

COAST GUARD AND MARITIME
TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2838) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, today the House of Representatives debated a bill that combines a Coast Guard reauthorization with unrelated provisions that will hurt our environment, our economy, and maritime workers. This bill will eliminate the ability of states to protect their waters from invasive species and significantly limit the rights of injured maritime workers, the families of workers who die at sea, and workers who are wrongfully denied their earned wages. This bill puts the profits of maritime corporations above the safety of our environment, our economy, and maritime workers.

Invasive species are a major threat to our environment and our economy, costing the U.S. economy over \$120 billion annually. In communities that rely on our lakes, rivers, and oceans, invasive species can decimate local economies, as they take over fisheries and damage water infrastructure. If zebra or quagga mussels were to spread from the Great Lakes to Oregon's rivers, for example, they could wreak havoc on not only our sensitive ecosystems but also cause major problems for hydropower production. These species could clog pipes and dam intakes in the Columbia River, potentially costing the Pacific Northwest \$25.5 million a year to clean up. Ballast water is the primary source of invasive species into our water, as ships from around the world release water from their last port of call into our waters.

This bill will prevent states from introducing common sense controls on ballast water releases in state waters. The bill sets a low national standard, and does not allow states to choose higher protections for sensitive local waters. It also removes one of the protections we already have—a federal permit requirement under the Clean Water Act. The bill will also further undermine the Clean Water Act by restricting public participation, and opens the door to future threats to our water quality.

This bill also harms the rights of maritime workers. The bill caps the amounts workers can recover when their employer wrongfully withholds their wages, and lessens the incentive to enforce wage laws because there is less to recover. Many maritime workers, especially fisherman, are not protected by many workers' compensation laws. Their only recourse is the right to go to a court to force boat owners to pay compensation or face the loss of their fishing permit. This bill would eliminate this right, and make it easier for boat owners to avoid compensating the families of killed or injured workers. The bill also incentivizes hiring non-U.S. citizens, as it removes the requirement for cruise ships to provide the same treatment for U.S. and non-U.S. citizens in U.S. waters. This makes it cheaper to hire non-U.S. citizens, eliminating American jobs.

This bill is a bad deal for the environment, for the economy, and for U.S. workers. While I support the Coast Guard, I oppose this legislation. I urge the House to vote on a Coast Guard authorization bill without provisions that threaten our environment and our economy.

HONORING ANDREW ESPOSITO ON
THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join all of those who have gathered to extend my sincere congratulations to my dear friend, Andrew Esposito, as he celebrates his retirement after more than four decades with Ironworkers Local 424. Andy's contributions to his union, his brothers and sisters of the labor movement, as well as his community have left an indelible mark that will not soon be matched.

The son of Italian immigrant parents—the second youngest of ten children at the end of the depression era—Andy learned early on that hard work and natural talents garnered success. Throughout his childhood, Andy was drawn to athletics and the skills he honed in the local parks and recreation centers made him a formidable player by the time he joined his high school team. He played three sports and captained the noted 1955–56 basketball team to a winning season, a feat which is still spoken of today. Andy's love for sports has been a lifelong passion. After his own playing days ended, he did the next best thing—he coached and refereed.

Andy became an official with the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials, IAABO, and refereed both high school and college ball throughout Greater New Haven. His dedication was recognized with a multitude of awards and commendations including the Outstanding Basketball Official of the Year as well election into the Hall of Fame. While living in East Haven, Connecticut, Andy coached bitty basketball and was one of the founders of the town's midget football league. Andy also volunteered to coach the first wheelchair basketball team in Connecticut, the Spokebenders; a team that has since gone on to attain national recognition for their abilities on the court. In addition to coaching and refereeing, he served 25 years as Chairman of the John P. Criscuolo Memorial Scholarship Awards dinner, a benefit to raise funds for high school scholar athletes in Greater New Haven. These are only a few examples of the innumerable ways Andy volunteered on behalf of his community and how his generosity and kind heart has touched the lives of others.

After serving honorably in the United States Army and marrying his high-school sweetheart, Andy spent several years searching for work for which he had a passion. In the late 1960's he found work with Ironworkers Local 424 and his life would forever be changed. Though he would choose no other for his life's work, Andy's many years of ironworking were long and hard. In 1994, his dedication and contributions to Local 424 were recognized with his election to the position of President/

Business Agent. He served in this position until 2000 when he was elected Business Manager/Financial Secretary/Treasurer. During his tenure he also served as Labor Co-Chair of Ironworkers Local 15 & 424 Annuity, Health & Welfare & Pension Funds, as well as President of the New Haven Building Trades. From his beginnings to today, his commitment to unions, fairness, and justice for men and women in the workplace has never wavered.

I have known Andy for many years and I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank him for his constant friendship and support. I consider myself fortunate to call him my friend. Throughout his life, Andy has demonstrated a unique commitment to his work and his community. He has made Greater New Haven a better place to live, work, and grow. I am proud to join his wife, Marie, their sons, Mark and Gary, as well as daughter-in-law, Karen, and their grandchildren, Gary and Danny as well as all of the family, friends, and colleagues in congratulating Andrew Esposito on his retirement and wishing him all the best for many more years of health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST SAVINGS
BANK OF PERKASIE AND THE
WELLSPRING CLUBHOUSE**HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the complications of mental illness in the United States, and to honor a local organization in my district for their efforts in assisting individuals who are recovering from these illnesses. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, mental illness affects 57.7 million adults in the U.S. per year. Four out of the ten leading causes of disability in the United States are mental disorders. There is no clear-cut socio-economic basis for these statistics; it is evident that mental illness can affect almost anyone, and the impacts on our economy are staggering.

Despite the disheartening statistics, mental illness is treatable, and there is much hope for people who battle with these afflictions. Given the right tools, people with mental illness can achieve their goals and be productive members of society. The First Savings Bank of Perkasie and the Wellspring Clubhouse work hard to help individuals recovering from mental illness in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and they deserve to be recognized for their outstanding achievements.

On behalf of the 8th District of Pennsylvania, I am pleased to recognize the work of Fred Schea and Marie Koch of the First Savings Bank of Perkasie, in their collaboration with the Wellspring Clubhouse to provide employment opportunities for individuals recovering from mental illnesses. Thus far, First Savings Bank has provided an opportunity for 10 individuals to return to work in the community, gaining valuable experience, and life skills. Wellspring Clubhouse members work in the Bank's Customer Care Center, which is supervised by Marie Koch. Members work alongside other Bank employees, and are responsible for scanning bank documents, verifying data, and performing data entry.