

good friends Chairman Don Young and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar of the House Transportation Committee have agreed to increase transportation funding for the Territories, Congressman Faleomavaega said. Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo (Guam), Congresswoman Donna Christensen (VI) and I have worked on this issue for the past year and Congressman Nick Rahall, Ranking Member of the House Resources Committee, has supported our efforts.

As a result of our work, the Territorial Highway Program (which includes American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and CNMI) will be increased from \$33 million to \$40 million for FY04, FY05 and FY06. For FY07, FY08 and FY09, funding will increase to \$50 million. Despite the Transportation Act (now known as TEA-LU) being \$100 billion less than what was originally proposed, the Territorial set aside will increase by 23.6%.

Moreover, American Samoa will receive \$14 million for high priority projects including village road improvements, drainage mitigation, shoreline protection and upgrades and repairs of the Tau ferry terminal facility. On January 23, 2004, I called Governor Togiola to let him know that the Committee had informed me of its intentions and asked that we keep this information confidential until the Committee held its mark-up. The Committee originally intended to hold its mark-up in February but postponed it until March 24, 2004.

On February 4, 2004, I also wrote to Governor Togiola in response to his January 15, 2004 letter to me. In my letter, I explained that from 1992 to 2003 American Samoa received over \$77 million in federal highway funds including \$12 million I obtained to improve village roads in American Samoa.

Roads that are not part of the federal highway system are ineligible for funding. This rule applies to every state and territory and includes our village roads. Be that as it may, I fought hard to convince my colleagues that an exception should be made for American Samoa and in 1998 they agreed to support my request for \$12 million for village road improvements.

The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century is now expiring and Congress is reauthorizing funds for the next six years. Again, the House Transportation Committee has agreed to my request for additional funds for American Samoa. On March 5, 2003, the House Committee on Transportation notified members of Congress that it would accept written and oral testimony regarding requests for funding. On March 5, 2003, I wrote Governor Sunia and requested his input. Although I did not hear back from Governor Sunia, I testified and appeared before the Committee.

Initially, I requested money for a ferry boat and terminal construction as well as funding for our village roads. However, since September 2003, Governor Togiola and I have worked together to obtain funding for the purchase of a vessel for Manua and on January 22, 2004, the House Committee on Transportation informed me that it would be able to grant \$14 million of my requests for highway projects in American Samoa. This funding is in addition to our annual federal highway funds.

In consultation with the Governor, we have set aside \$9.4 million for village road improvements in the Eastern, Western, Central and Manua districts of American Samoa. In further consultation with Senator Tu'alo Fruean and High Paramount Chief Mauga and members of the Pago Pago council of chiefs, we have also set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Pago Pago village roads.

In consultation with Senator Tago Suilefaiga, Representative Fagasoia

Lealaitafea and Representative Mary Taufetee and members of the Nu'uuli council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for shoreline protection and drainage mitigation for Nu'uuli village roads. In consultation with Senator Fa'amausili Pola and members of the Tau village council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1.6 million to upgrade and repair the Tau harbor facility.

Finally, in consultation with Senator Faiivae Galeai, Senator Lualemaga Faoa and members of the Leone and Malaeloa councils of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Malaeloa-Leone village roads. Governor Togiola and I thank our local leaders for their support of this historic and important initiative and we are hopeful that the House and Senate will pass this legislation before the 108th Congress adjourns, the Congressman concluded.

[Press Release, Apr. 2, 2004]

**HOUSE PASSES HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION BILL AND INCLUDES FALEOMAVAEGA'S REQUEST OF ADDITIONAL \$14 MILLION FOR VILLAGE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA**

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that by a vote of 357 to 65 the House passed H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU) which increases federal highway funding for the Territories and includes an additional \$14 million for village road and other improvements in American Samoa. The Senate has already passed its version of TEA-LU and the bill will now go to conference in May after which time it is expected that the President will sign it into law.

Once signed into law, the Territorial Highway Program (which includes American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and CNMI) will be increased from \$33 million to \$40 million for FY04, FY05 and FY06. For FY07, FY08 and FY09, funding will increase to \$50 million. Despite the Transportation Act (now known as TEA-LU) being \$100 billion less than what was originally proposed, the Territorial set aside will increase by 23.6%.

In addition to our share of funds from the Territorial Highway Program, American Samoa will receive an extra \$14 million for high priority projects including village road improvements, drainage mitigation, shoreline protection, and upgrades and repairs of the Tau ferry terminal facility. At this time, I want to thank my good friends, Chairman Don Young and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar, of the House Transportation Committee for agreeing to my requests to increase American Samoans annual funding and to include an extra \$14 million for our village road improvements and other high priority projects, Congressman Faleomavaega said.

