

The rights and protections of our Nation's military veterans, especially in light of their continuing sacrifices in Iraq, Afghanistan and other dangerous lands, should not permit the unfair and wrongheaded employment policies by the Federal Government to stand. I am proud to support the selfless and patriotic sacrifice of our Nation's military veterans, and I urge the swift consideration and passage by the Congress of this necessary and important legislation.

LANE EVANS POST OFFICE
BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 29, 2007

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 521, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2633 11th Street in Rock Island, Illinois, as the "Lane Evans Post Office Building."

Lane Evans completed 24 years of remarkable service to his nation as a member of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. His work here reflected the principles that guided him throughout his life. Lane's concern for our military men and women, the environment, and those less fortunate speaks to his character and commitment to make life better. But it was his unwavering support for the Nation's veterans that best defined his time in Congress. Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Spina Bifida, and expanded services for women veterans are just some of the causes for which Lane will be fondly remembered by his colleagues and our veterans.

I served on both the Armed Services and the Veterans' Affairs Committees with Lane, and have always respected his counsel, especially in his role as my Ranking Member when I chaired the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Even when we disagreed on policy matters, I never doubted that his positions on veterans issues were rooted in his service as a United States Marine during the Vietnam Era. Lane is a man of integrity, compassion, and honor.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 521. Naming this post office is a small, but lasting and appropriate way to honor Lane, and I hope those who visit this facility will recognize the contributions of the man for whom it is to be named.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOSS AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to salute Foss Avenue Baptist Church as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Church's founding. The congregation will hold a banquet on March 24th in my hometown of Flint, Michigan to mark the occasion.

In late 1956 several ministers in Flint meet with the purpose of organizing a Baptist church on Foss Avenue. It was agreed to organize a church and the first applications for membership were made. The first members were Preston Johnson, Emma J. Simpson, Marvell Arkansas, and Reverend and Mrs. Avery Aldridge. A motion was made to name the church Foss Avenue Baptist Church and on December 2, 1956 the new church was born.

The original church was dedicated on January 6, 1957. Under the direction of Pastor Avery Aldridge the second church building was entered on March 30, 1958 with the cornerstone being laid on March 22, 1959. The church was rebuilt in 1964, and the west addition was dedicated on February 9, 1969. The cornerstone was re-laid on December 10, 1978 when the north and south side additions were dedicated. As the congregation grew Pastor Aldridge organized many auxiliaries and services under the auspices of Foss Avenue Baptist Church and the congregation moved into the current sanctuary in 1989. In 2005 the original sanctuary was renovated and dedicated as the Mildred Light Aldridge Christian Education Center.

Through the years the members of Foss Avenue Baptist Church have contributed to the church enterprises. Foss Avenue Baptist Church has an active Usher Board, a Music Department, a Foreign Mission Board, Church School Department, Mother's Board, Deaconess Board, a Trustee Board, Mission Department, and Kitchen Entourage. In addition the congregation operated Foss Avenue Christian School and the first Black Dairy Queen in the Flint area. Through the efforts of this congregation, thousands of persons have been helped, inspired and educated.

Pastor Aldridge devoted his life to making Foss Avenue Baptist Church a reflection of God's glory and a beacon of light to the people of Flint. Under the current leadership of Pastor Roosevelt Austin, a lifelong friend of Pastor Aldridge, the congregation continues to respond overwhelmingly to God's call and to carry on His work.

Madam Speaker, please join me in applauding Foss Avenue Baptist Church as it celebrates 50 years of worship, fellowship, and homage to Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The clergy and members are to be commended for their service to their community and world.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 718 NATIONAL GUARD EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 718, the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007.

The National Guard needs a voice to ensure that its people get the same training, equipment and benefits as their active-duty counterparts. It needs a voice to speak for the needs of governors and the guardsmen who defend and protect us from natural disasters and acts of terror.

Asking the Department of Defense to approve one four-star General for the National

Guard and allow this Guard General a seat at the Joint Chiefs of Staff is not overly reaching or a threat to national security. It's simply a matter of providing a seat at the table to an organization that has earned it.

When it comes to the Guard, Cold War thinking still prevails at the Pentagon. So a bipartisan and bicameral group of Members of Congress stand united behind this bill. This year, we have added three important provisions to: allow Guard officers to advance to the highest ranks of leadership; force better accountability in service procurement for the National Guard; and, define and improve the fractured planning and operational relationships between the Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau, U.S. Northern Command and our Governors.

After 9/11, the President issued an Executive Order making the security of the homeland the No.1 priority of the Department of Defense. But the Department's attempts to empower the Guard have so far been date have been hollow, with no clear standards, no firm requirements and only minimal funding.

The Department of Defense seems to be in denial about the essential role the National Guard plays in times of need. The Pentagon needs to show more concern for the force that protects Americans first, arrives first, acts first and stays longest.

Today, the Government Accountability Office released a study sponsored by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee entitled: "Actions Needed to Identify National Guard Domestic Equipment Requirements and Readiness." This study points out that the Department of Defense has yet to take decisive action to improve the National Guard's domestic capabilities and clearly points out why this basic Guard empowerment bill is absolutely necessary.

If you want to know why the Guard deserves a seat at the table, take a look at what the Air Force has budgeted this year for First Air Force, which is made up of the nation's top Air National Guard wings. These are the fighters who protect the skies over America. Their command budget and manpower is being cut almost in half. And it should come as no surprise that these Air Guard wings are not on the Air Force list to get F-22s or F-35s.

Last year's BRAC decimated Air National Guard units that provided critical airlift capability during Hurricane Katrina, moving people, water and supplies through catastrophic damage. Without that capability, we may be in a worse position today in terms of emergency supply movement than we were when the storm struck.

Or consider the readiness of the Army's chemical and biological response units, most of which rest in the Reserve Component units. GAO soon will release a study sponsored by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee that will show the Army has not seen fit to enhance these units for homeland defense. As a result, Americans remain vulnerable to the chemical-biological attack many fear likely if not inevitable.

A year and a half after Hurricane Katrina, the findings and basic recommendations in the Select Committee Report on Hurricane Katrina have not been adequately addressed.

Moreover, the National Guard continues to perform valiantly in the Global War on Terrorism. The National Guard provides almost half the manpower, support and transportation