

importance of delaying these additional cuts to home health care agencies, which were already struggling with the negative affects of the IPS.

Although I believe much more must be done, I believe the home health care related provisions in the legislation are a small, yet positive step forward.

One of the first bills I introduced when I came to Congress was legislation to allow for the deduction of health care benefits by small businessmen. I was pleased that a version of my legislation was included in the FY98 budget. This year, the Omnibus bill provides for the acceleration of the health insurance deduction for self-employed individuals. This will provide much needed tax relief to small businesses and place them on a level playing field with large businesses that can already deduct 100 percent of their health care costs.

As Rhode Island works to develop the former Quonset Point Naval Air Station in North Kingstown, Rhode Island into an intermodal industrial park, efforts are underway to provide for a third rail track between Quonset Point and the Massachusetts state line allowing uninhibited movement of freight through Rhode Island and the Northeast rail corridor. Completion of this track is a critical component for the development of Quonset Point Davisville and the future of Rhode Island's economy. The Omnibus bill includes \$5 million for the continuation of the Rhode Island Rail Development Project.

As a landscape architect, I have a particular interest in and concern for our environment. I am pleased that the final agreement includes significant funding for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, including \$750,000 for construction of exhibits throughout the corridor, \$328 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the protection of sensitive and valuable public lands. In addition, the bill eliminates the wasteful purchaser road credit program. I do not believe it necessary for the federal government to subsidize the building of roads in our national forests by timber companies.

As a member of the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services, I am pleased that the Administration and the majority were able to come to agreement on the important matter of funding for the International Monetary Fund. Along with the money—the bill provides \$17.9 billion—are the reforms that the IMF must make. These reforms are similar to the ones approved by the Banking and Financial Services Committee. This will help stabilize foreign economies while at the same time make the IMF's transactions more transparent, liberalize the IMF's trade policy, and require the IMF to address environment, labor and human rights conditions in the nations they lend to.

The bill also provides funding for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) that help U.S. business enter foreign markets.

Title II-B of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), known as the Summer Youth program at the Department of Labor, has been fully funded at \$871 million. The purpose of this program is to enhance the educational skills of young people, encourage enrollment in additional education, and provide exposure to the working world. It is estimated that Rhode Island will receive \$2,671,035 which will allow 2,081 young Rhode Islanders between the

ages of 14 and 21 to participate in this worthwhile program.

I am particularly pleased that Congress provided funding equal to the amount requested for the Job Corps program. I hope that full funding will pave the way for approval, by the U.S. Department of Labor, of an application by the state of Rhode Island for a new Job Corps Center. Rhode Island is one of only four states in the nation without a Center.

Since its creation in the early 1960's as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, the Job Corps Program has provided hundreds of thousands of poverty level young men and women all over the United States with one last opportunity to become contributing members of their community. It is always a trying decision for any young person to say no to their family, friends and neighborhoods and yes to Job Corps and the possibility of a new beginning. Unfortunately, that decision has been all the more difficult for the young people in Rhode Island who have been forced to travel to other states for Job Corps training. In all too many instances, the distance has been just too difficult. Hopefully, saying yes to Job Corps and a brighter future will be just a little bit easier for Rhode Islanders in the near future.

Two other job training programs important to Rhode Island also received proper funding in this budget. Both Title II-A of JTPA, the adult training program and Title III, the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act, may provide close to \$7 million in training aid to Rhode Island workers. Regrettably, funding for these programs remains of great importance to Rhode Island. In recent weeks I have been working with the U.S. Department of Labor and the Rhode Island Department of Employment and Training to assist the employees of two separate companies who have lost their jobs and are in need of retraining for the future. Historically, Rhode Island's economy has been blue collar in nature. As we stand at the doorway of the next century, Rhode Island is making the changes necessary to compete in the high tech, global economy of the future. As we make that conversion, it will be very important that our workers receive retraining to make the jump to that new economy.

In August of this year, I joined with South County Community Action, West Bay Community Action, Self Help, Inc., Tri-Town Community Action, Providence Community Action, the Blackstone Valley Community Action, the Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs and several representatives from energy companies comprising the Good Neighbor Energy Fund to express our concern about proposed cuts in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) then proposed by House Republicans. I am pleased that the final budget will fully fund LIHEAP. This program will provide much needed heating assistance to over 17 thousand Rhode Islanders this year. Nobody should ever have to choose between heating or eating. Without LIHEAP, too many people would be forced to make that terrible decision.

