

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I had a real opportunity to work integrally with her on the issues of sovereignty at a time when the Supreme Court was attacking at that moment some very essential parts of tribal sovereignty.

I am sorry to hear of her passing; but I have great, great memories of working with her, of her leadership, of her advocacy, of her passion, and of her running so true to her values no matter what the situation. If she couldn't succeed today, she'd be back tomorrow. Very often, she was.

Thank you again so very much for this resolution, which recognizes the contributions of this outstanding woman to the history of our country.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, which honors the life of Wilma Mankiller, and I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the previous speakers in expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives on her passing.

There are many of us who did not have the opportunity to meet Wilma Mankiller. Nonetheless, as we deal with Indian affairs in Congress, all of us touch some part of the legacy of her accomplishments left to the great Cherokee Nation and Indian Country.

In a recent article on her death, Cherokee Chief Chad Smith states that she was a patriot for the Cherokee Nation. In 1998, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton in recognition for her success as an Indian leader.

Though Wilma Mankiller is further honored today by the House resolution, what stands out is the outpouring of grief from the Cherokee citizens upon hearing the news of her death. I think her greatest honor is the esteem and respect in which she was held by her fellow Cherokee people.

I commend the gentleman from Oklahoma for sponsoring this resolution and for ensuring its consideration on the House floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, just a few closing comments. I have a quote from the President of the United States, Barack Obama:

"I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Wilma Mankiller today. As the Cherokee Nation's first female chief, she transformed the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Cherokee Nation and the Federal Government, and served as an inspiration to women in Indian Country and across America. A recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, she was recognized for her vision and commitment to a brighter future for all Americans. Her legacy will continue to encourage and motivate all who carry on her work.

"Michelle and I offer our condolences to Wilma's family, especially her husband, Charlie, and two daughters Gina

and Felicia, as well as the Cherokee Nation, and all those who knew her and were touched by her good works."

I would just like to say I knew Wilma as a young boy. I got to meet Wilma through many festivals and pow-wows with my father when he served in the U.S. Senate. She was always so kind, and she was always lending advice to me. Then after I was elected to Congress—and Congressman COLE was very correct—the term I would say is "blunt"—she was very blunt in her political advice. She would call me whenever something would happen within the Cherokee Nation or here in Congress and would give me some advice, very direct advice, and she was always right in her advice. We are going to miss her deeply.

So, in closing, I would ask my colleagues to support this resolution to honor this great woman.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Native American Caucus, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 1237, a resolution recognizing and honoring the life of Wilma Pearl Mankiller. Chief Mankiller was an ardent advocate for the Native American community and an inspiration to the rest of the nation, and I am proud to support this resolution honoring her.

I would like to thank Congressman BOREN for authoring this important resolution, and House Majority Leader STENY HOYER and Speaker NANCY PELOSI for their skill and leadership in bringing it to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Wilma Mankiller inspired Native American women and girls across the United States when she became principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the second largest tribe in the United States. Born November 18, 1945 on family land at Mankiller Flats near Rocky Mountain, Oklahoma, she attended San Francisco University, where she became an activist for Native American causes. Chief Mankiller's political career began when she was elected deputy chief of the Cherokee Nation in 1983, before becoming principal chief in 1985.

This accomplishment gave her the opportunity and platform to become an unyielding activist for the continued enhancement of the indigenous population. She was successful in establishing tribally owned businesses, such as horticultural operations, improving infrastructure, and building a hydroelectric facility. In addition to this important work, she also advocated for Native American and women's issues by improving federal and tribal negotiations, as well as through her participation in organizations like the Ford Foundation, the Seventh Generation Fund, and the Freedom Forum. Because of her tireless efforts towards improving the general welfare of Native Americans, Chief Mankiller has received numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution honoring the life and accomplishments of this extraordinary woman. Her work and dedication have improved the lives of Native Americans across the country, as well as given Americans across the country a better understanding of the Native American community.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 1237.

