

In a sense, what they were really saying is that Erica made their experience in our nation's capital even better. That's no small feat. In a city with so many memorable museums, landmarks, and attractions, it says quite a bit that her service left such a lasting impression during what for many is a very special and personally fulfilling trip to Washington, D.C.

My colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee would certainly appreciate this example of Erica's hard work and dedication to the team. When the health care bill was brought up for a markup in the committee last summer, my senior policy advisor on health care issues was out of the office on maternity leave. So Erica stepped in to pinch hit for, essentially, her first Major League at-bat.

Madam Speaker, that marathon markup on the 2,032-page bill was Erica's very first hands-on experience in the committee process. Without missing a beat, she dove head-first into the complicated new policy implications of this massive piece of legislation. Put in a similar position, many others might have been intimidated by the pressure and greatly elevated stakes. She held more than her own, even helping me successfully attach several amendments important to rural Oregon to the committee version of the bill.

As I'm sure you can imagine, Madam Speaker, it is bittersweet to lose a member of the team like Erica. On the one hand, it is never easy to replace someone who brings to the table an outgoing personality, strong work ethic, and commitment to public service. But on the other hand, it's impossible not to be happy for her as she enters what will no doubt be a very exciting stage of her life.

While Erica is leaving Capitol Hill, she is entering a private professional organization where she will continue to remain deeply involved in public policy work, something that I know is a priority for Erica.

Beyond her professional growth, Erica recently became engaged to Danny Fernandez, a fellow Oregonian and former staffer for Senator Gordon Smith. They plan to marry next year, and I couldn't be any happier for the both of them—even if Danny hails from the wrong side of Oregon's Civil War. In all seriousness, they are two wonderfully talented individuals, and I wish them the very best as they go down the very exciting path before them.

Erica also became an aunt for the first time just a couple of short weeks ago. It must have been near torture for Erica to wait a week before heading down to Georgia to see the new addition to her family, but her pride in her sister and baby Seth has been evident ever since she announced the happy news.

Madam Speaker, I've already noted how constituents have showered praise upon Erica for her work. Just as importantly, I'd wager that if you polled my staff and the professionals who regularly come and go through my office, they would tell you that having the privilege to interact with Erica makes every day that much better. The world could always use a few more people like that. I can't think of any higher compliments.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J. HALL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4899, although I have strong reservations about the situation in Afghanistan.

I am glad that President Obama has remained committed to the draw-down of U.S. forces from Iraq. In August, another 20,000 American troops will return home from Iraq, leaving only 50,000 deployed there. We are on schedule to have all combat troops home by the end of 2011. H.R. 4899 funds this process, providing supplies, ammunition, and fuel for the ships and planes bringing our troops home.

I am also supportive of the disaster aid included in this bill, which allows FEMA to help communities rebuild after recent disastrous weather events and gives aid to Haiti. Further, the bill contains important funding for health care for veterans suffering from diseases related to Agent Orange, including b-cell leukemia, Parkinson's, and ischemic heart disease.

Regarding Afghanistan, I am still convinced that the presence of the Taliban and al Qaeda there and in Pakistan poses a serious threat to U.S. and Global security. Our troops are needed to continue the fight against enemies who have shown themselves committed to, and capable of, killing American citizens here and abroad.

However, after more than 10 years of war, the situation in Afghanistan is still deeply concerning. A spate of bad news in recent months has served to deepen public mistrust over the previous administration's conduct of the war, and raises questions about how to move forward. We have reliable and repeated reports that the Pakistani Intelligence Service, the ISI, is collaborating with the Taliban, and that the rampant corruption in the Afghan Government of Hamid Karzai jeopardizes our mission and the lives of our troops. It is time for the United States to engage in a thoughtful, national conversation about the direction of this war.

Just last December, President Obama laid out his plan to refocus the conflict in Afghanistan and clearly articulate what we are trying to achieve and when we plan to bring our troops home to their families. Our commitment to Afghanistan is not open-ended, a point that must be reinforced to both the American and Afghan people.

Although we must continually re-examine our involvement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is important to remember our goals in Afghanistan are still worthy. Our troops are denying the Taliban the profits of the drug trade, promoting education for girls and women, providing power and clean water to villages lacking it, and working to build a functioning and stable government.

Ultimately, unless we make significant progress fighting the insurgency it is hard to envision the U.S. achieving these goals in any lasting way. Our allies need to show similar progress: The Karzai government must rein in corruption and Pakistan must purge its intelligence service of Taliban supporters. Without

these developments, I do not believe it is worth additional sacrifice of American lives or resources.

In summary, despite these strong reservations, I plan to support this bill. The President announced his new strategy for Afghanistan only eight months ago, and General Petraeus has been in command for only a month. It is too early to pass judgment on their leadership, especially given the clear failure of the previous administration to pursue those who attacked us from Afghanistan while they diverted military and other resources to Iraq. I would strongly urge, however, that this be the last supplemental used to fund these conflicts. It is hard to envision how a war that has lasted more than 10 years can not be funded as part of the normal defense appropriation process.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR.
ARDILL WRIGHT, JR.

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Pearl Harbor survivor and influential community member, Ardill Wright, Jr., for his life of service to his community and country.

Mr. Wright enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Wichita Falls, Texas on February 14, 1940. On the morning of December 7, 1941, while stationed in Hawaii, Ardill Wright's peaceful morning was suddenly disrupted by the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. While on the deck of the USS *Raleigh*, Mr. Wright narrowly survived a Japanese attack on his ship. Overcoming the chaos and disaster of that morning, Mr. Wright valiantly and courageously saved several of his fellow service members, most notably rescuing multiple sailors trapped in the USS *Utah* by cutting a hole in the ship's keel. Following the attack, Mr. Wright resumed his service aboard the *Raleigh* until the conclusion of World War II.

Following his discharge from the Navy in 1946, Mr. Wright moved to Washington State and became a member of the American Legion, Kent Post 15. Consistent with the American Legion's objectives to benefit and serve the community through the organization of local programs for veterans and their families, Mr. Wright co-founded the highly successful Kent American Legion baseball program in 1961. Additionally, Mr. Wright contributed to the Kent community by serving as team manager well into the 1990s, and ran concessions at Kent Memorial Park until 2004.

In honor of his tireless service to his community, the main diamond at Kent Memorial Park was renamed Art Wright Field in 2003. Additionally, that same year, Mr. Wright was presented with the Kent Kiwanis Citizen of the Year award.

Ardill Wright, Jr. passed away on May 25, 2010, in his Kent home. Mr. Wright is survived by his three sons: Joe, Ardill III, and Shannon, as well as his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His life profoundly reflected selfless commitment to others, and his admirable citizenship and character continue to live on in the Kent community today.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ardill Wright, Jr., for his selfless commitment to others, his military service