As I have stated time and time again, our children deserve a world class education. With a quality education, children can succeed in this ever evolving and ever competitive global society.

I am pleased the Omnibus Appropriations Act includes critical money for local school dis-

tricts to begin hiring additional teachers to reduce class sizes, especially in the lower grades. This \$1.2 billion down payment will provide over \$5.6 million for the State of Rhode Island to lower class sizes. Reducing class sizes has proven successful in raising education outcomes, not only for students in the classrooms where the sizes are smaller, but also for students in higher grades. The 30,000 teachers provided in this budget will assist our neighborhood schools to provide quality education for all of our children. We need to continue funding this important program and realize the goal of 100,000 additional, well-trained and highly qualified teachers in the near future.

I was disappointed that the budget did not include much needed money for school construction and modernization. Countless school buildings in my district are in need of repair and rehabilitation. Countless others need assistance with modernizing their facilities, so they can prepare their students to compete well in the global economy. The federal government must provide some measure of assistance to local school districts to respond to their infrastructure needs. Although I am troubled that the Omnibus Appropriation Act does not provide this assistance, I am pleased that Congressional Democrats and the White House were able to succeed in providing some assistance to the students of our nation.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, I think this legislation is good for Rhode Island. For that reason, I voted in favor of the bill.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4328, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 4328, The Omnibus and Emergency Appropriations Bill of 1998. Many of the provisions contained in this measure are deserving of support—these include aid to farmers, support for education and other worthy programs. However, I do have some serious reservations about one provision—Division D—Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998. This measure incorporates text from S. 2358, including compensation legislation for Gulf War veterans that would attempt to override a compromise developed by both bodies' authorizing committees. This provision was inserted over objections in both Chambers in an effort to conciliate one member of the other body. I am unaware of any prior conference process that has been blatantly overridden to account for the desires of one Member. I am also extremely disappointed with my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee of the House and Senate for acceding to the demands of one individual who clearly did not express the authorizers' views.

By putting this authorization into "must pass" legislation with a number of worthy funding initiatives, I feel that my colleagues have exploited the position in which I and others find ourselves today. The Veterans Affairs Committee in the House and the other body, the committees of jurisdiction, agreed to comprehensive veterans' legislation which is now

awaiting passage by the other body. This measure, H.R. 4110, the Veterans' Programs Enhancements Act of 1998, was approved on October 10, 1998 by the House by a unanimous vote of 423 to 0. As agreed to by the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees and approved by the House, H.R. 4110 resulted from a consensus building process. This process created a bill that all concerned believed was cumulatively better than the sum of its parts. The compromise included parts of S. 2358, and of my bill, H.R. 3279, that allows the use of epidemiological models to determine what conditions ought to be compensated with regard to Persian Gulf War veterans. I considered this step to be a major gain for veterans. I sincerely believe that, in overriding the compromise, we will do a great disservice to our Gulf War veterans.

H.R. 4110 allows the prevalence of illnesses veterans experience to serve as a basis for compensation determinations. This model—one supported by the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses—is thought by many scientists to provide an approach that gives veterans the benefit of the doubt. Even if veterans are unable to prove that their illnesses resulted from any of a host of possible causes, as the language in S. 2358 and now, would require them to do, conditions that they experienced more frequently than their peers could serve as a basis for compensation.

By including the text of S. 2358 in the Omnibus and Emergency Appropriations Bill of 1998, those who have wrought the Omnibus and Emergency Appropriations Bill of 1998 have violated not only the spirit, but the letter, of the agreement of the authorizing committees. This is nothing less than a travesty of the legislative process. This is nothing less than using strong arm tactics to achieve the will of one. This is wrong, plain and simple.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4328,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, while I support the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1999, I am very concerned about a provision in the bill that only provides funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State through July 15th; thereby delaying Congress' decision on statistical sampling in the 2000 census until the Supreme Court rules on the legality and constitutionality of this method. I am not comfortable with this. It is yet another Republican-led effort to ensure that all Americans are not counted in the 2000 census.

For quite some time, we have been engaged in what has become a bitter fight over the use of statistician sampling. How we choose to handle the year 2000 census is one of the most important issues facing State and local communities across the Nation. In fact, it is an issue of fundamental fairness and basic economics. With the year 2000 census upon us, we cannot afford to further delay the implementation of the most effective means of counting the U.S. population.

