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**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Port of Seattle for receiving the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Port of Seattle is one of just fifteen employers across the country to receive this honor.

Each year, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an agency of the Department of Defense, awards employers with their annual Freedom Award. This is the Department of Defense's highest recognition awarded to employers for their exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees. More than 3,000 nominations from Guardsmen and Reservists, or their family members on their behalf, were submitted and the Port of Seattle distinguished themselves among all the nominees.

A Naval Reservist nominated the Port of Seattle because of the Port's focus on hiring military members and veterans, as well as for their participation in the military's Transition Assistance Program. Twenty percent of the Port's employees have served in the military and the Port has started a fellowship program to help returning service members transition from active duty to the civilian workforce. The Port of Seattle's efforts at employing Guardsmen and Reservists serves as a model for other port districts that are establishing programs to hire more service members.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I honor the Port of Seattle for their superb treatment of Guard and Reserve employees. The Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is a well-deserved honor.