

However, in the same letter, the NPS also stated that in its discussion with the Governor, the Governor said that he did not intend for there to be any further commercial development of Utulei Park other than the proposed McDonalds.

On the one hand, the Governor says he needs to construct a McDonalds at Utulei Beach because this is critical to the overall redevelopment plans for the Utulei and Fagatogo area and, on the other hand, he says that the McDonalds corporation will be the only corporation allowed to build at Utulei Beach. How fair is this to Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and the rest of our local business owners? Faleomavaega asked.

Do our business owners have a say in this? What about our Pono? Has the Governor submitted an economic development plan to our Legislature for consideration? If not, why not? Also, what is the role of the Pono in determining what lands the Governor may offer up as replacement lands for Utulei Beach?

Whatever direction this takes, I believe the NPS has an obligation to keep the public informed and I will do my part to make sure this is so. For now, I am pleased that the NPS has agreed to provide an initial review of proposed replacement properties that would indicate if there are any obvious facts that would render them ineligible before funds are expended to obtain surveys, appraisals, recreational development plans, and environmental compliance. Most importantly, I am pleased that the NPS has underscored the importance of the Governor's commitment to prohibiting any ground disturbing activity related to the McDonalds lease until NPS has completed the review and approval process for replacement properties.

Again, I thank the NPS for providing clarification on its recent meeting with the Governor and I am encouraged that the NPS is taking this matter very seriously. I am also encouraged that the NPS has documented its meeting with the Governor in its July 6th letter so that all facts pertaining to this historic issue can be made part of the public record. Utulei Beach is the peoples beach and, as such, our people have every right to know how ASG officials make decisions that will impact, for generations to come, the use of the most scenic and only beach park in American Samoa.

Our people also have every right to know what local lands will be given away to the federal government to accommodate the needs of one business owner. For this reason, a full copy of the NPS letter dated July 6, 2006 is posted on my website, Faleomavaega concluded.

[Press Release, May 19, 2006]

HOUSE PASSES INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL WITH OVER \$33 MILLION FOR AMERICAN SAMOA; URGES ACCOUNTABILITY OF FEDERAL FUNDS AND DISCOURAGES COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF UTULEI BEACH

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that late last night the House Committee on Interior Appropriations passed by a vote of 293 to 128 H.R. 5386, the FY 2007 Interior Appropriations bill which includes over \$33 million for the operations of the American Samoa Government and Capital Improvement Projects (CIPS). The bill also includes language which urges greater accountability of ASG funds and discourages the commercial development of Utulei Beach Park.

As I said in my release of May 16th, ASG continues to be the only government that receives a direct appropriation from Congress for the operations of its government despite being designated as high risk, the Congressman said. As a result of this support, I am hopeful that our local government will provide better accountability and I commend ASG for the progress it is making.

At this time, I thank the House Committee on Interior Appropriations for including my request to set aside \$500,000 of the \$22,880,000 ASG will receive for government operations. As stated in the Committee report, The Committee expects the government of American Samoa will use no less than \$500,000 of this funding for physical education activities at school. I am pleased by this outcome since our public schools lack adequate facilities, equipment and personnel to provide quality health and education programs which are critical to the physical, mental, and social development of our students. As a result of this funding, I am hopeful that our local DOE will have the support it needs to purchase equipment and establish sports programs for the benefit of our children.

I am also hopeful that our local leaders will work quickly to resolve the McDonalds issue that has now drawn Congressional attention. Again, I like McDonalds and I applaud the many valuable contributions McDonalds has made in American Samoa. I also support construction of a new McDonalds anywhere in American Samoa but Utulei Beach.

The fact is Utulei Beach is a federally protected park area and, by contractual agreement, cannot be used for any commercial purpose. Therefore, the current proposal to construct a McDonalds within a federally protected park area is a potential violation of ASGs agreement with the US National Park Service (NPS) and, as such, is an issue that has escalated into a federal problem that must be expeditiously resolved.

In other words, the current debate about McDonalds is a debate about location. If McDonalds builds on land solely-controlled by ASG, then its a local issue. But if McDonalds seeks to build on land that has been protected as a federal park area, then its a federal issue and this is why Congress has taken an interest.

Put another way, ASG, by choice, entered into an agreement with the NPS to protect Utulei Beach and now Congress has spoken out in the FY 2007 Interior Appropriations bill to encourage the American Samoa government to not allow commercial development of waterfront areas of Utulei Beach Park because this site has such high recreational and natural values, and it has enjoyed funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program which indicates that this park land should be dedicated to public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity.

While it is unfortunate that construction of a new McDonalds in our Territory has received Congressional attention and while it is worrisome that the US Congress has taken notice that ASG received federal funds to preserve Utulei Beach but is not being accountable for those funds, I believe it is in the best interest of our Territory to resolve this matter quickly so that other federal funding we receive will not be jeopardized.

As I said in a previous release, American Samoa, on a per capita basis, receives more federal education funding per pupil than any other State or Territory. Our health care funding has also doubled and recently we were able to significantly increase our Medicaid funding. With the amount of support and funding we are receiving, I am convinced if there is better accountability of federal funds we will see significant improvements in this Territory.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their support and, as this bill now moves to the Senate for consideration, I will continue to work to make sure American Samoa receives its fair share of federal dollars, Congressman Faleomavaega concluded.

HONORING WILLIAM L. GIVENS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize William L. Givens. William is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

William has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years William has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, William has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in commending William L. Givens for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING DJOUNEDOU TITIKPINA

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I stand before you today to honor Mr. Djounedou Titikpina for his many years of selfless and compassionate public service.

Djounedou Titikpina originally hails from the nation of Togo, but brought his passion for public service and community building with him to the United States. This passion is clearest in Mr. Titikpina's founding of the African People Alliance, Incorporated. This organization, which serves as an umbrella organization for other groups working to develop the African community here in The Bronx, has the unique dual role of providing social services while also working to fortify the work of existing groups throughout the community. The African People Alliance routinely hosts cultural exhibitions, youth and adult soccer programs, and legal assistance to individuals, while providing groups with infrastructural support and development they need to grow. Additionally, the African People Alliance plays a lead role in the annual coordination of the Bronx African United Day Parade and Festival.

Today, he serves as Founder and CEO of Djounedou T.'s African Fashion & Embroidery Design, Corporation, is a member of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition's Immigrant Rights Campaign Board of Directors, and provides services as a family court interpreter at Geneva Worldwide, Incorporated. With the ability to speak more than nine languages, Mr. Titikpina's talent to communicate and understand the needs of the community, and respond to them in meaningful ways comes as no surprise.

Mr. Titikpina is an individual who is clearly committed to ensuring that our community's work in tandem to grow in healthy, respectable ways. He has fostered partnerships among groups and individuals that are all working towards a common goal, and this type of leadership is what keeps our community moving in