

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