

labor, and discrimination. In turn, the playing field for U.S. workers and goods produced in the U.S. must be lowered to compete with the current standards of our trading partner.

This Congress knows better. Just four years ago, this House passed a free trade agreement with another country in the Middle East, Jordan, by voice vote. The U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement affirmed the rights of workers and explicitly stated that it was "inappropriate to encourage trade by relaxing domestic labor laws." It is extremely disappointing that the agreement before us today could not live up to this standard and do more to protect the rights of workers.

The U.S.-Bahrain free trade agreement also fails on environmental protection. Under this agreement, the labor and environmental dispute process is inferior to that provided for commercial provisions. Monetary fines for environmental and labor violations are capped at \$15 million. This amount is lower than that for commercial violations and likely too low to deter the most severe violations.

This free trade agreement also undermines the quality of life of working families in other ways. It extends patent protection for pharmaceutical companies, extending the time before generic drugs may enter the market. This denies working families affordable access to the prescription drugs they need, to the benefit of already successful drug companies.

For these reasons, I oppose this free trade agreement and encourage my colleagues to vote against this legislation.

#### NESST SOCIAL ENTERPRISE COMPETITION FOR CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

##### TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing an important competition that will take place in early 2006 in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

The regional Social Enterprise Competition for Central & Eastern Europe is sponsored by the Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team (NESST). The competition will bring together social entrepreneurs and local civil society organizations to submit proposals for achieving greater financial sustainability through social enterprise. The mission of this competition merits the attention of my colleagues in the House because it is inextricably linked to the role of civil society organizations as advocates for freedom, human rights and public welfare in emerging democracies.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that all of us remember the euphoria that accompanied the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the demise of communism just a decade and a half ago.

With Members of this House and people around the world, I recall the joy of seeing democracy and human rights restored to long-suffering peoples of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. I remember watching in amazement as Berliners from both halves of the divided city danced on the Berlin Wall. I joined people from around the world as we chipped a piece from that disappearing Wall. I was with the Czech students celebrating in the streets of Prague.

The struggle for democracy and human rights is far from over in this region and elsewhere in the world. As the United States strives to help emerging democracies such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Afghanistan, efforts by NESST and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through activities such as the social enterprise competition are critical in helping to promote the rights and interests of the public in emerging democracies.

Mr. Speaker, Central and Eastern Europe received an enormous amount of foreign assistance throughout the 1990s, which assisted former communist countries to transition to more open and democratic societies. However, in recent years, this region has seen significant cuts in U.S. foreign assistance. Despite these cuts in funding, the needs of civil society organizations in this region continue to grow.

The limits on democratic development assistance in Central and Eastern Europe resulted in some serious questions about the viability of civil society organizations to assist in democratic development. What role should social enterprise play in encouraging growth, upholding worker rights, and protecting natural resources? What role can civil society organizations play in democratic development if they are beholden to the whims of foreign donors? NGOs, such as NESST, have found innovative and cost-efficient ways to strengthen the financial sustainability of civil society organizations working for social change and development in emerging market countries.

The NESST-sponsored competition seeks to expand the network of financially sustainable civil society organizations throughout the region. Through the competition, NESST will apply a venture capital approach, also known as venture philanthropy, to providing the financial and technical support to the region's civil society organizations.

Mr. Speaker, venture philanthropy involves applying the tools of the for-profit sector to expand the reach of the community organizations. Venture philanthropists often offer loans and equity equivalents rather than traditional donations; engage nonprofit managers with an array of technical and strategic advisory service; build organizational capacity through the development of skills and networks; and, most important of all, set clear performance goals and expect "portfolio members" to achieve concrete social and/or financial returns on investment.

I would like to pay tribute to the principal sponsor of the competition, the Nonprofit En-

terprise and Self-Sustainability Team (NESST). From its offices in Budapest and Santiago, this organization has emerged as an international leader in the effort to foster social entrepreneurship and venture philanthropy in developing nations. NESST's co-founders, Nicole Etchart and Lee Davis, direct initiatives that clearly address the challenges and needs of NGOs in Central Europe and Latin America.

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons and many more, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the important mission of the Social Enterprise Competition for Central and Eastern Europe and the outstanding contributions of its principal sponsor, the Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-Sustainability Team.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

##### HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say that although I will be voting for H.R. 2863, I would like to express my disappointment about several of the provisions in the Act. These extraneous provisions should not have been included in this important bill that is helping to fund and support our troops.

First, I am concerned about the inclusion of aid for students displaced by Hurricane Katrina both procedurally and substantively. While I believe that schools serving displaced students must be reimbursed for educational expenses associated with these students as soon as possible, I am concerned that the system in this bill will create a continuing voucher system, which will not be in the best interest for teachers, students, or parents. I am not satisfied that this program will provide the best relief for students and it is my hope that the program will only be utilized in this emergency time and will sunset as provided next August.

I am also concerned about the 1 percent across the board cut contained in the bill. This cut will reduce defense spending by \$4 billion. These cuts will affect funding of important homeland security programs, such as the Customs and Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, education programs including No Child Left Behind, and FBI funding, including a reduction of new hires for the counterintelligence/counterterrorism department.

I am disappointed in both of the above provisions, which I feel should have been considered separately. For this reason, I voted against the rule that allowed these provisions to be permitted for consideration in the Defense Appropriations bill.