

Together, these investments will serve over 1.5 million citizens without health care coverage in the coming year.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Sunday is Veterans Day. With our Nation at war, this conference report honors our brave men and women in uniform by proposing the largest single increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the institution's 77-year history. The \$43.1 billion this legislation appropriates will enable us to provide quality care to 5.8 million patients, add 1,800 processors to tackle the outstanding backlog of 400,000 claims, and invest in needed treatment for increasingly prevalent conditions like traumatic brain injury, TBI, and post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. It is the least we can do—and now is the time for us to do it.

Madam Speaker, these two bills both passed the House with strong, bipartisan majorities. Together, they set the right priorities for America. They comply with our five-year balanced budget plan. And they deserve our support today.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for overriding the President's misguided veto of the Water Resources Development Act.

This bill is long overdue. The projects funded in this bill are critical to the health, safety and quality of life in our communities around the country. This bill is necessary to better protect Americans against severe weather and flooding—and also ensure all Americans have access to clean, safe drinking water.

The President's veto of WRDA is another example of misplaced priorities. We continue to spend \$10 billion in Iraq, but won't spend the money necessary to make sure we never have another Katrina. This bill is about saving lives. In my district we have perchlorate contamination in much of the drinking water. H.R. 1495 invests money in researching and solving this problem—because no parent should ever have to worry that their child is going to get sick from drinking tap water.

I urge my colleagues to cast a vote to keep America safe and healthy—and override this mistaken veto.

TRIBUTE TO DR. RICHARD SHEEHAN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Richard Sheehan on the completion of his 50th marathon by the age of 70. Dr. Sheehan reached this goal at the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC. An impressive achievement for anyone but even

more so for this 70-year-old dentist from Orchard Park, NY, who didn't start competing in marathons until 1986.

A self-proclaimed "accidental runner," Dr. Sheehan began running at the age of 48 when a grieving family member needed his support. With only 8 weeks of training before reaching the starting line for his first Marine Corps marathon, Dr. Sheehan helped his brother-in-law through a difficult time while discovering his love for long-distance running. After completing more marathons, Dr. Sheehan set a long range goal of completing 50 races before turning 70.

This determined dentist has now run 12 Marine Corps races, completed marathons in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, as well as Cleveland and Chicago, and once, in Boston.

Running is a family event for the Sheehans, and 16 family members and friends joined Dr. Sheehan in DC for the occasion. This is the 10th year in a row that Dr. Sheehan has participated in the Marine Corps Marathon but none, I'm sure, as memorable as this one in which four of his children ran portions of the race with him as he completed number 50.

Congratulations and best wishes for continued success to Dr. Dick Sheehan for setting and reaching his goal. What began as a run to help a family member has become a remarkable accomplishment that should inspire us all to pursue our goals with devoted persistence.

QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the framers of our Constitution empowered the U.S. House of Representatives to impeach the President in cases of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." They gave Congress a sacred responsibility to check the power of the President in order to preserve the liberty of the American people. With this responsibility came an equally important obligation to use congressional power only to advance the interests of the Nation. I am not convinced that an impeachment proceeding is in America's best interests at this time. That is why I recently voted to give the House Judiciary Committee time to substantively consider the articles of impeachment before bringing them before the full House for debate and a vote. At a time when Congress has so much work to do to repair the damage caused by this administration, Congress will best serve the American people by focusing our efforts on ending the war in Iraq, protecting civil liberties from executive overreaching and passing needed legislation to move America in a new direction.

With a little over a year left in office, attempting to bring impeachment charges against President Bush, or Vice-President CHENEY, at this point, would prove counterproductive to the aggressive agenda our new majority in Congress has put forth. With many issues needing attention, Congress should focus on implementing the agenda the American people elected us to pursue.

As part of the new agenda, the 110th Congress has begun to do what the previous Congressional leadership would not do, and what many in this Congress still refuse to do: Stand up to this President. Under Representative HENRY WAXMAN, CA, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has launched more than two dozen investigations of Bush administration actions. The committee's 75 investigators have probed everything from the behavior of contractors in Iraq to the politicization of the Federal Government here at home. Congress's efforts have already led to needed reforms in a variety of executive branch programs.

You may recall that in late July, it became apparent to me that Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's contradictory statements and actions raised serious concerns about his integrity and his respect for civil liberties. At the same time, Bush administration stonewalling was making it impossible for Congress to fully investigate Gonzales and restore America's respect for the Justice Department. On July 31, 2007, I joined with other former prosecutors serving in the U.S. House in calling for an investigation to determine whether Gonzales should be impeached. At the time, I believed investigation and, potentially, impeachment by the Congress provided the only way to hold Gonzales accountable.

In August, Alberto Gonzales did something he should have done long before: He resigned. His resignation provided needed change at the Justice Department, but it did not provide the answers that the American people demand and deserve. Congress still has an obligation to determine the legality of Gonzales's confusing, conflicting and misleading actions and statements. Just this week, Representative JOHN CONYERS, MI, took another step towards getting the truth about the Justice Department's actions under Gonzales. CONYERS demanded the White House release key information regarding the Justice Department's firing of Federal prosecutors or face a congressional contempt citation. I and my colleagues will do everything in our power to compel the White House to cooperate with our investigation. I will continue to work with my colleagues to uncover the truth about the Gonzales Justice Department and its treatment of Americans' civil liberties, and I will fight to hold this administration accountable.

While Congress exercises its oversight role, we must also support a framework of laws that protects Americans from violations of our liberties and our right to privacy. I have always defended civil liberties. In 2001, I joined just 65 of my colleagues in standing up to post-9/11 fearmongering and voting against the USA PATRIOT ACT. I have cosponsored legislation to restore the right of habeas corpus and undo the Military Commissions Act. And, most recently, I opposed changes to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA, that would have given this administration more power to spy on Americans.

The Bush administration has done real damage to the United States through its policies and its executive actions. Congress must respond in the manner that will most effectively protect the American people and promote the interests of our country. We have begun to rein in the president and restore integrity to the Federal Government. We will continue to do so.