

THANKING RICK WEIDEMANN FOR  
HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

**HON. ROBERT A. BRADY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 28, 2010*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement on May 25, 2010, we rise to thank Mr. Rick Weidemann for his 22 years of distinguished service to the U.S. House of Representatives. Rick has served this great institution as a valued employee of the Clerk of the House for 8 years and House Information Resources (HIR) in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for 14 years.

Rick began his career at the House with the Office of the Clerk in November 1987 as a Data Entry Clerk for the Finance Office. A year later he was promoted to the position of Senior Telecommunications Administrator with the Office of Telecommunications. In June of 1995, Rick joined HIR when the Office of Telecommunications was transferred to the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. During this time, Rick managed the landlines and wireless requirements of Members, committee, leadership and House support offices.

In recent years, Rick has handled the increased workload and challenges of the position brought on by the explosive growth and variety of personal digital assistants (PDAs) and Smart Phones.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Rick for his years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives.

**NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011**

SPEECH OF

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 27, 2010*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5136, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011," which provides \$726 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy.

I thank Chairman SKELTON for his masterful leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. Chair, I support this bill for three reasons: (1) it restores and enhances the readiness of our troops, equipment, and defense infrastructure; (2) it takes care of our military personnel and their families; and (3) it authorizes the needed investments to keep our nation strong, safe, and respected in the world.

Let me briefly highlight some of the key provisions. This legislation:

**TROOP AND EQUIPMENT READINESS**

Provides \$1.2 billion for projects in Afghanistan to allow our commanders on the ground

to immediately respond to military construction needs in theater.

Authorizes \$13.6 billion for the training of all active duty and reserve forces to increase readiness as troops experience greater dwell time following the Iraq drawdown.

Authorizes \$345 million to fully fund the first increment of construction funds to modernize DOD schools.

Authorizes \$9.7 billion to fully fund day-to-day maintenance requirements of DOD facilities.

Provides a total of \$7.2 billion for the National Guard and Reserve, including \$700 million above the budget request.

**HELP FOR MILITARY FAMILIES**

Provides a 1.9 percent military pay raise.

Expands TRICARE health coverage to include adult dependent children up to age 26.

Increases family separation allowance for troops who are deployed away from their families.

Increases hostile fire and imminent danger pay for the first time since 2004.

Expands college loan repayment benefits.

Contains the most comprehensive provisions to address sexual assault in the military, including 28 recommendations of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault.

Establishes a pilot program to help military spouses take advantage of their personal skill sets to identify and obtain desirable and portable careers.

Authorizes an additional special one-time payment to seriously wounded servicemembers to pay for the relocation costs of their caregivers.

**IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN**

Bans permanent bases in Iraq and prohibits U.S. control of Iraqi oil.

Requires report on responsible redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq, the development of military capabilities that are necessary for the Government of Iraq to stand on its own, and the status of nearly 1,000 projects, programs, and activities that will need to be closed or transferred over a short period of time as a result of the drawdown.

Bans permanent bases in Afghanistan.

Requires reports to assess progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan and the conditions and criteria that would need to permit the transition of lead security responsibility to the Afghan government, and allow the redeployment of U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

**HOMELAND SECURITY AND COUNTERRORISM**

Authorizes \$87.8 million for the Combating Terrorism Technical Support office.

Authorizes \$2.6 billion for Homeland Defense and counterproliferation activities, including \$1.6 billion for chemical biological defense.

Provides \$20 million for two cybersecurity new start programs.

Provides \$1.6 billion to support nations providing support in Iraq and Afghanistan in the fight against al Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban.

Extends DOD's Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund through FY11.

**RICHARDSON AMENDMENT #1**

Mr. Chair, in my remaining time let me discuss an additional reason why I support this legislation. With the support of Chairman SKELTON and his committee, this bill includes an amendment I offered which I will briefly describe.

My amendment, Richardson Amendment #1, improves the bill by instructing the TRANSPORTATION COMMAND (TRANSCOM) to update and expand the PORT LOOK 2008 Strategic Seaports study. This study remains a crucial tool to ensure that our ports are ready to respond in the case of an emergency. My amendment would expand the scope of the report to include consideration of the infrastructure in the vicinity of strategic ports, including bridges, roads, and rail capacity, in addition to the facilities inside the port that are already covered.

Mr. Chair, it bears repeating that in time of war, "the role of the ports is to protect the forts." If the transportation systems and infrastructure in and around our strategic ports is deficient, the ability of these ports to fulfill their indispensable national security role will be compromised. That cannot be allowed to happen. My amendment will ensure that we have the information needed to make the investments needed to keep our strategy the best in the world.

I thank the Rules Committee for making my amendment in order and Chairman SKELTON for accepting it.

**RICHARDSON AMENDMENT #2**

I also offered a second amendment, Richardson Amendment #2, to increase the effectiveness of the Northern Command ("NORTHCOM") in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in event of war and in providing support to local, state, and federal authorities in times of national emergency. Specifically, my amendment would have ensured that NORTHCOM (1) develops and has in place a leadership strategy that will strengthen and foster institutional and interpersonal relationships with state and local governments and (2) develops an instructional program to train key personnel how to lead effectively in the event of a disaster when they do not have command authority to dictate actions.

The purpose for NORTHCOM is to bring the capabilities and the resources of the U.S. military to the assistance of the American people during a catastrophic disaster. NORTHCOM leaders will be much more effective in saving lives, protecting assets, and enhancing resilience after the disaster has occurred if they are trained in the techniques of effective engagement with civilian leadership. My amendment would have ensured that such training will be available. Although this amendment was not made in order by the Rules Committee, my present intention is to introduce this legislation as a separate bill when the House reconvenes next month.

**CONCLUSION**

Madam Speaker, let me express my thanks to Chairwoman SLAUGHTER of the Rules Committee for making the Richardson Amendment in order and to Chairman SKELTON for accepting it. I also want to acknowledge the yeoman work of the Committee staffs and the excellent work of my Legislative Director, Gregory Berry, and Jeremy Marcus, my Senior Legislative Assistant.

In conclusion, I support H.R. 5136 because it restores and enhances the readiness of our troops, equipment, and defense infrastructure. It takes care of our military personnel and their families. And it authorizes the needed investments to keep our Nation strong, safe, and respected in the world. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for the bill on final passage.