

Even if we started drilling in ANWR today, we would not see any of that oil until 2012.

Rather than drilling in the Arctic wilderness and extending our reliance on oil, we must increase fuel efficiency, diversify our sources of energy, and promote clean alternatives. We need to invest and focus on ways to reduce our consumption of oil. This is why Congressman JACK KINGSTON (R-NY) and I have introduced The Fuel Choices for American Security Act, which sets meaningful and achievable goals, all of which can be accomplished using new technologies that are already proven, effective and efficient.

I, therefore, am very pleased to learn that the Senate has struck the ANWR drilling provision from the Defense Appropriations Conference Report. It is my understanding that this bill will now pass the House by unanimous consent, and will be sent to the President for signature.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, by including the legislative provision to drill and destroy the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in this defense appropriation conference report (H.R. 2863), the Republican majority has demonstrated their on-going abuse of power, their shameless collusion with the oil industry and a distasteful willingness to exploit the needs of U.S. troops at war in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to achieve their policy desires, regardless of the cost. This is a cynical strategy to pass a provision designed for the oil industry, a provision that has already been rejected by this House earlier this year. The fact that the Republican majority is using our brave men and women serving in the armed forces as political cover to ensure that the provision allowing for oil drilling in ANWR is passed by this House shows the majority's desperation, their deception and their willingness to undermine our democratic process.

The intended purpose of this bill is to provide the resource for the defense of our nation. It is to ensure the men and women serving in the armed forces have the training, the protective gear, the equipment and all of the necessary support to execute their missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Europe and here at home. The men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces comprise the greatest fighting force the world has ever known and they not only keep the citizens of the U.S. safe from a world filled with very real threats, they are serving the cause of peace and security around the world. I commend our troops and our military leadership for their service and sacrifice, as well as the dedication of their families.

Of the more than \$450 billion appropriated in this bill, much of the defense related expenditures are necessary for national security. I strongly support the 3.1 percent pay raise for military personnel. The allocation of more than \$7 billion for the ballistic-missile defense sys-

tem continues to be a waste for tax dollars since the program has failed many of its critical tests and by all accounts is a boondoggle.

The language in the bill that bans torture by all U.S. personnel, including civilian defense and intelligence personnel, sets the appropriate standard by which the U.S. should conduct itself—even in a war against terrorism. Senator JOHN MCCAIN should be commended for his perseverance and determination not to yield to President Bush and Vice President CHENEY's demands that torture be permitted under certain circumstances. Torture is an inhumane practice that is the antithesis of America's values and moral obligations as a defender of international human rights.

In addition to allowing drilling for oil in ANWR, this bill has a number of nondefense provisions that are objectionable. The across-the-board cut included in H.R. 2863 will total an additional \$8 billion in cuts to services critical to our families. This will result in another \$28 million cut to No Child Left Behind, bringing the total cut this year to \$1 billion. This is in addition to the \$40 billion this law has been under-funded by the Republicans since its passage.

Also included in this bill are funds to prepare for a possible Avian Flu pandemic. While I support providing funding for this work, the Republicans have included a provision providing unlimited liability protection to the pharmaceutical industry. Instead of having an honest debate about the needs of health care workers, public health systems and local governments in the case of a pandemic, Republicans have chosen only to worry about another of their strong allies—the drug companies.

H.R. 2863 also claims to provide new funding for Katrina relief which I support. However, this bill includes only \$5 billion—not nearly enough to allow families to begin to rebuild their lives and their community. And it relies on a complicated scheme of possible revenues from drilling in ANWR and sales of spectrum to fund relief. In addition, Republicans used this opportunity to push through a divisive school voucher plan that was defeated by the Education and Workforce Committee. This plan will allow \$645 million in taxpayer schools to go to private and religious schools that do not have to adhere to the accountability requirements of public schools.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support our troops. Overall, this bill however, is an example of the shameless and abusive tactics used over and over again by this Republican party to force their special interest agenda on the American people. It shows again that the Majority does not represent the values of American families, but rather values their corporate contributors. I urge my colleagues to reject this outrageous bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, due to the death of a family member, I was not present for rollcalls 665 through 671 on Sunday, December 18 and Monday, December 19. Had I been present, I would have voted

“nay” on rollcalls 666, 669, 670 and “yea” on rollcalls 665, 667, 668, and 671.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SPC RICHARD JUNIOR DE GRACIA NAPUTI

