

SECRETARY CLINTON VISIT

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkish Relations and Turkish Americans, I was greatly encouraged by the recent visit of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to our ally, Turkey. This historic visit sends a clear signal that the United States greatly values its strategic partnership with Turkey—which has benefited both of nations for over half a century.

During the visit, Secretary Clinton announced an upcoming trip to Turkey by President Barack Obama, and together with Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan released a Joint Statement.

Over the coming months, I am convinced that U.S.-Turkish relations will continue to deepen and flourish under the stewardship of President Obama, Secretary Clinton and the new Administration. It is clear that a strong and mutually respectful friendship is in the national interests of the United States and Turkey, and also serves to promote regional peace, security and prosperity. To that end, I encourage all of my colleagues to review the text of Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Babacan's joint statement, which I am including in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

JOINT STATEMENT BY TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON UPON THE INVITATION OF MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY ALI BABACAN, MARCH 7, 2009

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister Ali Babacan today reaffirmed the strong bonds of alliance, solidarity and strategic partnership between the Republic of Turkey and the United States, as well as the commitment of both countries to the principles of peace, democracy, freedom, and prosperity enshrined in the Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue document agreed to in July 2006.

Turkey and the United States reiterated their determination to continue close cooperation and consultation on all issues of common concern. They pledge to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East and in this context, to support a permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including alleviating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-state solution; to enhance energy security and to expand the Southern corridor of natural gas and oil infrastructure to enable Caspian basin and Iraqi energy producers to reach European and world markets; to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the south Caucasus, including through U.S. support for the efforts of Turkey and Armenia to normalize relations and joint support for the efforts of the Minsk Group to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict; to continue to cooperate in the Balkans; to support strongly a comprehensive and mutually-acceptable settlement of the Cyprus question under the auspices of the UN and in this context ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots; and to enhance their cooperation in the fight against terrorism, particularly against their common enemies, the PKK and al-Qaeda. The United States will continue its intelligence support for Turkish operations against the PKK and is reviewing ways to be more supportive. As members of the G-20,

Turkey and the United States pledge continued cooperation to deal with the global economic crisis and efforts to increase and diversify bilateral economic relations with particular emphasis on trade, investment, scientific and technological cooperation.

Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Babacan discussed Turkey's accession to the European Union as a member, a goal the United States continues to strongly support, as well as the Government of Turkey's continued emphasis on reform process. With their commitment to Transatlantic relations and as Allies in a strong NATO, they pledge continued cooperation in Afghanistan, including through continued Turkish contributions to Afghanistan. They reiterated their commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq as well as reiterated their support for a democratic, pluralistic, unified and federal Iraq. They also welcome Turkey's deepening relations with the Government of Iraq as evidenced by high level visits as well as trilateral meetings to discuss cooperation against the PKK. Turkey and the United States will strongly back the United Nations Security Council in its work to maintain global peace and security for the prevention and removal of threats to the international community and in this context will cooperate in dealing with issues including terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime and the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the region and beyond.

Finally, they reaffirmed their determination to diversify the broad based bilateral relations particularly between the Turkish and American people. In that context, the Secretary and Minister announced the establishment of "Young Turkey/Young America: A New Relationship for a New Age." This initiative will enable emerging young leaders in Turkey and the United States to develop initiatives that will positively impact people's lives and invest in future ties between the leadership of our two countries.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, unfortunately I missed recorded votes on the House floor on Friday, March 6, 2009.

Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on Rollcall vote #107 (on approval of the journal), "Aye" on Rollcall vote #108 (Motion to Recommit with instructions to H.J. Res. 38), "Nay" on Rollcall vote #109 (on passage of H.J. Res. 38).

COMMENDING THE OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF SOMERSET COUNTY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of National Women's History Month, and I would like to congratulate a number of outstanding women who will be recognized at the Somerset County's Commission on the Status of Women awards in New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District.

The Commission presents awards annually in celebration of National Women's History Month in March. This year there are 17 women being honored, including entrepreneurs, educators and hometown heroes whose community service is considered extraordinary.

This year's Education Award winner is Elizabeth Stitley of Somerville. She currently serves as a supervisor of Allied Health Programs at Somerset County Technology Institute since 2003.

In this capacity, Elizabeth has spearheaded the growth of the program, which now offers two full-time, day practical nursing programs and an evening program. She was instrumental in adding a new skills laboratory with a task-training center that will soon be equipped with cameras.

