thirty-eight Members of Congress joined in this effort. We initially pressed for a purchase of the aircraft. However, the Commandant informed us that he wanted to hold open the option of acquiring a new multi-purpose helicopter. As a result of our efforts, the Coast Guard extended the lease for 8 HITRON helicopters currently in the inventory for 5 years and made provision to lease additional helicopters. In signing that lease, Coast Guard had the foresight to open the lease terms in order to permit the addition of as many Sting Rays as may be required. The Sting-Rays may be returned to the manufacturer in any lease year if new helicopters come on line.

It is important that we assist the Coast Guard in every way possible to carry out their post 9-11 role. With the HITRON Sting-Rays we have an ideal interim program until the new helicopters can be acquired. In fact I would be surprised if there is not a permanent role for these light, fast and aggressive little helicopters. I know for a fact they should not be shuttled back and forth between the East Coast and the West Coast. Each Coast must have a permanent installation. I know for a fact we need more Sting Ray helicopters for East Coast anti-terrorist port protection as well as Caribbean fast boat drug interdiction. This bill, which authorizes funding for a West Coast fleet, jump starts the process and is a good beginning. We have wasted two years with no expansion of our assets capable of airborne use of force. Lets roll!

TRIBUTE TO JAY S. PIFER

**HON. JOHN P. MURTHA**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 14, 2003*

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, it is with both pleasure and sadness that I rise today to recognize Jay S. Pifer, who is planning his retirement on December 1st after more than 40 years with Allegheny Energy. Jay has been a good friend to Pennsylvania and an outstanding corporate leader. I am pleased to recognize some of his achievements here today, but I must say that he will be greatly missed.

Jay is a native of Pennsylvania, graduated from Ridgway Area High School, and has degrees from both Penn State University and Clarion State University. He has received numerous awards including Penn State's Outstanding Engineering Alumni and the University's Alumni Fellow Award. He began his career at Allegheny as a college student.

He was named interim President and CEO at Allegheny Energy before being named Chief Operating Officer in June. He has worked in almost every department in the company including sales, marketing, engineering, customer service, accounting and management. In fact, Jay has performed admirably at almost every job in the company. He has held a number of leadership positions, including President of its Allegheny Power energy delivery subsidiary—which supplies power throughout Western Pennsylvania, and in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and Ohio. During a time of recent financial challenges for Allegheny, Jay played a leading role in preserving the company. Through it all—and some very difficult weather from ice storms to Hurricane Isabel—Allegheny Power was recognized by J.D. Power and Associates as the second best company in customer satisfaction in the East and 10th best in the Nation. This is an honor of which Jay is justifiably proud.

Jay also has been involved in many civic and community activities, dedicating himself to education, economic development, and conservation efforts in Western Pennsylvania and her neighboring states. He serves on the boards of the United Way and the Business Roundtables of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. His many other honors include membership on the Advisory Board of Penn State University and the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, honorary chair of the NAACP, director of the Westmoreland Trust, and membership in the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. He is an ordained Lay Pastor in the United Methodist Church and has long been associated with the Boy Scouts of America. He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Northeast Region of the Boy Scouts.

His accomplishments are really too numerous to mention, but I wish Jay well in his retirement and thank him for his tireless commitment to Allegheny Energy and Pennsylvania.