

Army, Europe and Seventh Army during a period of simultaneous operations in Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo. General McKiernan subsequently became the Coalition Forces Land Component Commander for Central Command. In March 2003, General McKiernan commanded and led all coalition and U.S. conventional ground forces in the invasion of Iraq.

As the capstone for an exceptional career of service to our country, General McKiernan distinguished himself from 3 June 2008 to 3 June 2009 while serving as the Commander, International Security Assistance Force and Commander, U.S. Forces—Afghanistan. General McKiernan was instrumental in developing the partnerships and setting the conditions necessary for achieving mission success in Afghanistan. He revamped the campaign strategy. He worked to improve command and control in that war by reorganizing the ISAF headquarters staff to better execute that strategy and working to establish a new command—U.S. Forces Afghanistan, significantly improving coordination of counterinsurgency operations across Afghanistan.

In the fall of 2008, General McKiernan articulated the need for a sizeable increase in U.S. forces in the strategically important southern region of Afghanistan to improve security and help safeguard national elections in August 2009. He was the first to recommend the need for a sizeable increase in civilian resources from the U.S. Government to bolster governance and development efforts.

General McKiernan improved operations in Afghanistan, issuing new Counterinsurgency Guidance as the campaign shifted to efforts to protect the Afghan population, obtaining legal authorities to conduct counternarcotics interdiction, improving force protection measures, and issuing new guidance that cut down on non-combatant casualties. General McKiernan worked with the Ministry of Interior to develop the Afghan Public Protection Program, which could become a blueprint for developing bottom up governance in the districts and provinces throughout the country. He worked with the Afghan Government to support a highly successful 2008–2009 voter registration program with over 4.5 million Afghans registering without major incident and prepared the plans to support a fair and credible election in August 2009. He received approval for his recommendation to accelerate the growth of the Afghan National Army to 134,000 by December 2011, and has started the planning effort to grow the Afghan National Security Forces up to 400,000 in the years to come. He also was the architect behind the plan to bring in U.S. units in 2009 that can not only conduct a rigorous counter-insurgency campaign in the south, but can build the capacity of the Afghan Army and Police by training, partnering and mentoring with Afghan Army and Police units. General McKiernan personally reinvigorated the Tripartite Commission (TPC) process with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and ISAF, and conducted bilateral meetings to improve U.S. and Pakistan relations and to make the case that both countries face a mutual terrorist threat. It is certainly my hope that General McKiernan's initiatives build momentum going into the summer of 2009.

General David D. McKiernan is a true American patriot. His leadership, keen intellect and performance throughout an intensive and demanding period of military history were instru-

mental in achieving success in mission after mission. He boldly led "America's finest" during combat operations in Desert Storm, the Balkans, the invasion of Iraq and finally in the harsh and difficult mountains and deserts of Afghanistan. I know his selfless performance of duty, courage under fire, exceptional integrity and quiet pursuit of excellence has inspired many American warriors who have served with him. I am sure he will be truly missed in Afghanistan by his troops, diplomatic colleagues, NATO and our Coalition partners, and the Government of Afghanistan. It gives me great pleasure today to recognize and salute a great American—General David McKiernan—before my colleagues. I wish General McKiernan and his lovely wife Carmen all the best that life has to offer as he concludes a most distinguished career in service to our country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MILITARY OVERPAYMENT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2009

HON. CAROL SHEA-PORTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Military Overpayment Fairness Act. Payment errors are common in all military branches and the burden of having to quickly repay an overpayment can place a significant strain on military families.

When I had a meeting with National Guard families and asked for their most significant problems, they spoke to me about the hardships caused by overpayment errors. I heard the story of a National Guard Sergeant from New Hampshire who was injured in Afghanistan and hospitalized in Walter Reed. Due to an error by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), he received four months of pay in error. He immediately brought these overpayments to DFAS's attention. DFAS assured the service member that there was no error and that he was entitled to all of the money he received. The service member disputed the payments several times, but was told they were correct. Then, a year later, DFAS reversed itself and suddenly notified him that he had been overpaid. They began deducting at the rate two-thirds of his monthly paycheck. To make matters worse, by this time he had enrolled in college and still had the continued, added burden of house payments. This and other similar stories show the severity of this problem in my home state of New Hampshire and across the nation.

I am introducing this legislation to ease the burden on servicemen and women by requiring DFAS to take into account the finances of members of the Armed Forces when pay errors are made. This bill gives the Department of Defense the flexibility to negotiate the terms of repayment, taking into account the finances of the service member, to avoid causing service members undue hardship. In addition, the bill states that not more than 10 percent of a service member's pay can be deducted monthly for an overpayment. Currently, up to two-thirds of a service member's salary can be deducted. The bill delays repayments if service members are wounded, ill, or deployed. It also has a five-year statute of limitations.

These provisions should encourage the Department of Defense to improve its accounting practices.

The men and women that serve our nation have already sacrificed for our country—there is no excuse for placing undue financial burdens on these men and women as a result of poor accounting practices. I was proud to introduce legislation to address the hardships caused by these errors. I look forward to its consideration in the House of Representatives.

VITTORRO MAESTAS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Vittorio Maestas who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Vittorio Maestas is a senior at Jefferson High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Vittorio Maestas is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Vittorio Maestas for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication he has shown in his academic career to his future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, unfortunately I missed recorded votes on the House floor on Monday, June 8, 2009.

I ask that the record reflect that had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote No. 311 (Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H.R. 1736); "nay" on rollcall vote No. 312 (Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H.R. 1709); "aye" on rollcall vote No. 313 (Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H. Res. 420).

INTRODUCTION OF FEE DISCLOSURE BILL

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Defined Contribution Plan Fee Transparency Act of 2009. During the last Congress, we expected some guidance from the Department of Labor on the issue of fee transparency, but not much was