Elizabeth has served as president of the Practical Nurse Educators Council and of the New Jersey League for Nursing, and received the league's 2004 President's Award. She also is a member of Sigma Theta Tau, the international nursing honor society.

I am pleased to congratulate Elizabeth Stitley for her outstanding efforts and share her good work with my colleagues in the United States Congress and the American people.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the House Republican standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 1105, the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: CJS: COPS Law Enforcement technology

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Charles Town Police Department

Address of Requesting Entity: 114 West Liberty Street, Charles Town, West Virginia 25414

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$124,000: The Charles Town Police Department is seeking funds to upgrade their technological capabilities to meet the needs of a growing community. This funding will be used to provide computers that can be used in the office and in police vehicles that will allow them to integrate into various databases that are available via the intranet and internet; provide a server with enough space to allow them to utilize various databases for information storage and retrieval; provide a case management system that will allow the police department to generate forms, conduct searches as well as integrate case and document management; and provide the police department the opportunity to store documents electronically versus a paper format.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: CJS: COPS Law Enforcement technology

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Weston Police Department

Address of Requesting Entity: 102 West Second St., Weston, WV 26452

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$100,000: Weston, a small rural community in West Virginia, is seeking funds to upgrade their communications capabilities to help them meet the needs of their community and the surrounding county. These funds will help establish a computer network in all police vehicles that is networked with the 911 center and the Weston Police Department and surrounding counties.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: CJS: COPS Law Enforcement technology

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Morgan County Commission

Address of Requesting Entity: P.O. Box 28, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$576,000: The Morgan County Commission is requesting funding for two emergency and communication towers to be built in the western part of the county. Not only will this tower provide better Cellular and Internet service for our citizens in this rural area, but more importantly, it will increase emergency operations in these areas. The second tower will be located in Paw Paw, West Virginia and will provide great service for not only the residents of Morgan County, but also those that travel through the area.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: CJS: COPS Law Enforcement technology

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Hampshire County Multi-Agency RMS Communications

Address of Requesting Entity: 66 North High Street, Room 2, Romney, WV 26757

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$93,000: Hampshire County's Sheriff's office is seeking funds to implement a new, modern, Windows based, multi-jurisdictional Record Management System (RMS), which will link the sheriff's department, two city police departments, 911 Center, and the prosecuting attorney's office. This shared line of communication is critical to the county's ability to respond to emergencies and threats to the Greater Washington metropolitan area as the county is on the front line for eastern evacuation routes for the city.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Energy & Water: Corps of Engineers: Construction

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Rep. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Address of Requesting Entity: 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$1,435,000: This money is to fund certified water and wastewater projects and is of great value to small communities with aging or inadequate water systems.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Energy & Water: Corps of Engineers: Construction

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Wirt Co. Commission

Address of Requesting Entity: Court & Washington Street, Elizabeth, WV 26143

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$287,000: The Wirt County Commission is hoping to effect permanent, long lasting repairs to the Wells Lock/Dam. The Department of Natural Resources has attempted temporary repairs by filling old lock chamber with large stones, but this is considered a temporary repair. If the water pool established by the dam is lost, it will cause considerable erosion of river banks alongside the Town of Elizabeth, including Sportsman Park, schools, and various roadways. Funds will be used for a more long term repair to this vital piece of infrastructure.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Interior: STAG

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Central Hampshire PSD

Address of Requesting Entity: Rural Route 1, Box 84, Augusta, WV 26704

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$500,000: The Central Hampshire PSD's existing wastewater treatment plant is at capacity and the PSD has imposed a moratorium on new sewer connections. While Hampshire County has land suitable for residential, commercial and industrial development adjacent to the City of Romney the moratorium on new connections precludes this development. The City of Romney is developing a new wastewater treatment plant that will meet federal and state standards. The City is developing the facility with sufficient capacity to serve immediately adjacent areas of the Central Hampshire PDS that currently rely on the existing overburdened Central Hampshire Treatment Plant. The PSD must construct an inter-connector line to access this treatment capacity. Accessing the Romney wastewater treatment plant will allow the PSD to lift the moratorium and serve new development.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Interior: STAG