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of one of Guam's sons, SPC Richard Junior De Gracia Naputi, 24, U.S. Army, of Talofofo, Guam. Sadly, on December 20, 2005, our nation lost SPC Naputi. SPC Naputi was killed in action while serving in Taji, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Born and raised in Guam, he left the only home he knew to serve and defend his country. Assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division in Fort Benning, Georgia, SPC Naputi embodied the proud history and traditions of his unit whose motto was “Can Do” and whose lineage traces back to the Civil War.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Naputi family during this time of loss. I join his parents, Richard and Naputi, his wife Brienne, and all of Richard's extended family and friends, in mourning the loss of Richard and in honoring the dignity of his life. While the loss of SPC Naputi is painful for our entire island and our nation, he now joins that solemn fraternity of heroes who have put their country before themselves and made the greatest sacrifice. Heeding the Christmas message of “Peace on earth,” Richard's loss leads us to reflect upon the sacrifices made by the men and women who shoulder the responsibility of protecting our liberties and our freedoms. To these men and women, we owe a debt of gratitude that is simply unpayable.

During this difficult time, the people of Guam and I are keeping the Naputi family in our thoughts and prayers. I also extend my prayers to the many men and women continuing to serve around the world in the cause of freedom. God bless the Naputi family, God bless our men and women in uniform and God bless America.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF THOMAS F. MCHUGH

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 37 years of public service Mr. Thomas F. McHugh has devoted to the City of Rochester. His hard work and commitment to the city's development will set an example for current and future public servants, and Rochester is grateful for all that Mr. McHugh has contributed.

Mr. McHugh grew up in Ancram, Massachusetts. His father was in the insurance business and his mother was a teacher. It was from them that he learned the importance of a strong work ethic and a responsibility to community. He carried these lessons with him as studied at University of Syracuse and moved to Rochester upon his graduation.

Mr. McHugh began his career with the City of Rochester, serving 5 years as Project Director in the Department of Urban Renewal & Economic Development. In that capacity, he directed the \$100 million, 175-acre Upper Falls Urban Renewal Project. From there, he moved to the Rochester Housing Authority where he has served as the Executive Director of the Rochester Housing Authority for the past 32 years. As Executive Director, he has ensured that low-income families, elderly, people with disabilities and many other members of the community have access to quality affordable housing.

Mr. McHugh has greatly expanded the affordable housing opportunities in the City of Rochester and Monroe County. When Mr. McHugh started with the RHA in 1974, it had approximately 1,100 Public Housing Units and 93 employees. Today RHA consists of 2,440 Public Housing units, 7,700 Assisted Housing units and 195 employees. Even with the addition of so many units, the Rochester community continues to regard RHA in the highest terms because of the commitment to keep properties in good repair. Mr. McHugh has developed and nurtured collaborations and partnerships with numerous public service agencies and community organizations. He has continuously maintained a positive working relationship with not only the City of Rochester, but also Monroe County, and State and Federal agencies.

While administering housing for more than 10,000 households is a daunting task in and of itself, under Mr. McHugh's leadership, RHA has used its resources in an effective and efficient manner. RHA has reported solid financial performance year after year and achieved high ratings in HUD's assessment programs for Section 8 and public housing.

Mr. McHugh spearheaded the effort to redesign Rochester's first public housing complex, the State-built Hanover Houses that consisted of seven high rise building for low-income families. He replaced the Hanover Houses with townhouse units to house families, seniors and people with disabilities that maintain a much greater degree of livability and security.

Mr. McHugh greatly expanded the scope of resident and educational services at RHA. Through the Family Investment Center Department and a Social Services Department, RHA has provided to thousands of residents training on family self-sufficiency, computers, construction trades apprenticeships, GED attainment and job placement. RHA also now has resources and staff available to assist residents who need counseling services for drug prevention or other types of intervention. Under Mr. McHugh's leadership, RHA developed a summer camp program which serves over 250 young people and created an after school tutoring program. RHA has nutrition programs for seniors and provides a senior escort van to transport them to shopping and doctor appointments.

