

We need to empower voters and Congresswoman SEWELL'S bill—the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 2867)—would do just that.

Now—we often talk about how states in the south like Alabama have laws threatening voting rights. But this is still an issue around the country, including in California.

While California has implemented many policies that improve access to the ballot box, including vote-by-mail, automatic voter registration and expanded absentee voting—we are not perfect.

Three California counties—Kings County, Monterey County and Yuba County—were covered by the section 5 of the Voting Rights Act before the Shelby decision—meaning they needed preclearance from the Justice Department before changing voting rules or jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, we must restore the preclearance process to prevent voter discrimination and disenfranchisement before it happens—not after.

It is clear—our democracy is in a crisis. There is an assault against voting rights and we must come together to stop it.

My Democratic colleagues and the Congressional Black Caucus are serious about protecting voting rights and pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act. It is past time that all Republicans in Congress join our efforts to protect the foundation of our democracy: the right to vote.

Our work is not over until the voice of EVERY American is equally heard.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5055) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, let me thank the Ranking Member and Chair for including language to recognize the importance of workplace diversity in the Department of Energy's National Laboratories and directing the Department to provide a detailed plan on the recruitment and retention with minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

I am also pleased that the bill includes language on Energy-Water Nexus initiative that I worked on with our Ranking Member MARCY KAPTUR. This language encourages the Department of Energy to enter into an agreement with the Department of Agriculture at various national labs to work on development of affordable and efficient food production systems for our most food insecure communities. This is a critical step towards addressing food insecurity and poverty.

Lastly, I'm pleased that the Advanced Light Source program is fully funded in this bill at the level of \$64.95 million in FY2017. This \$2

million increase over FY 2016 enacted levels will ensure that these facilities remain fully operational, including the Advanced Light Source and Molecular Foundry at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in my home district.

However, I remain deeply concerned regarding the many poison pill policy riders and low funding levels included in this spending bill.

We know that California is experiencing an unprecedented drought coupled with the real effects of climate change. The fact that most of H.R. 2898, the Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015, has shamefully been inserted into this bill is a disgrace. This harmful rider fails to adequately address critical elements of California's complex water challenges and will only worsen the effects of the drought. It would also violate existing laws protecting salmon and other endangered fish in California's Bay-Delta estuary.

I am also concerned regarding the other harmful policy riders that would shamefully allow guns on Army Corps of Engineers land and prevent implementation of the administration's Clean Water Rule.

Mr. Chairman, instead of trying to roll back vital environmental protections, we need to be proactive about preserving our environment for the health and safety of future generations. We need to make more investments in clean energy like solar, wind, and geothermal. Unfortunately, this bill does not do that.

I hope that as the process moves forward, these terrible policy riders and low allocations are resolved.

CLARIFYING CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IN PROVIDING FOR DC HOME RULE ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ardently oppose H.R. 5233, wrongfully entitled the "Clarifying Congressional Intent in Providing for DC Home Rule Act of 2016." H.R. 5233 seeks to repeal a District of Columbia referendum, approved by a super-majority of D.C. residents, 83 percent, to allow the local D.C. government to implement its own local budget. To be clear, implement its own local budget after a 30-day congressional review period. This legislation does not preserve the authority of Congress, the 30-day congressional review period already does that, rather it subjects the local D.C. government to the arduous appropriations process to use tax dollars from its own residents.

Why, Mr. Speaker, would we choose to overturn the will of the local D.C. electorate to spend their tax dollars as they choose? Optically, it does not look right. Substantively, it is not right, and, legislatively, we are on the wrong track.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5233 is a move in the wrong direction away from granting the residents of D.C. increased self-determination and home-rule.

ISAAC MONTANO

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 Isaac Montano for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Isaac Montano is a 9th grader at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Isaac Montano is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Isaac Montano for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

REMEMBERING THE PALESTINE FLOOD VICTIMS

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2016

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in somber tone. I wanted to take a moment to remember six lives that were recently lost in Texas' 5th Congressional District.

On April 29th, East Texas experienced a storm system that swept through during the latter part of the day into the evening and night. During the early Saturday morning hours, the city of Palestine in Anderson County, Texas had reports of 7.5 inches of rain that fell in less than an hour. Several homes were destroyed in the neighborhoods, businesses flooded and ultimately lives were changed forever.

I would like to take a moment to remember Lenda Asberry and her great-grandchildren: Jamonicka Johnson, 6, Von Anthony Johnson Jr., 7, Devonte Asberry, 8, and Venetia Asberry, 9. Also, Giovanni Olivas, 30, who leaves behind a wife and two children. Spouses, children, parents, aunts, uncles, friends, neighbors, teachers, all left to grieve for these loved ones.

Let us all remember in our thoughts and prayers these families, businesses and the city of Palestine's people as they rebuild their property and lives.

FY17 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2016

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment with the way the Majority has undermined the welfare of our troops

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.

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.

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