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Kanawha County Commission

Address of Requesting Entity: 407 Virginia Street East, Charleston, WV 25301

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$184,000: The requested funding will allow the Kanawha County Commission to fully fund this project and continue providing water to residents of Kanawha County. Currently, Kanawha County is approximately 98% served by a viable water system. The construction of this water project will bring water to an additional 45 families that are in dire need of water. These residents have relied on wells that are no longer functioning, shallow wells, cisterns, springs and are hauling water to their residents. Many of these systems producing water does not meet the drinking water quality requirements of the WV Department of Health

and Human Resources, due to mineral and biological contamination. One of the goals of Kanawha County's comprehensive plan is to provide potable water to its residents which will enhance their quality of life. If this project is not constructed the problem will continue to perpetuate the nearly intolerable conditions that currently exist.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Family Care Health Center

Address of Requesting Entity: 301-6 Great Teays Boulevard, Scott Depot, WV 25560

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$347,000: Northern Putnam County is underserved for primary and preventive care, with only one doctor located in the area and a population close to 10,000 people. Family Care, a Section 330 Community Health Center (FQHC) has its main office in the Teays District of Putnam County and is interested in working with a community coalition from Northern Putnam County to establish a full-time health center in this growing community so that families can access healthcare closer to their homes and schools. Funding will be used to purchase an existing building in the town of Eleanor, renovate it to accommodate a 5,000 sq. ft. health clinic, and support the first two years of operation until the new site is financially stable.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: St. Francis Hospital

Address of Requesting Entity: 333 Laidley St. P.O. Box 471, Charleston, WV 25322

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$190,000: The Prime of Life health screening program at St. Francis offers monthly screenings at free or reduced rates. St. Francis currently offers a free blood sugar and blood pressure screening as well as a cholesterol check, prostate exam, thyroid stimulating hormone test, hemoglobin A1C test for patients with diabetes and a complete blood count for \$10 per test. Federal funding would allow St. Francis to expand the screening capacity and to educate patients and the regional population on health prevention, encourage them to take personal responsibility for their health, and act as a preventative health resource.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: E.A. Hawse Health Center Address of Requesting Entity: PO Box 97 17978 State Rt. 55 Baker, WV 26801

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$190,000: E.A. Hawse Health Center (HHC) is seeking federal funding to provide oral health care for the underserved in the three county region of Berkeley, Morgan and Jefferson counties in West Virginia. The funding will allow HHC to lease, renovate, and equip a 3,000+ sq. ft. building located in Martinsburg for the practice site. Initial staffing will be 2

FTE Dentists, 1 FTE Dental Hygienist, 2.5 FTE Dental Assistants, 2 FTE clerical staff and 1 FTE Office Manager. It is estimated that the practice will provide 5,700 encounters for 2,500 users by the second year of the service expansion project period.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105 FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Marshall University Mid-Ohio Valley Center
Address of Requesting Entity: One John Marshall Way Point Pleasant, WV 25550

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$190,000: This funding will go towards building a medical simulation lab, a state of the art training facility that will provide the most current clinical situations. This lab will provide challenging medical situations that require critical thinking skills for all levels of medical professionals, in addition to the hands on interventions of medical care. This funding will allow the center to continually train all medical professionals for the rural setting. It is imperative to provide this training for these unique medical cases. Not only will the training assist in saving lives, but the care given at the first contact will aid in a faster diagnosis and treatment which could assist in the recovery process

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Thomas Memorial Hospital

Address of Requesting Entity: 4605 MacCorkle Avenue SW., South Charleston, WV 25309

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$95,000: Thomas Memorial Hospital is seeking funding to assist in the completion of a clinical pavilion that will provide critically needed patient beds and surgical suites. The hospital serves an 8 county radius and needs the additional patient beds and surgical suites to address the demands of an aging patient population and an increased number of births at the facility.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: Labor HHS: HRSA

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: St. Joseph Hospital

Address of Requesting Entity: 1 Amalia Drive, Buckhannon, WV 26201

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$95,000: St. Joseph's is seeking funds to establish twenty skilled nursing beds on hospital campus. The twenty skilled nursing beds are an integral component of the proposed senior retirement community in Upshur County that will provide independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing living facilities.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: FHWA: IM

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: City of South Charleston

Address of Requesting Entity: P.O. Box 8597, So. Charleston, WV 25303

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$237,500: The city is asking for funding to help with the cost involved in the repairs that need to be done. The entire decking on this bridge is failing and must be replaced as well as the sidewalks on the bridge. The federal funding if granted will be used entirely on the planning and replacement costs. A bridge report is available should it be required. This bridge is one of the main arteries in to the city. It also is the only available way for the students who attend South Charleston Middle School to cross over in order to get to the school. As it is now it is not as safe as it needs to be for all the traffic that passes over whether it is by foot or automobile. The funding for this project will help us accomplish our goal to replace the decking and sidewalks on the Central Avenue Overpass. We hope to meet a goal of new decking, sidewalks and to replace all the fencing and rails for all traffic. The benefit of this project is to ensure that we have a safe entry into our city in order to keep our economic growth at a steady rate. It also will allow a safe and direct way for our School students to get to and from school if their only way to school is to walk.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: HUD: EDI

