

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 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. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong support of the McMorris Rodgers/Bishop amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. As co-chairs of the Congressional Military Family Caucus, we are committed to supporting military families. Our amendment highlights a growing issue for military spouses: that of unemployment and underemployment.

Military spouses face a unique lifestyle marked by frequent moves, increased family responsibility during deployments, and limited career opportunities in certain geographic locations. These circumstances make it especially tough for those who want to build a portable career that matches their skills, including their education and experience.

According to a recent DoD survey, the unemployment rate for civilians married to a military member is 25 percent—and climbs to 33 percent for spouses of junior enlisted members. In contrast, the average unemployment rate for individuals 20 years and over is 6.1 percent. A recent Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)/Institute for Veterans and Military Families' (IVMF) Military Spouse Employment Report looked beyond unemployment, finding that 9 out of 10 female military spouses who are employed possess more formal education or experience than is needed in their current position. Many spend years obtaining a degree or developing an area of expertise, only to find that they must be relicensed or recertified each time they move across state lines. For medical professionals, nurses, attorneys, teachers, and numerous others, the financial and emotional burden is too much. Their circumstances make it difficult to build a retirement fund, or get the promotion or tenure they would obtain in civilian life.

DoD has demonstrated its commitment to helping military spouses obtain employment by establishing several programs, including the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), a computer portal that connects companies with military spouses seeking employment. Since MSEP's launch in June 2011, more than 61,000 military spouses have obtained jobs through the program. DoD presently collects data on the number of businesses participating in MSEP and the number of military spouses placed in a job through the program. However, information is not available on the types of jobs obtained and whether they are commensurate with an applicant's experience or education.

Our amendment would require DoD to begin gathering this data, which will equip us to better address the complex employment challenges of military spouses.

I applaud DoD for its significant progress in addressing military spouse unemployment. Yet, we have a continuing responsibility to make sure our programs are as effective as possible. I urge my colleagues to support our amendment to enhance efforts to address military spouse unemployment and underemployment.

IN RECOGNITION OF KATHLEEN McDERMOTT'S RETIREMENT

**HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Kathleen J. McDermott, the Executive Director of the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC) a \$17 million anti-poverty community action agency serving North Central Massachusetts. After many years of dedicated service, Kathy will be enjoying a well-earned retirement.

MOC does incredible work. Their mission is to alleviate poverty and create healthy communities by providing services, coordinating community resources that promote self-sufficiency and advocating for social change. Last year, MOC provided services in 30 communities and served over 20,000 individuals.

Prior to becoming Executive Director, Kathy was the agency's Director of Administration and Finance. During her tenure the agency has developed many new initiatives. MOC is known for addressing the changing needs of the community by planning strategically, using new approaches and collaborating with community partners to build a more vibrant community. Programs the agency administers include Asset Development, ChildCare and Head Start, Youth Services, Education, Training and Employment, Wellness and Nutrition Services, Energy Conservation, Housing, Elder Services, Homelessness Services and Neighborhood Development.

Kathy was instrumental in the establishment of the Community Health Connections Family Health Center, a federally funded health center with sites in Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner and served as its first President of the Board of Directors.

When Kathy officially retires on August 1st, MOC will have big shoes to fill. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kathy on her retirement and wishing her the very best in the years ahead.

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 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. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chair, in 2011, all of New York's Chinatown suffered a profound loss when Private Danny Chen died in Afghanistan. We did not lose this young man through combat with the enemy. Rather, Danny passed away after enduring horrific abuse and hazing at the hands of others in his unit. After months of being forced to do push-ups while holding water in his mouth, being kicked, called racial slurs and having rocks thrown at him, Danny died while on guard duty.

One of the great tragedies of this case is that Danny's superiors—both enlisted troops and officers—were either complicit with his hazing or turned a blind eye, allowing his abuse to continue. We have to wonder, if Danny Chen had somewhere to turn whether he would still be alive today. If someone else in Danny's unit had been able to speak out—without fear of repercussions—might things have ended differently? Would Danny's parents, Szu Chen and Yao Ten, still have their son?

Unfortunately, hazing remains too common in the military—and often goes unreported. By requiring every branch of the military to establish a tip line where these incidents could be reported, this amendment would help create a zero-tolerance environment for hazing. Not only will this provide help for the servicemember suffering abuse, but it can serve as a powerful deterrent. When potential bullies know inappropriate behavior can be anonymously and safely reported, they will be more cautious.

Madam Chair, no family should have to endure what the Chens have. The brave men and women who serve our Nation risk everything on our behalf. We owe it to them to ensure they operate in a professional environment where everyone is afforded dignity and respect, regardless of background. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the amendment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CERTIFY IT ACT

**HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be a voice for the employees and owners of small businesses across the United States. The working class men and women who are struggling to make ends meet and who are on the front lines on the war against rising health care costs deserve to know the truth about Obamacare. The truth is Obamacare is hurting small businesses and their employees. Health care costs are rising and Obamacare is causing the problem rather than solving it.

To shed some light on increased health care costs and their impact on America's middle class, I am introducing the Certify It Act. This bill requires the Comptroller General of the United States to annually study, for five years, the impact the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) will have on small business jobs and health care insurance premiums.

This bill would also provide for a one-year delay of the employer mandate, the cornerstone of Obamacare, should the Comptroller General or the Office of Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services