Regarding our funding, I believe it is important to explain how Congress authorizes transportation funds. Simply put, a federal gas tax is collected nationally to fund the transportation bill. Residents of American Samoa and other territories are not required to contribute to this fund or pay federal gas taxes. Although we pay no federal gas taxes, Congress provides for our transportation needs by way of a direct-set aside for the Territories and this is known as the Territorial Highway Program.

Since 1992, American Samoa has received more than \$77 million in federal highway transportation funds including \$12 million I obtained in 1998 to improve village roads in American Samoa. Roads that are not part of the federal highway system are ineligible for funding. This rule applies to every state and territory and includes our village roads. Be that as it may, I fought hard to convince my colleagues that an exception should be made

for American Samoa and in 1998 I was able to get \$12 million for Village Road Development on the islands of Tutuila and Manua.

This was the first time that Congress ever agreed to let federal highway funds be used for constructing roads that are not part of the federal highway system and I am pleased that Congress acted favorably on my request. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century is now expiring and Congress is reauthorizing funds for the next six years. As of today, the House has now agreed to support my request to provide American Samoa with an additional \$14 million over the next six years for village roads and other transportation improvements.

In consultation with Governor Togiola, we have set aside \$9.4 million for village road improvements in the Eastern, Western, Central and Manua districts of American Samoa. In further consultation with Senator Tu'alo Fruean and High Paramount Chief Mauga and members of the Pago Pago council of chiefs, we have also set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Pago Pago village roads.

In consultation with Senator Tago Suilefaiga, Representative Fagasoia Lealaitafea and Representative Mary Taufetee and members of the Nuuli council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for shoreline protection and drainage mitigation for Nuuli village roads. In consultation with Senator Fa'amausili Pola and members of the Tau village council of chiefs, we have set aside \$1.6 million to upgrade and repair the Tau harbor facility.

Finally, in consultation with Senator Faiivae Galeai, Senator Lualemaga Faoa and members of the Leone and Malaeloa councils of chiefs, we have set aside \$1 million for drainage mitigation for Malaeloa-Leone village roads. Again, Governor Togiola and I thank our local leaders for their support of this historic and important initiative.

I also thank Chairman Don Young (Republican from Alaska) and Ranking Member Jim Oberstar (Democrat from Minnesota) of the House Committee on Transportation as well as the Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Resources, for their support of increased funding for the Territories. I also commend Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo (Guam) and Congresswoman Donna Christensen (VI) who have also worked tirelessly to increase funds for the Territorial Highway Program.

Out of 422 members of the House who voted today, 357 overwhelmingly voted to support this historic legislation. In other words, it's not about whose in the majority. It takes both Democrats and Republicans to get the job done. It also takes seniority and this is why I am thankful that the people of American Samoa have trusted me time and time again to get the job done for them. With your continued support and prayers, I am hopeful that our increases and add-ons will be supported when the House and Senate meet in May to conference this bill, the Congressman concluded.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS EQUAL ACCESS ACT**

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the bipartisan Veterans Equal Access Act along with my colleagues DANA ROHRBACHER, DINA TITUS, JUSTIN AMASH, PAUL BROWN, WALTER JONES, THOMAS MASSIE, SAM FARR, JARED POLIS, BETO O'ROURKE, STEVE STOCKMAN and STEVE COHEN, which

will allow Veterans Health Administration physicians to recommend medical marijuana to their patients in states where it is legal.

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have passed laws that provide for legal access to medical marijuana. As a result, well over one million patients across the country, including many veterans, now use medical marijuana at the recommendation of their physician to treat conditions ranging from seizures, glaucoma, anxiety, chronic pain, and nausea.

There are also nine states and the District of Columbia that now allow physicians to recommend medical marijuana for the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS), due to a growing body of anecdotal evidence suggesting that marijuana offers relief when nothing else has.

While outdated federal barriers often prevent the research necessary to develop marijuana into an FDA approved drug, states have heard from their citizens, including veterans suffering from PTS, that marijuana is helping them now, and have adjusted their laws.

Despite this growing state availability of medical marijuana, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prohibits VA medical providers from completing forms brought by their patients seeking recommendations or opinions regarding participation in a state marijuana program.

The Veterans Equal Access Act would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to authorize physicians and other health care workers employed by the VA to provide recommendations and opinions regarding the participation of a veteran in a state medical marijuana program. This includes authorizing them to fill out any forms involved in the process of recommending medical marijuana.

Veterans should not be forced outside of the VA system to seek a treatment that is legal in their state. VA physicians should not be denied the ability to offer a recommendation they think may meet the needs of their patient. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this effort.

**INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING CONGRESSWOMEN FREDERICA S. WILSON AND ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN ON THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HALL OF FAME**

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a Resolution Congratulating Congresswomen FREDERICA S. WILSON and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN on their induction into the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Hall of Fame.

I am also pleased to be joined by Representatives FRANKEL, DIAZ-BALART, CLAWSON, DEUTCH, GARCIA, WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, MURPHY and ROONEY of the South Florida delegation in celebrating Congresswomen FREDERICA S. WILSON and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN on receiving this honor. Both Representative WILSON and ROS-LEHTINEN are products of the Miami-Dade County Public School System and

are a testament to the quality of MDCPS. I invite you to join me in congratulating Congresswomen FREDERICA S. WILSON and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN on their myriad accomplishments and their induction into the MDCPS Hall of Fame.

**HONORING DR. BOLA OMOTOSHO**

**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 Dr. Bola Omotosho for his many years of compassionate public service and tireless work to improve the health of our community residents.

Dr. Omotosho left Nigeria to relocate to The Bronx in 1995, after an extended career in medicine that culminated in studying anesthesiology through the Nigerian Navy. Bringing his passion for medicine along with him, Dr. Omotosho went on to study the nature of infectious diseases upon his arrival, and currently works with Montefiore Medical Center in The Bronx, which is one of the largest healthcare providers in the United States. Additionally, Dr. Omotosho remains very closely involved with several other medical missions, both local and international in their scope. Dr. Omotosho recently facilitated the donation of 3 dialysis machines to the Haut-Nkam of New York, who will provide these machines for usage by the Haut-Nkam community in Cameroon. Locally, Dr. Omotosho continues to be our community's champion for kidney donation amongst Africans here in New York City.

Dr. Bola Omotosho is not only a distinguished medical leader, he is also an individual who stands as the model of an active, civically engaged community member. Dr. Omotosho serves as Chairperson of Community Board 5, President of the Harrison Avenue Homeowners Association, and President of the Mount Hope Housing Corporation Board of Directors. He is also the Vice Chair of the Bronx Multi Faith Advisory Group, and an active member of the United Africa Coalition as well as the Black United Leadership group of The Bronx. Each of these groups works tirelessly to improve the quality of the life here in The Bronx, and Dr. Omotosho's commitment to each of them speaks to his longstanding commitment to our community.

Dr. Bola Omotosho is an alumnus of New York Police Citizen Academy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Citizen Academy, from which he received the 2009 Humanitarian Award. Today, Dr. Omotosho continues to work with several residential boards that work with law enforcement agencies to improve community relations and amplify safety efforts throughout our neighborhoods.

Individuals like Dr. Bola Omotosho remind us all that we all have a duty to be faithful community servants, and should work each day to improve the quality of life for all of neighbors alike. Dr. Omotosho has a true passion for community, which is clear in all of his work, and I am sincerely grateful to call someone like him a neighbor.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Dr. Bola Omotosho for his consist-

ently remarkable dedication to public service and longstanding commitment to improving our community.

**HONORING THE WORK OF ADOBE SERVICES DURING NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK**

**HON. ERIC SWALWELL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the week of November 15–23 as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and to honor the distinguished work and advocacy of Adobe Services, a non-profit working in the 15th Congressional District and throughout the Bay Area to end homelessness.

The week before Thanksgiving has been designated as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week to bring about community awareness and to help those in need. Throughout the year, but especially during the holiday season, we must always remember how hunger and homelessness remain serious problems in our communities across the United States. I am proud to have Adobe Services as a strong community partner in the Bay Area working to end homelessness and advocating on behalf of the hungry.

Throughout National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Adobe Services has planned several events to engage community members in the Bay Area and raise awareness regarding homelessness and hunger. For example, today, Adobe Services is hosting the "Feed Your Soul" performance night at Mission Coffee in Fremont. At this performance night, guests will have the chance to understand more about the impact homelessness has on families and the wider community through artistic renditions. Additionally, tomorrow, Adobe Services will host a candlelight vigil at St. James' Episcopal Church to remember Alameda County residents who died last year while homeless. To combat hunger in the East Bay, Adobe Services also is organizing a food drive to provide festive holiday meals to those in need.

Adobe Services not only works to fight homelessness and hunger during this national awareness week, but also serves more than 4,000 Bay Area residents throughout the year. Its mission is to end homelessness by assisting low-income, un-housed people and secure stable and supportive housing. I am grateful for the assistance Adobe Services provides, and I applaud its continued dedication to the homeless community.

**COMMENDING PROJECT GIVEBACK'S VOLUNTEERS**

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the more than 500 volunteers who will gather at the District of Columbia's Columbia Heights Educational Campus Saturday, November 22, 2014, to begin packing and distributing Thanksgiving parcels for Project