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Kanawha Co. Public Library

Address of Requesting Entity: 123 Capitol Street Charleston, WV 25301

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$237,500: The funds appropriated for the project will go towards building new parking facilities a small business center, career center, and meeting room space.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: HUD: TCSP

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Berkeley County Development Authority

Address of Requesting Entity: 110 West Burke Street, Martinsburg, WV, 25401

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$332,500: Funding is needed to continue the construction of necessary infrastructure at Tabler Station Businesses Park. These funds would be directed toward projects including: Transportation and Roads, Water and Sewer Lines, Storm Water Management, Electrical Power, and Telecommunications. This project received an EDA grant of \$1.2 million in 2007.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: HUD: EDI

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Morgan County Commission

Address of Requesting Entity: P.O. Box 28, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$190,000: It is proposed to build a senior housing project on a vacant CSX site in downtown Berkeley Springs. The monies would be used for site acquisition and some site improvements. Despite growth in the area, there remains a long-term population of the area who need affordable housing and who are gradually being priced out of the market. This includes many persons aged 55 or over who

have been residents of the Morgan County area for their entire lives, but now find a shifting of their housing needs as they age. Currently there are no senior housing facilities in Berkeley Springs. The construction of this project will be the first in the area and will meet a demonstrated need.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: T-HUD: HUD: EDI

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Randolph County Development Authority/City of Elkins

Address of Requesting Entity: 10 11th Street, Elkins, WV 26241

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$142,500: This project will help ensure both downtown revitalization and preservation of the City of Elkins' historic commercial core. Funding is needed because the City of Elkins and the RCDA have exhausted both of their resources investing in the skeleton of the Revitalization effort. The City has upgraded water, sewer, and storm sewer lines, while the RCDA has installed road beds, underground utilities, restored the historic depot, and attracted private developers into the downtown.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: HUD: EDI

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of WV

Address of Requesting Entity: 135 Main Street P.O. Box 176, Clay, WV 25043

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$190,000: This funding will be used for mining reclamation. With the planning and design of the site the coal company will work with the engineer firm, WV Housing Development Fund and the Clay County Board of Education to make sure the reclaimed sites are left in the proper condition for construction, water and sewer, housing. By using reclaimed mine sites, Clay County will be able to have developable land for much needed housing and industrial sites. The benefits to the district will be affordable housing for the residents of the district and land to develop industry.

Requesting Member: SHELLEY MOORE
CAPITO

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY 2009 Omnibus
Appropriations Act

Account: HUD: TCSP

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: HOPE Community Development Corporation, Charleston, WV

Address of Requesting Entity: 407 Virginia Street East, 600 Kanawha Boulevard, West, Charleston, WV 25302

Description of Request: Provide an earmark of \$712,500: The funding will allow HOPE CDC to establish a Home Ownership Zone on the West Side of Charleston to provide homeownership opportunities to low to moderate income families on The West Side to increase the number of homeowners on the West Side of Charleston. The establishment of an Entrepreneurial Economic and Workforce Development Center will Result in the creation of jobs and economic business opportunities for residents on the West Side of Charleston.

COMMENDING THE OUTSTANDING
WOMEN OF SOMERSET COUNTY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of National Women's History Month, and I would like to congratulate a number of outstanding women who will be recognized at the Somerset County's Commission on the Status of Women awards in New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District.

The Commission presents awards annually in celebration of National Women's History Month in March. This year there are 17 women being honored, including entrepreneurs, educators and hometown heroes whose community service is considered extraordinary.

This year's Distinguished Honoree is Raritan Borough Mayor Jo-Ann Liptak, who is being honored for her decades as a teacher, volunteer work at Somerset Medical Center in Somerville, and her service on the Somerset County Planning Board. She also created the borough's annual John Basilone Memorial parade. Jo-Ann is the third generation in her family to hold office in Raritan Borough, became the municipality's first female mayor in 2007. I am pleased to congratulate Raritan Borough Mayor Jo-Ann Liptak for her outstanding efforts and share her good work with my colleagues in the United States Congress and the American people.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, consistent with House Republican Earmark Standards, I am submitting the following earmark disclosure information for project requests that I made and which were included within H.R. 1105, the "Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009."

