

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. SCOTT H. PETERS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 17, 2016*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, I oppose Sec. 1094 of this bill.

The language included in the underlying bill is dangerously vague, and allows contractors, or any entity that receives federal funds, to discriminate based on the faulty guise of religious exemption.

Since “religious corporation” is undefined by the bill or by courts, this provision applies too broadly.

Let’s be clear—a “religious corporation” could range from a religious institution like a church to a corporation with a religious CEO.

Therefore, any vaguely religious organization or corporation receiving federal funds could legally discriminate against LGBT Americans if they feel like hiring them violates their religious beliefs.

A corporation with a religious CEO could decide not to hire, or to fire, LGBT people. A religious university could fire employees with no religious job requirement, such as a scientist or custodial worker, simply because they are LGBT.

Tax-payer dollars should not be used to fund discrimination.

Last year, I offered an amendment to the Transportation Appropriations Bill that affirmed President Obama’s executive order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

My amendment passed with a near supermajority, including 60 Republicans.

I believe all of my colleagues can agree on these two things—the federal government should not infringe on religious freedom, nor should we do business with groups that discriminate.

No American should be fired, denied a job or a place to live because of who they are or who they love.

I urge my colleagues to stand on the side of equality and against discrimination and oppose this provision.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 17, 2016*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment to H.R. 4909, the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act offered by Mr. CALVERT. This amendment requires the Department of Defense to report on the structure and size of its civilian and contractor workforce. This reporting requirement is a continuation of misguided assaults on the federal workforce which delivers capabilities needed to build back readiness and support operations. Furthermore, it adds an unneeded layer of bureaucracy with redundant reporting requirements. The information called for in this provision is already provided in eight separate statutes and this additional burden is unjustifiable.

Not only is the report duplicative and unnecessary, the “findings” section is littered with misinformation and subjective clauses. It is yet another transparent attempt to attack civilian and contracted personnel, who have borne a disproportionate share of the fiscal burden levied on the Department of Defense. The first “finding” states in no uncertain terms that the civilian workforce has reduced the Department’s capabilities, a statement that is maliciously inaccurate. Civilian personnel provide a cost-effective workforce and contribute unique capabilities to our national security at home and abroad, particularly in key areas such as intelligence and cyber operations.

For these reasons I am strongly opposed, as is the Department of Defense, to the inclusion of the reporting requirement and hope to work with my colleagues in conference to address this biased and unnecessarily punitive amendment.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 18, 2016*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize

appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer a bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I am proud to have my colleagues, Representatives SAM JOHNSON of Texas and DAN LIPINSKI of Illinois, supporting this amendment. Our amendment seeks to expand access to on-the-job training programs for service members transitioning out of the military. Specifically, the amendment directs the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to study the success of the relatively new Department of Defense (DOD) program known as Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships, or JTEST–AI, which is an initiative pursuant to DOD Instruction No. 1322.29. The amendment also requires the Undersecretary to issue guidance to unit commanders encouraging them to allow more service members separating from the armed forces to participate in a JTEST–AI initiative—provided, of course, that unit readiness is not impaired.

One particular initiative formed pursuant to JTEST–AI is the SkillBridge Initiative. Although SkillBridge and all other JTEST–AI initiatives are still nascent, they are already showing promising results. According to preliminary DOD statistics, more than 4,500 service members have successfully participated in SkillBridge training; there are approximately 40 programs currently in operation; and almost all graduates have received jobs as a result of participation in these initiatives. In fact, 18 SkillBridge training programs have a hiring rate of 100 percent of graduates, and another 8 programs have a hiring rate of more than 85 percent.

Organizations participating in these programs span every sector of the workforce. Sponsoring entities include private companies, labor unions, and even government agencies. These programs are popular with transitioning service members, and currently there are more applications from service members than can be accommodated. Our amendment simply seeks to have DOD conduct a comprehensive study so that the initiatives may be improved and access may be expanded, as appropriate.

Our outgoing service members have skill sets that are unique but that can easily be honed and adapted to a certain field or application if given access to on-the-job training. Given the sacrifices our women and men in uniform have made for us all, we should strive to make their transition to civilian life as smooth and successful as possible.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment designed to help our transitioning service members gain meaningful employment.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.