

Calorie March" from Florida to Boston in which took place in 2005.

Working with opera star Andrea Delgadice, Todd also founded the Todd G. Patkin Opportunity Performing Art Center. It brings the highest quality vocal, dance and acting instruction to its students, many of whom are from the less-advantage areas of Brockton, Massachusetts, and are receiving full scholarships because of their economic need.

Todd recently made a substantial contribution to the Boston Medical Center for its Todd and Yadira Patkin Sickle Cell Anemia Clinic. He has also provided significant financial support to the Boston chapter of the Anti-Defamation League, where he and Andrew Tarsy will be managing a new initiative to combat bigotry and intolerance in greater Boston.

Todd has had a positive impact internationally as well, Mr. Speaker. He supports two charities in the State of Israel—the Jewish National Fund, which is chaired by Ronald Lauder, and the Yemin Orde Youth Village headed by Chaim Peri. The village is perhaps the most advanced orphanage in Israel and the world. It focuses on helping children, who frequently have been orphaned under devastating circumstances, to become happy and productive members of society. Today over two-thirds of the 300 children in the village are Jews of Ethiopian descent.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, on December 16, 17, and 18, 2005, I missed the following votes due to previous commitments in my Congressional district:

S. 1932, On Motion to Instruct Conferees, Budget Reconciliation, 2006 (#652). Had I been present I would have voted "nay."

H.R. 4437, On Passage of the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (#661). Had I been present I would have voted "nay."

H. RES. 623, On Agreeing to the Resolution providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (#663). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

H.R. 2520, Suspend the Rules and Agree to the Senate Amendment, Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act (#664). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

H.R. 1815, On Agreeing to the Conference Report, National Defense Authorization Act, FY 06 (#665). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

H. RES. 639, On Agreeing to the Resolution waiving points of order against the conference report on H.R. 2863, Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006 (#666). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

H.R. 2863, On the motion to recommit conference report with instructions for the appropriations bill for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes (#668). Had I been present I would have voted "nay."

H.R. 2863, On Agreeing to the Conference Report for the appropriations bill for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes

(#669). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

S. 1932, On Agreeing to the Conference Report for Budget Reconciliation, 2006 (#670). Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

H.R. 2863

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, now that the most egregious provision has been stripped out the Defense Appropriations bill, I rise to offer my support for this important legislation.

When the House first voted on this measure early Monday morning on December 19, I opposed this bill because, among other reasons, it included a provision to permit oil and gas drilling in ANWR. The Arctic Refuge is one of the last, wild, untouched places left in the United States—with an abundance and variety of wildlife. Not only was I concerned about the environmental impact of opening up ANWR to drilling and exploration, but I was also opposed to the inclusion of this unrelated provision in a defense bill. I am glad that the ANWR provision has been stripped from this bill.

The remaining bill will do a great deal to support our troops. It appropriates a total of \$453.5 billion for defense programs, including \$50 billion in emergency spending for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am pleased that it contains language, authored by Senator JOHN MCCAIN that bars any U.S. personnel, including civilians, from engaging in "cruel, inhumane, or degrading" treatment of detainees. I am particularly pleased it includes funds for an average 3.1 percent pay increase for the men and women in our armed forces. H.R. 2863 also includes funding for certain special pay and bonuses for reserve personnel.

With that said, and while I now support this bill in its final form, I am concerned about a number of remaining provisions in the bill. Among other things, H.R. 2863 includes a provision to provide virtually unlimited liability protection to the drug industry, while providing illusory and unfunded compensation to any potential victims. We must be prepared in case of a flu pandemic, including ensuring our first responders are ready. Yet, the Republican bill uses the threat of a flu pandemic as an excuse to push the Administration's agenda of giving unwarranted and broad liability protection to the drug industry for a broad array of products.

I am also concerned about the bill's inclusion of funding for the national missile defense (NMD) system. The bill before us includes \$7.8 billion for this system. While we should always stand alert with a strong national defense, the NMD system is scientifically unproven, fiscally irresponsible, and grossly inaccurate. There are better ways to improve our defense.

Last, I share many of my colleagues concerns over this bill's provision to cut all non-emergency discretionary spending, except for VA programs, by 1 percent. As a result, K-12 education will see a cut of \$1 billion this year; LIHEAP, which helps many people heat their homes, will be cut by \$21 million; and Local

Law Enforcement Block grants, which goes to help our first responders, will be cut by \$315 million. While I agree that we must be fiscally responsible, we cannot do so at the expense of vital social and federal programs that assist our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I support our troops, and I believe in a robust defense. But we cannot use this legislation to hold our troops politically hostage to unwise policies. I am pleased that ANWR has been stripped out of this bill, and I strongly support its passage now that it has been removed.

H.R. 2863—DOD APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the removal of a provision from the Department of Defense Appropriation bill that would have allowed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This pristine wilderness area deserves to be protected, and furthermore, a Defense Appropriations bill was an entirely inappropriate vehicle to use to attempt to approve drilling in ANWR. For those and other reasons, I opposed passage of H.R. 2863 on December 19, 2005.

I am greatly pleased, however, that the Senate rejected the inclusion of the ANWR language, and removed the rider from this important appropriations bill. I still have grave concerns over several provisions still included in H.R. 2863, however, when it is passed into law our brave soldiers will get the resources they need to do the job overseas and return home safely as quickly as possible.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, on December 19, 2005, I voted against the Department of Defense Appropriations Conference Report as it was considered by the House of Representatives. While I voted for the Defense Authorization Act and normally would support a Defense Appropriations bill—especially with our troops in harm's way—this year I regrettably had to vote against the legislation.

I did so largely because the Republican majority inserted a provision allowing oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This controversial measure was repeatedly rejected through the democratic process, but the Republican leadership preferred to hold the Defense Appropriations bill—and our troops in the field—hostage to the effort to drill in this pristine wildlife refuge. Moreover this legislation contained a 1 percent across the board cut in non-defense discretionary spending.

Mr. Speaker, America cannot drill its way to independence from foreign oil. Tapping ANWR would produce barely a drop in the bucket of the amount of oil we consume in this Nation.