Requesting Member: Congressman JOHN DUNCAN

Bill Number: H.R. 1105

Account: Corps of Engineers—Section 206

Project Amount: \$0—It is a named project.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Army Corps of Engineers—Nashville District, PO Box 1070, Nashville, TN 37202.

Description of Request: Maryville, TN is interested in the restoration of the area's hydrology, streambank stabilization, and construction of a sediment basin. Recommended features include sediment removal, bioengineering restorations, and wetland restoration and development.

INTRODUCTION OF "HEALTHCARE
ENHANCEMENT FOR LOCAL PUBLIC
SERVANTS ACT OF 2009"

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, along with my New York colleague, JOHN MCHUGH, I am

pleased to introduce the "Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Servants Act of 2009" or HELPS II legislation to provide a pre-tax deduction of up to \$3,000 to retired public servants for health or Long Term Care (LTC) insurance premiums.

This legislation builds off the successful language added to the Pension Protection Act (P.L. 109–280), which included a provision permitting retired public safety officers to take up to \$3,000 in pre-tax income and use it for health care costs or long term care expenses.

Today, we expand this successful measure to all retired public employee.

This concept was born several years ago during the 108th Congress in the Portman-Cardin pension bill (H.R. 1776) which included language to provide the ability of all retirees to use pre-tax dollars to pay for health plan premiums. Unfortunately, this provision and H.R. 1776 did not become law, and so today we introduce this as a free standing bill.

This language will benefit our nation's hard working public sector retirees.

The average monthly pension benefit of a retired public servant is \$1,725 and many do not have Social Security benefits. A significant portion of a retired public servants' monthly pension check is going towards health or Long Term Care insurance premiums. In many cases, the retired public servant is using the entire pension benefit to pay for health insurance premiums.

Additionally, HELPS II would streamline the administrative requirements of the program so that it will run more smoothly for those who already enjoy this tax benefit our nation's retired public safety officers.

Therefore, we are pleased to introduce this legislation and will work for its enactment to ensure that all of our nation's retired public safety officers and all of our nation's retired public servants have a streamlined ability to pay for health and long term care costs in their golden years.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
HEALTHCARE ENHANCEMENT
FOR LOCAL PUBLIC SERVANTS
ACT OF 2009

HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of the Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Servants Act of 2009, or HELPS II, Act. I appreciate the work my friend, Mr. CROWLEY, has done to develop this important legislation, which would make health care and Long Term Care (LTC) premiums more affordable for retired public servants.

Currently, active American workers who participate in a cafeteria plan option known as "premium conversion" may elect to reduce their taxable wages by having their share of health insurance premiums paid on a pretax basis. Such an arrangement reduces both income and employment taxes. Since October 2000, this option has been available to federal employees who participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). This option is also available to private sector and state or local government employees with their employers' permission.

Generally, premium conversion is not available to retirees. This is so because of an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination that distributions from qualified retirement plans are always subject to taxes, aside from several minor exceptions. Consequently, retirees are precluded from recasting pension payments as pretax income and thus denied this tax benefit.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 (P.L. 109–280) allows certain retired public safety officers to pay up to \$3,000 of qualified health insurance and/or Long Term Care (LTC) insurance premiums from their pensions on a pretax basis. This tax advantage, which makes health care more affordable, has become increasingly important as health insurance premiums have increased in recent years.

While I support making premium conversion available to all Americans, a good first step would be to make it available to retired state and local public employees through the enactment of the Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Servants Act of 2009. Accordingly, I look forward to working with the Gentleman from New York to enact this measure.

ALLISON HARMON, DISTINGUISHED
FINALIST, 2009 PRUDENTIAL
SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Mr. BARTLETT. Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a young student from my district who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in her community. Allison Harmon of Hampstead has been named a distinguished finalist by the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state and the District of Columbia.

Ms. Harmon has been an active community volunteer, going back to the sixth grade. She has coordinated drives to collect school supplies, clothing, food and toys for the needy; tutored and mentored young students; volunteered at hospitals; and participated in many other service activities.

I believe it is vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contribution that Allison has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods.

I heartily applaud Ms. Harmon for her initiative in seeking to make her community a better place to live, and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

Young volunteers like Allison are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.