

signed, H.R. 5109, which basically assisted the Veterans Health Administration to help personnel.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Jack Seum, my chief of staff, for his 20 years of service; Paul Flusche for his 17 years; Sherrie Porter for her 10; and Shawna Williams for her 14 years of service. They did an extraordinarily good job, and I thank them.

I recognize my long time employees.

Jack Seum, Chief of Staff, 20 years of service; Paul Flusche, Press Secretary, 17 years of service; Sherrie Porter, District Director, 10 years; and Shawna Williams, Staff Case-worker, 14 years.

And I thank all of my staff for their strong efforts.

Also I want to thank Jay Pierson for his help during my tenure in Congress. He was the floor manager and did a great job. His 34 years of service was extremely impressive.

DISTRICT FUNDING REQUESTS SUMMARY

1. Establishment of an outpatient clinic for Veterans in Leesburg and Ocala, Florida.

2. Instrumental in building a Veterans' hospital facility in western Marion County, part of The Villages, with ten acres of land donated by Gary Morris, the owner of The Villages.

3. Funding for a 235-bed facility for the Veterans Administration Hospital in Gainesville.

4. Numerous funding support for the infrastructure for the beltway in Ocala and the beltway in Clay County.

5. Conversion of the Master Navy Jet Base Cecil Field into the Cecil Field Commerce Center with continuous appropriated funding made to help transition this into a commercial enterprise.

6. Further funding for the National Guard in Camp Blanding for the new Education Center as a result of the 9/11 tragedy and terrorist attack. Also helped National Guard in the relocation of the space program deposit of rocket fuel at Camp Blanding.

7. Federal funding for the building of a new prison in Sumter County and the funding for the intersection to allow transportation requirements to be met off of I75.

8. Accomplishments for Jacksonville Area: JAX VA Cemetery: I first offered legislation (H.R. 3882) to establish a new VA cemetery in northeast Florida in 1996. There are approximately 189,000 veterans in the Jacksonville area, but there were no veterans' cemetery to provide them a permanent place of honor. It was not until 2003, with the inclusion of language from my bill (H.R. 197) into H.R. 1516, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, that a veterans' cemetery in Jacksonville was finally established.

Cecil Field: With the closure of Cecil Field, I have worked with area leaders and involved citizens in transforming Cecil into a commercial center. Since 2001, I have secured \$10.5 million in appropriations funding for the former Cecil Field, now Cecil Commerce Center.

I also worked through the Military Airport Program (MAP) to upgrade the facilities at Cecil. From FY 2000 to 2003, I helped Cecil receive more than \$12.5 million in MAP funding for building and hangar renovation, runway rehabilitation, and infrastructure improvements.

Florida National Guard: I have a long record of working with the Florida National Guard and its premier facility at Camp Blanding. I have secured funding and support for establishing the Rocket Motor Storage Facility, various infrastructure upgrades, and the Air National Guard Weather Readiness Training Center.

NADEP: I support the mission and workers at Jacksonville NADEP. Stearns contacted Secretary of Defense and pointed out specific examples in which NADEP personnel contributed directly to returning equipment to combat readiness.

JAX Port: I consistently join the area delegation in supporting dredging at JAX Port Authority.

MORE RECENT EXAMPLES ARE

1. Representative STEARNS introduced FAST, the "Faster Access to Specialized Treatment Act" (H.R. 4132), which rewrote Section 506 of the Food, Drug & Cosmetics Act to modernize the accelerated approval pathway for rare disease drugs. FAST was included in the FDA Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA), Rare Disease Bill.

2. Congressman STEARNS worked with Rep. ED TOWNS (D-NY) to craft H.R. 734, the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009 which directed the Secretary of Transportation to set a noise level sufficient to alert blind and other pedestrians of the presence of operating motor vehicles. This legislation was signed into law on January 4, 2011 as S. 841.

3. One of the high points for veterans and serving on the 24 years on the Veterans Affairs Committee was the accomplishment of getting a new cemetery in Jacksonville. The language in Representative STEARNS' bill H.R. 1516 was incorporated into the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, establishing a veterans' cemetery in Jacksonville. This was signed by President Bush. Representative STEARNS had originally dropped H.R. 3882 and it was ten years later that this Act was accomplished and signed into law by President Bush.

4. Representative STEARNS served as a member of the Air Force Congress with Sam Johnson who spent 6½ years as a POW at the Hanoi Hilton. While a member of the Air Force Caucus the Air Force Association presented to Congressman STEARNS the W. Stuart Symington Award which is the highest honor presented to a civilian in the field of national security.

5. A recent bill which passed the Congress for the first time with Democrat support was H.R. * * * (James) the Concealed Weapons Permit to allow Americans to carry a concealed weapon if they have established their credentials from the state of their residency to other states.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for 3 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, sometimes events occur that are so out of the ordinary, so unusual as to defy belief. Such is the decision of the Speaker last night not to permit this House to vote on relief aid for the three States and some other areas that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

I have been in this House for 20 years. There have been many disasters—floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires. In every single instance, this House has voted aid for the necessary States; in every single instance, usually within a week or 2. Never more than 3. It has now been 9 weeks since October 29 when Hurricane Sandy devastated three States and parts of more—9 weeks.

The Senate passed a bill to aid us. The House was ready. The bill was prepared and an amendment was prepared. We were assured the bill would be on the floor last night or today. At the last minute the Speaker, without even talking to Republicans, not to mention Democrats from New York, refusing to meet with them, suddenly pulled the bill and said we wouldn't have a vote; as if the people in New York and Connecticut and Pennsylvania, New Jersey are not in need of aid; as if thousands of people are still not without heat, without water—as if thousands of small businesses don't need loans and aid so that they don't go under; as if thousands of people don't need help to rebuild their homes, to clear the trash from their properties; as if hundreds of municipalities don't need aid to finance this activity, having used up all their budgets for that purpose.

We're told by the chairman of the Appropriations Committee we'll get a bill on the floor later this month in the next Congress. It's already 9 weeks. It's already an unprecedented length of time. And why? Are New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians and Connecticut residents and New Jersey residents less American than the people that we aid in the Midwest and the South when we vote for aid for those people because they are the victims of natural disasters? How can we treat an entire region of the country this way? It is the most disgraceful action I've seen in this House in the 20 years I've been here.

I see that we're told that, well, FEMA still has money until March. But it's not just FEMA; it's the Small Business Administration that needs the appropriation now to help small businesses now; it's the Army Corps of Engineers that needs the authorization, the appropriation now to help the people who are victimized.

There is no excuse for this, none. It is a betrayal of the people of those States. It is a betrayal of the people of the United States. It is a betrayal by the Speaker personally of the Members of this House not to permit a vote. I have never seen an action like it. I hope I never see it again.

I urge the Speaker to reconsider and to rectify this decision today, because today is the deadline to avert going down in history as shameful.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GRIMM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIMM. Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to stand here and have to speak to my constituents knowing that we're going to break, we're going to end this Congress, and I'm going to go and walk the streets in Midland Beach, in South Beach, in New Dorp Beach and Tottenville, and I'm going to meet with homeowners that I've been meeting with for 9 weeks now and I can't