The census count is a constitutional requirement for reapportioning the House of Rep-

resentatives. It is also used to: determine the allocation of billions of taxpayer dollars to States and localities; determine within-State legislative redistricting; make decisions regarding the administration of various Federal programs; and compile many kinds of economical and statistical research.

Statisticians across the Nation have already indicated widespread support of sampling as the most scientifically accurate and cost-effective census enumeration method. In fact, in 1991, a congressionally mandated National Academy of Sciences panel of nationally recognized experts supported this conclusion by stating that a "Differential undercount cannot be reduced to acceptable levels at acceptable costs without the use of integrated coverage measurement and the statistical methods associated with it."

A second panel of experts confirmed these findings, in 1992 and 1996, when it further determined that sampling is critical to the success of the 2000 census. There is no other way to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Speaking of the past, it is a well known fact that the 1990 census, which cost a recorded \$2.6 billion, repeated a disturbing trend of disproportionately missing higher numbers of minorities than non-minorities in the census enumeration. For the first time in history, this most recent census was less accurate than the preceding one. In fact, the 1990 census undercount is estimated to have been 33 percent greater than that of the 1980 census. Four times as many blacks, 5 times as many Hispanics, 2 times as many Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 5 times as many American Indians as non-Hispanic whites were missed in the count. This resulted in greater expenditures for non-response follow-up.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford the consequences of another inaccurate census. We have scientific proof that sampling is the only method of ensuring that the 2000 census is fair and accurate and that it is inclusive of all Americans. If we do not utilize sampling techniques, we can expect an undercount of at least five million people, the majority of whom will be children, minorities and the urban and rural poor. We can also expect to waste valuable taxpayer dollars. For according to the U.S. Census Bureau, a year 2000 census that incorporates sampling surveys would save from nearly \$675 million to \$800 million.

It is for these reasons that I urge my colleagues not to hesitate to do what is right. We must not forgo the cost effectiveness and accuracy of statistical sampling.

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM ACT OF 1998

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2431, the religious persecution freedom bill. In its current form, this measure is too narrow to address the issues facing the global community today.

H.R. 2431 implies to the world that somehow religious persecution should be given protection and heightened priority before other forms of abuse. I strongly believe that all forms of oppression and persecution, whether

they are for religious, racial, or nationality reasons, or whether they are due to individuals standing up for their political beliefs which are most often in defense of democracy, should be addressed in this legislation. There must be special protections against all forms of persecution.

Operationally, the religious persecution freedom bill would undermine U.S. efforts to support the goal of religious freedom, as well as other important U.S. foreign policy interests. More specifically, the measure would establish an office of religious persecution monitoring to provide the imposition of sanctions against countries engaged in a pattern of religious persecution.

This measure would prohibit Federal agencies and U.S. citizens and exporting goods, including religious torment facilitating products, to countries and significant entities engaged in religious torture. H.R. 2431 proposes sanctions that would be counterproductive to convincing foreign governments to prevent limitations on religious freedom. This could possibly lead to misguided repercussions against minority religious groups that are perceived as causing deterioration of relations with the United States.

By imposing automatic sanctions, this legislation could harm bilateral relations with allies, as well as limit Presidential flexibility and raise questions regarding U.S. international obligations. In addition, this bill undermines the U.S. policy to respect all human rights.

Mr. Speaker, current law already provides an adequate basis for the United States to impose sanctions on foreign entities that violate human rights. Furthermore, automatic imposition of sanctions could dissuade foreign governments or persons from cooperating with the United States to prevent limitations on religious freedom. In its current form, this bill could harm U.S. political and economic relationships with other countries. For example, it legislates sanctions without consideration for exempting emergency food aid and distribution programs that would place many innocent civilians in danger of starvation.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that legislation sanctions would alienate significant diplomatic and trade partners. It is for these reasons that I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 2431, the religious persecution freedom bill. Vote "no" to H.R. 2431.

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF
INSPIRATION

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that our nation was created was to celebrate the freedom of religion. And over the years, many Americans have devoutly professed their faiths and found strength within their churches. Next month, on November 15, Bay City First Church of the Nazarene is celebrating its 75th anniversary of inspiring its members to follow God's guiding light, and, most importantly, the success that the Church has had in achieving that goal.

As Reverend Marc Meulman points out in his announcement of this special event, on November 15, 1923, a small group of Nazarenes joined together to officially organize the