Mr. McHugh's public service has not been limited to only the Rochester Housing Authority. During his 32-year career at RHA he has had long time affiliations, board memberships and service on committees with many organizations such as: Council of Large Public Housing Agencies (CLPHA), National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), Middle Atlantic Regional Council of NAHRO, National Leased Housing Association, National Low-Income Housing Coalition,

Regional Council on Aging, Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Women's Career Center, St. John the Evangelist Church, Sisters of Mercy Founders Club, SWV Realty Corporation, Monroe Housing Development Corporation, GEVA Theatre, Downstairs Cabaret Theatre, Rochester Area Educational Television Association, Blue Cross of Monroe County, Project Self-Sufficiency Monroe County Task Force, Marie and Joseph Wilson Foundation, Workforce Investment Board and the Family First Federal Credit Union.

Through Mr. McHugh's leadership, compassion and commitment, thousands of people have been able to improve the quality of their lives because they had a good quality, safe, and affordable home. Many have used RHA as a springboard to better jobs, self-sufficiency and home ownership. He is a shining example of the difference one devoted individual can make in providing quality affordable housing opportunities, building communities, encouraging self-sufficiency and protecting the dignity of people with limited resources while at the same time safeguarding the public trust.

As Mr. McHugh heads into retirement, it is with great pleasure that I recognize and commend Mr. McHugh for his 37 years of dedicated and successful public service. If a man can be judged wealthy because he has friends and colleagues who both respect and admire him, then Thomas F. McHugh is truly a wealthy man. He leaves a great legacy that can serve as an example to all of us. My most sincere and heartfelt congratulations go out to Mr. McHugh for a job well done.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1932,
DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Republican's so-called budget reconciliation plan. This bill cuts vital services to families to provide tax cuts for the most fortunate. At the same time that the majority adds to our Nation's exploding Federal budget deficit.

The conference committee unfortunately failed to alleviate the draconian cuts in the original House version of this bill. The conference report before us slashes Medicaid, reducing access to health care for children and families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. It continues the Republican plan to balance the budget on the backs of students by including \$13 billion in cuts to student financial aid: The bill increases costs for local government and decreases services for families by cutting funding for child support enforcement, foster care, and other child welfare programs.

Conferees also chose to disregard the common-sense cost saving measures passed in the Senate bill. The bill before us does not include the elimination of the PPO slush fund which is a \$10 million giveaway to the insurance and drug industry. Republicans have once again chosen to prioritize corporations over families.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is an outrage. It is outrageous that Republicans dare to claim fiscal responsibility while preparing to pass \$60 bil-

lion in tax breaks for the wealthy. It is outrageous that to pay for these giveaways to their wealthy friends, American families will lose access to health care, critical services, and an affordable college education. And it is outrageous that the leadership of this House is passing this shameful bill in the early hours of the morning while the American public is sleeping.

This reckless bill should be defeated and urge my colleagues to join me in voting against it.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the legislation. Specifically, I oppose the avian flu liability provision which provides sweeping blanket immunity for the drug companies while again leaving American citizens unprotected. This legislation, which appears both unconstitutional and contrary to federalism, has not been reviewed by any committee of jurisdiction. In fact, this language was added to the Department of Defense Appropriations Conference Report in the middle of the night, long after the conferees approved the bill.

Under the current provision, punitive damages for any claims are barred, allowing for no corporate liability. Drug companies that engaged in the worst kinds of abuses could not be penalized by juries. In addition, the legislation limits the total liability of any manufacturer or distributor. The result is no out of pocket payments by reckless corporations and no real recovery for injured citizens.

Consider this example: The Secretary of Health and Human Services declares a potential public health emergency and designates a vaccine as a countermeasure. Later production of the vaccine demonstrates that the vaccine has vast problems with its potency and may render the vaccine harmful. With this knowledge, the company still sends the vaccine to thousands of distributors and when it is administered, the result is numerous deaths. Under this provision, families who are trying to gain compensation for their losses are left without recourse.

This provision requires that before an injured person can pursue a claim, the Secretary of HHS must determine, by clear and convincing evidence, that there was willful misconduct on the part of the manufacturer, distributor, or administrator of a covered product. First, this would insure that no injured person, including first responders and medical personnel, would have coverage. Second, it is doubtful that "willful misconduct," which is defined as actual knowledge that a covered product would cause harm, could actually be proven. Third, even if an injured victim proved willful misconduct by clear and convincing evidence, the massive tort reform such as no punitive damages and capped non-economic damages would severely limit any compensation.

In addition, this portion of the conference report applies to a wide range of drugs, vaccines, and other products. The provision does