

by inserting poisonous language into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017.

Last week I unfortunately had to vote against the FY 17 NDAA. I want to state that it pained me to take that vote. Throughout my career I have supported our service members in every respect. I have worked tirelessly on veterans issues. I have worked closely with Department of Defense leadership to ensure our troops on the front lines have had every resource they needed to be successful and that our troops and their families at home were well taken care of.

Last week, the Majority injected their reckless ideology into the bill: a provision that would explicitly allow defense contractors to discriminate against LGBT employees. The language seeks to nullify an executive order prohibiting federal contractors from laying off or otherwise punishing employees because of their sexual orientation. Instead of passing a bill supporting our troops, they hid behind our troops in opposing LGBT Americans.

In doing this, the Majority placed the welfare of our troops in jeopardy, potentially robbing them of much needed resources, and undermined protections for LGBT employees of federal contractors created by a Presidential Executive Order.

As I stated earlier, this was a difficult vote to cast. However, I also know that this was the correct vote to cast. This body should not be risking national security nor sanctioning discrimination.

I urge the Republican Majority to delete this language in a House-Senate conference. They should not play politics with our national security.

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RECOGNIZING THE 98TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC DAY OF AZERBAIJAN

**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 26, 2016*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 98th anniversary of the Republic Day of Azerbaijan, and to extend my best wishes to all Azerbaijanis as they celebrate Republic Day. May 28th marks the founding of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, when the people of Azerbaijan first gained their independence from the Russian Empire in 1918. Although Azerbaijan's independence was ended by Soviet forces in 1920, it is noteworthy that the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was the world's first secular parliamentary democratic republic in a predominantly Muslim nation—earning diplomatic recognition from the United States during the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. We also recall, with admiration, that the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan granted universal suffrage to its citizens in 1918, making it the first Muslim country to give women the right to vote.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan restored its independence on October 18, 1991, when its Parliament adopted the Constitution Act on the Restoration of the State of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The last twenty-five years of independence have not been without challenges for the peo-

ple of Azerbaijan. At the fall of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan found itself in an armed conflict over occupied territory by Armenia. In 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding complete, unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Despite the U.N. resolutions, today, more than 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts, remain under Armenian occupation.

Additionally, a 1994 ceasefire agreement has been breached over the years with the most recent provocation occurring in 2016 while the Azerbaijani President was en route to Azerbaijan following a successful nuclear summit in the U.S. I am pleased that Azerbaijan immediately called for peace in the aftermath of the skirmish and remains committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Armenia.

Azerbaijan is a key global security partner for the United States. As an active member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, Azerbaijan cooperates with the United States in countering terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and narcotics trafficking. Azerbaijani troops serve shoulder to shoulder with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, as they previously did in Kosovo and Iraq. In support of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan has extended important over-flight clearances for U.S. and NATO flights as well as regularly providing landing and refueling operations at its airports for U.S. and NATO forces. Azerbaijan also plays an important role in the Northern Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan, by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a key player for enhancing global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline are the main arteries delivering Caspian Sea energy resources to global markets, and completion of the Southern Gas Corridor—which will run from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, and Albania into Italy—will increase the energy security of key American allies by increasing the amount of natural gas from the Caspian Sea to European markets.

Notably, Azerbaijan also provides roughly 40 percent of Israel's oil consumption. What may be more surprising to some is that Azerbaijan—a predominantly Muslim country—enjoys friendly ties with Israel beyond oil sales. Jews have resided in Azerbaijan for 2,500 years without persecution and today, the Jewish community in Azerbaijan numbers over 12,000. Azerbaijan is also home to Christian communities and has been praised for its religious tolerance by the European Parliament.

As co-chair of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I congratulate the people of Azerbaijan on the monumental occasion of Republic Day in their national history. May the partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan progress and continue to benefit both of our nations.

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT OF MR. NORMAN BEATTY

**HON. SCOTT GARRETT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 26, 2016*

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Norman Beatty who is retiring after 32 years of service at First Hope Bank in Hope, NJ. During his tenure at First Hope Bank, Mr. Beatty served as Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, and President. He graduated Blair Academy in 1958, the United States Military Academy in 1963 (BS), and the University of Alabama Graduate School of Business in 1971, where he received an MBA and an MS in Human Resources. Additionally, he served 20 years in the Army from 1963–1983. Retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1983, he joined First Hope Bank and worked with his father, Lewis C. Beatty.

Mr. Beatty played an essential role in the New Jersey Bankers Association, where he served as Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chairman, Chair, and on the Executive Committee.

During Mr. Beatty's tenure, New Jersey's two banking organizations, the Savings League and Bankers Association, merged in 2009. Mr. Beatty was then named the Co-Chairman of the NJ Bankers Association. Within the American Bankers Association he represented New Jersey on the Community Bankers Council and the Membership Council. From 2010 to 2014 he served as a member of the American Bankers Association's Board of Directors and Chairman of its Audit Committee.

Mr. Beatty is a charter member of the Hope Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors where he held the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer. The Township of Hope recognized Mr. Beatty as its Outstanding Citizen in 1998 and recognized him with the Founding Father award in 2009. The Warren County Chamber of Commerce selected Mr. Beatty as its Business Person of the Year in 2002. In 2011 Warren County Community College inducted Mr. Beatty into its Hall of Fame.

I am proud to have Mr. Beatty as a member of our community and want to recognize his decades of service to Northern New Jersey, to the banking industry, and to our nation.

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BEAU MARTINEZ

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 26, 2016*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Beau Martinez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Beau Martinez is a 12th grader at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Beau Martinez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels