

every day, in ways large and small. These are people for whom compassion is part of their DNA. Let me introduce you to the staff of the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission: Kristy Ring, Deputy Director; Robin Brassie, VOCA Administrator; Sheila Allen, VAWA Administrator; Julie Duren, Reparation Officer Supervisor; Terri Ruegger, Financial & HR Officer; Dorothy Padilla; Randy Vallejos; Debra Yepa; Jacqueline Chavez; Denise Jaramillo; Mary Anne Garcia; Michele Threlkel; Moises Valdez; Paula Smith; Debra Simpson; Suzanne Gallegos; Wendy Archibeque, and Robert Norfor.

You are simply hearing their names. But I had the chance to meet them, and want you to know that our Nation is a better place because of their ongoing commitment to helping victims of crime.

And that's just the way it is.

THE CONFERENCE REPORT ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2006 AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT (H.R. 2744)

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Conference Report on the fiscal year 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Act. While this bill takes some positive steps, overall it is a missed opportunity.

This bill provides increased funding for critical food assistance programs, including Women, Infants and Children, WIC, and school lunch. The conference report also upholds current adjunctive eligibility requirements for WIC and Medicaid. This will save local WIC agencies in six states, including Minnesota, from having to conduct 275,000 duplicative eligibility determinations and keep resources devoted to nutrition assistance.

Voluntary conservation programs that I support, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, CRP, and the Wetlands Reserve Program, WRP, receive \$840 million in funding. For generations, farmers and others working close to the land have made positive contributions to the conservation effort. Programs like CRP and WRP assist landowners in reducing erosion, improving soil and water quality, and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

Funding for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS, is increased to address food safety and emerging diseases, namely avian influenza. Prompt action is needed to safeguard against further spread of this deadly strain and to be prepared for a potential outbreak at home or abroad.

Despite these positive aspects, Congress missed an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of families by failing to provide relief for the millions of Americans facing soaring prescription drug prices. I supported language passed by the House of Representatives to allow reimportation of prescription drugs. Unfortunately, this language—which would have barred the Food and Drug Admin-

istration, FDA, from preventing prescription drug reimportation—was stripped in conference committee for a third year in a row. It is unacceptable for anyone to suffer because prescription drugs have become too expensive, and it is disappointing that once again Congress has prioritized pharmaceutical companies over families.

This bill also imposes further delays upon implementation of mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling, COOL, requirements. COOL provides our families with important information on meat, fish, fruits and vegetables. It also gives U.S. producers credit for the considerable investment they make in the quality and safety of their products. The 2002 Farm Bill required mandatory labeling by 2004, but the fiscal year 2004 Agriculture Appropriations Act delayed implementation of COOL to 2006. This conference report further delays implementation of COOL until 2008.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report.

I would first like to thank the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. HOBSON, and the Ranking Member, Mr. VISCLOSKY, for their work in putting together the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill, and in negotiating with the Senate on this conference report.

I also want to thank both of them for including \$48 million in the conference report to continue funding the Port of Oakland's 50-foot dredging project in my district in California, and for including \$5,585,000 for Operations and Maintenance.

As the fourth largest container port in the country, the Port of Oakland serves as one of our premier international trade gateways to Asia and the Pacific.

The 50-foot dredging project will underpin an \$800 million expansion project funded by the Port that will improve infrastructure, expand capacity and increase efficiencies throughout the distribution chain.

Once this project is finished, the Port projects that an additional 8,800 jobs will be added, business revenue will increase by \$1.9 billion, and local tax revenues will go up by \$55.5 million. Best of all, 100 percent of the dredged materials will be reused for wetlands restoration, habitat enhancement, and upland use within the San Francisco Bay Area.

I appreciate the Subcommittee's support for this project and I look forward to continuing to work with the chairman and ranking member to complete it.

COMMENDING THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY EMPLOYERS OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 302, recognizing and commending the support provided by the employers of members of the National Guard and other reserve divisions who have been mobilized during the Global War on Terror.

More than 433,000 members of the reserve components of the United States Army have been mobilized for active duty since September 11, 2001. During this difficult time for them and their families, the commitment of their employers is essential. The obligations of the National Guard and other reserve components will continue for years to come, and job security and support for those who are mobilized in defense of our nation is crucial for the country in continuing the War on Terror.

In my home town of Chicago, many employers have demonstrated their commitment to the safety of the nation and to those who fight to secure it. When National Guard employees of Chicago law firm Bell, Boyd & Lloyd learned they would be deployed, the firm responded by asking how it could help. Whether the need was for supplying care packages to the troops or redoubling their support as deployments were extended, this firm has provided tremendous assistance to its employees and their families.

Doug Ewing, the former president of Ewing-Doherty Mechanical, Inc., left a strong legacy of support for our troops. When his employees were deployed, Mr. Ewing supplied them with necessary provisions and equipment. He also frequently contacted his employees' families in order to boost their morale and ensure that they were provided with any necessary assistance. Mr. Ewing has sadly passed away, but his commitment and compassion will long be remembered by his employees and their families.

The Chicago Fire Departments and Chicago Police Department also merit recognition for the support they give to their employees who have been mobilized during the War on Terror and their families. These employers have shown themselves to be dedicated to the security of the nation, and have provided support beyond that which is required. They deserve our most sincere recognition and gratitude. I would like to offer my praise for their contributions, and encourage the Department of Defense to continue its efforts to maintain a high level of support between deployed Guardsmen and their employers.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in recognizing and commending the strong support provided by employers for those who work to secure the goals and safety of the United States.