

a resounding “yes” and therefore I am proud to introduce the Public Safety Tax Cut Act. I request that my fellow Members join in support of this key legislation.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1815) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with grave concerns in regard to the deficiencies of this National Defense Authorization Act. It is truly unfortunate that the brave men and women of our Armed Forces are fighting around the world while the Department of Defense is in the current state it is in. Leadership must be accountable for the actions of the Armed Forces; the unfortunate events taking place in Iraq have caused our Nation irreparable harm.

I am most outraged by the fact that there will be no consideration of the Taylor amendment on TRICARE for reservists, the Salazar amendment on ending the Military Families Tax, and the Marshall amendment on ending the Disabled Veterans Tax. These amendments are three key provisions in the GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century, which House Democrats unveiled in March. It seems blatant, that the Rules Committee would not allow the full body to consider these vital amendments which could have greatly strengthened this Defense Authorization.

H.R. 1815 authorizes \$441.6 billion, slightly less than the President's request and the total provided for by the budget resolution for FY 2005. The total is \$21 billion, 5 percent more than the current regular authorized and appropriated level. This does not even include the \$75.9 billion in FY 2005 emergency supplemental defense funds appropriated last month for operations in Iraq. In addition, this measure also authorizes an additional \$49.1 billion in expectation of another supplemental budget request for the war in Iraq later this year. This brings the bill's authorization total to \$490.7 billion.

This measure continues the spending by providing \$79.1 billion for weapons procurement, a full \$1.1 billion more than the president's request; \$69.5 billion for research and development, another \$113 million more than the request; \$124.3 billion for operations and maintenance, \$2.6 billion less than the president's request; \$108.8 billion for personnel, slightly less than requested; \$12.2 billion for military construction and family housing; and \$17 billion for weapons-related and environmental-cleanup activities of the Energy Department.

If Congress provides the full amount in the FY 2006 budget resolution—including the \$50 billion in emergency spending for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan—defense spending in FY 2006 will total about 55 percent of the entire

federal discretionary budget. The percentage could rise even higher if more than \$50 billion is provided for operations in Iraq later this year. If the administration's request is approved, overall defense spending, in real terms, would be more than 20 percent higher than the average Cold war budget.

The sad truth is that when compared to other nations around the world, you quickly realize that our military spending is not about defense needs as much as it is about overkill. The nearly \$500 billion expected to be provided for defense this year—assuming another supplemental—is only slightly less than the \$527 billion estimated by the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation as currently being spent by other nations combined, including China (\$56 billion), France (\$40 billion), Great Britain (\$49 billion) and Japan (\$45 billion). Furthermore, when comparing U.S. defense spending to those countries determined by the Defense Department as most likely to threaten the United States, the difference is even greater. Such rogue states, including Iran (which spent \$3.5 billion), North Korea (\$5.5 billion), Syria (\$1.6 billion), Cuba (\$1.2 billion) and Sudan (\$500 million). Clearly, we are not only the world's leader in military spending, but now we are determined to lap the field many times over.

It's just disgraceful that many so-called advocates of fiscal responsibility talk about discretionary spending for federal programs when they represent only a tiny sliver of spending compared to our military spending. While we continue to allocate funds for this costly war, our federal debt continues to soar and that debt continues to be owned by foreign nations. We are now borrowing \$1 trillion every 20 months and the federal debt will soon exceed \$8 trillion. The Japanese own more than \$800 billion of that debt, the People's Republic of China more than \$250 billion and all our foreign debt continues to explode.

It is truly unfortunate that this Defense Authorization continues this Administration's policy of having misplaced priorities. Instead of directing more money for proper planning in Iraq, or for greater protection equipment for our troops, or maybe for greater pay raises for our troops; this Authorization provides \$7.9 billion for ballistic-missile defense programs—\$100 million more than the administration's request. Missile defense systems are not new, in fact they have been discussed for decades. The truth is that missile defense systems have proven to be overly complex, unreliable, and often been little more than pipe dreams. Why in good conscience, in this time of budget constraints and increased need, would we allocate even more money for failed programs? There are more responsible ways to budget this money. Money from the Defense Authorization should go to our men and women in the Armed Forces who actually defend our Nation instead of into programs that just waste needed funds.

I am heartened by a few provisions of this legislation. This Authorization provides an average 3.1 percent pay increase for military personnel in FY 2006, equal to the President's request, and extends certain special pay and bonuses for reserve personnel. Our men and women in the Armed Forces deserve these pay increases, in fact they deserve much more for the sacrifice they are making for our Nation abroad. The bill provides added funds for increased protection for U.S. troops in Iraq,

including funding for up-armored Humvees, tactical wheeled-vehicle recapitalization and modernization programs, night-vision devices, and improvised explosive device (IED) jammers. The war in Iraq gets more dangerous by the day and the Pentagon won't even give this Congress a timeline for our exit. As always, this leaves our brave men and women of the Armed Forces and their families in the lurch. We as a Congress owe it to them to give them more answers, instead of only providing more questions. Unfortunately, while this Authorization gives a little comfort to our Armed Forces abroad, it really falls far short of what we owe to our Nation's bravest.

A TRIBUTE TO GERALDINE BAKER

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Geraldine Baker for her academic accomplishments and contributions to the field of education.

Geraldine “Gerry” Baker was born in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York, and is one of the twin daughters of Marie G. and the late Henry W. Baker. Ms. Baker was raised in the Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn. Here she was greatly influenced by the Reverend Dr. Gardner C. Taylor's ministry of activism and leadership and studied classical music under the tutelage of the late John T. Lucas, organist. Following the tradition of great Black families, Ms. Baker's parents inspired her life-long pursuit of excellence.

Ms. Baker is a distinguished alumna of the New York City Public School System. At an early age she exhibited leadership skills when she was elected class president at Eastern District High School. She was later selected to participate in a pilot program under the auspices of the Carnegie High School Language program, and won a National Defense Foreign Language Fellowship in Chinese for the summer program at Columbia University. She then pursued a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology and linguistics at CUNY Richmond College.

Ms. Baker culminated her education at Pace University, where she received a Master of Science in Education Administration and Supervision and was accepted into the Phi Delta Kappa organization. She has also participated in Harvard University's Graduate School of Education in the Principals' Center for Critical Issues of Urban Education, completed a three-year Partnership for the Prevention of Violence Training Program at the Harvard School of Public Health, and studied at NOVA Southeastern University.

Ms. Baker is now a senior staff member at the Edward R. Murrow High School Special Education Department. Her teaching career has spanned the spectrum of the education profession from teaching the gifted and talented to the emotionally, neurologically and physically challenged. In addition, she has been certified by the New York State Department of Education, as an Impartial Hearing Officer, to adjudicate cases on special education problems. In her spare time, Ms. Baker taught at CUNY La Guardia Community College in a specially funded program to provide academic