

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE DICKSON STRING QUARTET AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the members of the Dickson family who are committed to their education and love for the art of music. That is why parents Raymond and Theresa Dickson chose to simultaneously enroll four of their children at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Music Majors Ashley, Benjamin, Brandon and Daniel Dickson receive lessons and recite together as a string quartet, under the tutelage of the "Arianna String Quartet", the University's quartet-in-residence. It is believed to be the only resident quartet in a public university in the United States. The Dickson family chose Florissant, Missouri to maintain a strong support structure for their University students.

Prior to moving to Florissant, Raymond, Theresa and their ten children had been living in Battle Ground Washington a suburb of Portland, Oregon for several years. The children were home-schooled. Most of them elected to learn an instrument. Over time, four of the eldest Dickson's began performing together as the Dickson String Quartet.

While honing their skills at the Britt Festival in Jacksonville, Oregon, they caught the collective ears of the Arianna String Quartet, who were guest instructors at the two-week string quartet academy. "When people hear them, I don't think they can help but be drawn in," Arianna violist Joanna Mendoza told University of Missouri-St. Louis Magazine.

The feeling was mutual for the Dickson's, who desired a continuation of their studies with the Arianna. Working with the university, members of the Arianna were able to create an opportunity for the four Dicksons to enroll together and learn as an ensemble with University of Missouri-St. Louis' resident quartet.

With the Dickson String Quartet ranging in age from 16 to 20 and never having attended a public school at the time of their enrollment at University of Missouri-St. Louis, Raymond and Theresa decided to move their family to maintain a support structure for the new university students.

The Dickson students have thrived at University of Missouri-St. Louis. They've quickly established a reputation as leaders and role models in the Department of Music and Pierre Laclede Honors College. They participate in several performance ensembles, play together as "the quartet for worship" at their local church and have several standing ovations through their performances as a sibling quartet.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the Dickson family and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring them.

JUSTICE AND EQUITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to correct an injustice that has been inflicted upon a group of World War II veterans, the World War II United States Merchant Mariners.

World War II Merchant Mariners suffered the highest casualty rate of any of the branches of service while they delivered troops, tanks, food, airplanes, fuel, and other needed supplies to every theater of the war.

Compared to the large number of men and women serving in World War II, the numbers of the Merchant Mariners were small, but their chance of dying during service was extremely high. Enemy forces sank over 800 ships between 1941 and 1944 alone.

Unfortunately, this group of brave men was denied their rights under the G.I. Bill of Rights that Congress enacted in 1945. All those who served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard were recipients of benefits under the G.I. Bill. The United States Merchant Marine was not included.

The Merchant Marine became the forgotten service. For four decades, no effort was made to recognize the contribution made by this branch of the Armed Services. The fact that Merchant Seamen had borne arms during wartime in the defense of their country seemed not to matter.

No legislation to benefit Merchant Seamen was passed by Congress until 1988 when the Seaman Acts of 1988 finally granted them a "watered down" G.I. Bill of Rights. Some portions of the G.I. Bill have never been made available to veterans of the Merchant Marine.

In addition, they still have not received proper recognition as veterans for Social Security purposes. If they had the "veteran" designation, their Social Security would be calculated as if they had earned \$160 more a month than they did earn during their time in service in the Merchant Marines. Of course, what this means is a smaller Social Security check, now that they are retired.

While it is impossible to make up for over 40 years of unpaid benefits, I propose a bill that will acknowledge the service of the veterans of the Merchant Marine and offer compensation for years and years of lost benefits. H.R. 23, the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2011," will pay each eligible veteran a monthly benefit of \$1000, and that payment would also go to their surviving spouses. It will also give them the Social Security that they are due by providing them with the status of "veteran" under the Social Security Act.

The average WWII-era Merchant Marine is now well into his 80s. Many have outlived their savings. An increase in their Social Security

and a monthly benefit to compensate for the loss of nearly a lifetime of ineligibility for the G.I. Bill would be of comfort and would provide some measure of security for veterans of the Merchant Marine.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting and co-sponsoring this legislation. We can fix the injustices endured by our Nation's Merchant Marines by passing H.R. 23 as quickly as possible.

HONORING TANNER JOSEPH DALMAN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Tanner Joseph Dalman. Tanner 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 397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Tanner has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Tanner 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, Tanner has earned the rank of Senior Patrol Leader. Tanner has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Tanner designed and constructed an open shelter for Jesse James Park in Kearney, Missouri, a task that included many long weekends this past fall.

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

THE SENIORS' HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Seniors' Health Care Freedom Act. This act protects seniors' fundamental right to make their own health care decisions by repealing federal laws that interfere with seniors' ability to form private contracts for medical services. This bill also repeals laws which force seniors into the Medicare program against their will. When Medicare was first established, seniors were promised that the program would be voluntary. In fact, the original Medicare legislation explicitly protected a senior's right to seek out other forms of medical insurance. However, the Balanced Budget Act

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of 1997 prohibits any physician who forms a private contract with a senior from filing any Medicare reimbursement claims for two years. As a practical matter, this means that seniors cannot form private contracts for health care services.

