

and colleagues join me in praising his accomplishments and extending thanks for his service over the years on behalf of the state of Alabama and the United States of America.

TERRY will surely enjoy the well-deserved time he now has to spend with Barbara and his beloved constituents. I wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

CONSOLIDATED SECURITY, DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 2008*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with no small amount of misgiving that I will cast my vote in favor of this Continuing Resolution today. While I know that my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee worked diligently and in good faith to fashion a responsible and responsive bill for this Congress to consider, I regret that the White House did not do the same.

First and foremost, I do not believe this document should be repealing the twenty-seven year old congressional moratoria on offshore drilling. While I—like many of my colleagues—am willing to consider new ideas for responsible development in the context of broader, forward-looking legislation like The Comprehensive American Energy Security and Consumer Protection Act this House passed last week, I do not support unrestricted drilling three miles off our coastline, and I don't believe the American people do, either. Restoring common-sense environmental safeguards and developing a genuine vision for this Nation's energy future needs to be an early action item for an OBAMA Administration and the 111th Congress.

Second, while I am gratified that this CR includes important assistance for our struggling families in the form of additional funds for Pell Grants, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, and low income home energy assistance, I am disappointed that it does not include the kind of robust stimulus our economy clearly needs right now. It is simply astonishing that the President would threaten to veto \$50 billion for job-creating infrastructure improvements, unemployment insurance, food stamps and health care support for our states and citizens at the same time he is asking for \$700 billion to bailout Wall Street. This, too, must and will change under an OBAMA Administration and a strengthened Democratic Congress in 2009.

In spite of these and other shortcomings, we clearly must fund the federal government through the beginning of next year—and the Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bills included in this package, while not perfect, all, on balance, have my support.

Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this temporary spending measure today—mindful that Congress will be back to address its deficiencies in a few short months.

CONSOLIDATED SECURITY, DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 2008*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, this is a bad week for those of us concerned over Congress' refusal to reign in federal spending. Not only are we preparing to deal with at least a multi-billion dollar bailout of the financial services sector, Congress today stands ready to add billions to the national debt by passing H.R. 2638.

I would not object to many of the items in this bill if they were offset by reductions on other, lower priority, programs. For example, I would support the disaster relief package if the package were offset by reductions in other spending, particularly reductions in our overseas commitments. Unfortunately, H.R. 2638 not only fails to reduce spending to finance disaster aid; it attaches money for the country of Georgia onto the disaster aid package. Georgia is not receiving this money because it was affected by a natural disaster but because it was involved in a military conflict with Russia—which was started by Georgia! It is an insult to the American people to divert money that could have gone to help the victims of Hurricane Ike to promote interference in a conflict that in no way threatens the security of the American people.

Another particularly objectionable part of H.R. 2638 is the section providing \$7.5 billion in loan guarantees for the auto industry. In exchange for the loans, the industry must agree to produce the type of automobiles favored by federal bureaucrats. Thus, this bill not only increases corporate welfare, it empowers federal bureaucrats to displace the judgment of consumers as to where the auto industry should concentrate its resources. As the failure of every centrally planned economy throughout history shows, when government officials usurp the decisions of consumers, workers, and entrepreneurs the result is economic stagnation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2638 represents another missed opportunity for Congress to exercise fiscal discipline by funding the American people's priorities, such as disaster relief, by reducing spending on non-priority items, such as overseas spending. Therefore, I must oppose this bill. I hope that in the future Congress will fund items such as disaster relief by reducing spending in other areas instead of burdening future generations with more debt.

CONSOLIDATED SECURITY, DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 2008*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 2638, the Con-

tinuing Resolution, or CR, and to thank Chairman OBEY and the Democratic leadership for putting together a continuing resolution that includes a full year of funding for our troops, veterans, and first responders, while also guaranteeing continued funding for other essential Government programs.

I am especially pleased that the CR includes a \$7.5 billion appropriation to support \$25 billion in direct loans to automakers to re-tool their manufacturing facilities to produce the next generation of advanced technology vehicles. The loans will help keep jobs in Michigan and other States, and create new green jobs building new, more fuel efficient vehicles. This package will help us move quickly towards vehicles that will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and I have every confidence that just like the loan guarantees to Chrysler in the 1980s these loans will be repaid to taxpayers at a profit. These loans would not be in the CR were it not for the tireless work of the entire Michigan delegation, or the strong leadership of Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, Senate Leader REID, Michigan Senators LEVIN and STABENOW and all the Democratic and Republican Leadership in the House and the Senate.

I am pleased that we have also provided a full year of funding for the Department of Defense. This package includes important increases for training, addresses National Guard and Reserve equipment shortfalls, so that our troops are sent into battle well prepared and well equipped. It also contains increases for military health care, and for programs that support military families.

In addition to providing for our troops overseas, this bill provides for our veterans once they have returned home by continuing to strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs. The funding provided for the VA in this bill builds upon prior efforts of the 110th Congress to provide our veterans with the health care and other benefits they deserve. In the last 3 years, Congress has increased funding for veterans' health care by \$11.8 billion. This year, Congress has provided \$47.6 billion for the VA, which is \$4.5 billion above the 2008 funding level and \$2.8 billion over the President's request. These increases will be used for improvements in veterans' medical care, including mental health treatment for veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. The increases will also be used to hire more claims processors, provide state-of-the-art prosthetics, and make important facility improvements.

This bill also provides critical homeland security funding to protect our country from terrorist attacks and to help respond to devastating natural disasters. The CR contains \$4.2 billion in grant funding for port security and first responders, increases in funding to hire 2,200 new border patrol agents, and important new oversight provisions to ensure Department of Homeland Security is spending its money wisely and implementing the findings of the 9/11 Commission. The bill also provides \$22.9 billion in emergency disaster response assistance to help the gulf coast rebuild from Hurricane Ike, help communities in the Midwest that suffered from floods, and assist those in the West that were ravaged by wildfires.

Like many of my colleagues, I had hoped that this administration would be willing to