Seniors may wish to use their own resources to pay for procedures or treatments not covered by Medicare, or to simply avoid the bureaucracy and uncertainty that comes when seniors must wait for the judgment of a Center from Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) bureaucrat before finding out if a desired treatment is covered.

Seniors' right to control their own health care is also being denied due to the Social Security Administration's refusal to give seniors who object to enrolling for Medicare Part A Social Security benefits. This not only distorts the intent of the creators of the Medicare system; it also violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join an additional government program!

At a time when the fiscal solvency of Medicare is questionable, to say the least, it seems foolish to waste scarce Medicare funds on those who would prefer to do without Medicare. Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the program to refrain from doing so will also strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to participate in it. Of course, my bill does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits or to use his own resources to obtain health care.

Forcing seniors into government programs and restricting their ability to seek medical care free from government interference infringes on the freedom of seniors to control their own resources and make their own health care decisions. A woman who was forced into Medicare against her wishes summed it up best in a letter to my office, ". . . I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed." I urge my colleagues to protect the right of seniors to make the medical arrangements that best suit their own needs by cosponsoring the Seniors' Health Care Freedom Act.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL WAR POWERS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce a bill that will create a national commission to examine fundamental questions regarding national security, civil liberties, and the rule of law. These include: What actions are permitted in the name of national security? What rights and liberties should a free people demand? Can the so-called Imperial Presidency be controlled?

These questions take on greater significance every year. The power of the Presidency seems to grow and grow under both parties, and the ability of our democratic institutions to constrain it seems more and more uncertain.

In the current political atmosphere, I believe that an expert commission with appointments made by both branches and individuals of both parties would be uniquely positioned to evaluate the issues and propose steps that the Congress can take to enhance both our liberty and our security for generations to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reintroduce legislation that will amend the United States Constitution to force Congress to rein in spending by balancing the federal budget.

We have a spending addiction in Washington, D.C., and it has proven to be an addiction that Congress cannot control on its own and which is bringing dire consequences. We have gone in a few short years from a deficit of billions of dollars to a deficit of trillions of dollars. We are printing money at an unprecedented pace, which presents serious risks of massive inflation. Our national debt recently surpassed an astonishing \$14 trillion and continues to rapidly increase, along with the waste associated with paying the interest on that debt.

Our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, warned of the consequences of out-of-control debt when he wrote: "To preserve [the] independence [of the people,] we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude." Unfortunately, it increasingly appears that Congress has chosen the latter path.

Our current Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, issued a similar warning when she recently declared: "I think that our rising debt levels [sic] poses a national security threat, and it poses a national security threat in two ways. It undermines our capacity to act in our own interest, and it does constrain us where constraint may be undesirable. And it also sends a message of weakness internationally." Despite these warnings, Congress has refused to address this crisis.

Congress' spending addiction is not a partisan one. It reaches across the aisle and afflicts both parties, which is why neither party has been able to master it. We need outside help. We need pressure from outside Congress to force us to rein in this out-of-control behavior. We need a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

That is why I am introducing this legislation, which garnered 179 bipartisan cosponsors in the 111th Congress. This bill would amend the Constitution to require that total spending for any fiscal year not exceed total receipts and require the President to propose budgets to Congress that are balanced each year. It would also provide an exception in times of

war and during military conflicts that pose imminent and serious military threats to national security.

Furthermore, the legislation would make it harder to increase taxes by requiring that legislation to increase revenue be passed by a true majority of each chamber and not just a majority of those present and voting. Finally, the bill requires a 3/5 majority vote for any increases in the debt limit.

Our federal government must be lean, efficient and responsible with the dollars that our nation's citizens worked so hard to earn. We must work to both eliminate every cent of waste and squeeze every cent of value out of each dollar our citizens entrust to us. Families all across our nation understand what it means to make tough decisions each day about what they can and cannot afford and government officials should be required to exercise similar restraint when spending the hard-earned dollars of our nation's citizens.

By amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, we can force the Congress to control spending, paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, rather than allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and in doing so leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

This concept is not new—49 out of 50 states have a balanced budget requirement.

Our nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make the difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that guide America's families each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the roots of our broken immigration and employer verification system can be traced to three underlying factors: too many unreliable documents, including the Social Security card; a faulty employment verification system; and lax enforcement. The cornerstone of any immigration and border security reform plan must include an effective employment verification system and enhanced enforcement of our immigration laws. My bill, H.R. 98, the Illegal Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, provides a strong foundation on which to build upon.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act created the I-9 system for employers to verify the work authorization status of prospective employees. Currently, there are 26 documents that individuals can use in 102 different combinations to establish work authorization status in the U.S. While well intentioned, this