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BOREN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1237.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING COAL MINERS FROM UPPER BIG BRANCH MINE IN WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1236) honoring the coal miners who perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine-South in Raleigh County, West Virginia, extending condolences to their families and recognizing the valiant efforts of emergency response workers at the mine disaster.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1236

Whereas coal mining is a time-honored profession and miners and their families have shaped the history and rich culture of West Virginia and the Nation;

Whereas the Nation is greatly indebted to coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they perform to provide the fuel needed to keep the Nation strong and secure;

Whereas the Nation has long recognized the importance of health and safety protections for miners who labor in extreme and dangerous conditions;

Whereas accidents in the Nation's mines have again and again taken the lives of coal miners;

Whereas 29 West Virginia miners tragically perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine-South following an explosion on April 5, 2010;

Whereas this was the worst coal mining disaster in the Nation over the last 40 years;

Whereas Federal, State, and local rescue crews worked tirelessly night and day in courageous rescue and recovery efforts;

Whereas the families of the fallen miners have suffered immeasurable loss; and

Whereas residents of Raleigh County and throughout West Virginia came together to support the miners' families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the ultimate sacrifice made by the 29 coal miners lost at the Upper Big Branch Mine-South, Raleigh County, West Virginia;

(2) extends the deepest condolences of the Nation to the families of these men;

(3) recognizes all coal miners for enduring the loss of their coworkers and maintaining courage throughout this ordeal;

(4) commends the rescue crews for their valiant efforts to find these miners; and

(5) honors the many volunteers who provided support and comfort for the miners' families during the rescue and recovery operations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 1236 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. At this time, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman GEORGE MILLER.

Mr. Speaker, last week, on Monday, April 5, an explosion tore through the Upper Big Branch Mine in Raleigh, West Virginia, taking the lives of 29 good, hardworking men. It was the repeat of a recurring nightmare that has haunted the coalfields of our Nation for generations, and it is a tragedy that never should have occurred.

Immediately upon receiving news of the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine, I rushed to the scene to be with the families. For me, it was, unfortunately, not an unfamiliar circumstance. I have spent too many anxious hours within the aftermath of mine accidents in the midst of family and friends, of coworkers and survivors, awaiting word. The watching, hoping and praying for survivors to emerge from the darkness into the arms of their loved ones is a heart-wrenching exercise, but being surrounded by such warmth and love, generosity and faith is heartwarming at the same time.

The people of coal mining communities, in particular those of southern West Virginia, are a special breed. Generations of these families go into our mines. For so many of these miners, it is not a job; it is a calling. They live with the knowledge that there is risk, but they are proud to take that risk to labor in the company of good and loyal friends, to earn an honest paycheck in order to provide for their families and for themselves.

The miners at Upper Big Branch were just such men. Like coal miners throughout the ages, they did difficult work in dangerous circumstances. They labored underground in cramped conditions in the damp and the dark, but outside the mines, their lives were full of light and love and joy. They had wives and children and grandchildren. They hunted, pranked and laughed together, and they experienced many warm memories and gentle sorrows. While most Americans can scarcely imagine what a coal miner's day at work is really like or will never really understand our coal miners, we certainly appreciate what their labors have meant in our daily lives.

The toil of these coal miners, of all coal miners, has fueled our Nation's economic engine, ensuring our military security by providing coal not just to the generation of power but as an essential element in the steelmaking process. All coal miners are deserving of our gratitude and of our renewed commitment to ensure that such tragedies never occur again.

Countless individuals can be thanked for their help during this disaster. I thank our Governor, Joe Manchin, III, for his leadership; both of our U.S. Senators, JAY ROCKEFELLER and ROBERT C. BYRD; our Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, who twice visited us during this week; her assistant secretary for Mine Safety and Health Administration, Joe Main, there every day and night; Ron Wooten, our West Virginia division Mine Safety and Health training director; Jimmy Gianato, director of our West Virginia Homeland Security. Both of these individuals were there every day and night, 24/7, for an entire week. I thank our West Virginia head coach, Bobby Huggins, for his uplifting visit to the families.

By all accounts, the explosion that took the lives of these 29 miners should never have happened in this time, in this modern era.

To quote the Mine Safety and Health Administration's administrator for coal mine safety and health, Kevin Stricklin, who fought every hour, 24 hours a day, to help find our coal miners, "All explosions are preventable. It's just making sure you have things in place to keep one from occurring. It's quite evident that something went very wrong here."

□ 1330

There are multiple layers of laws and regulations in place to prevent such a disaster. There are modern technologies. There were repeated, persistent inspections. And yet 29 men perished and one is hanging on in the hospital. That this deadly explosion occurred is infuriatingly, frustratingly heartbreaking, and I am determined that we will get to the bottom of it and ensure that steps are taken to prevent a recurrence of this type of explosion. We owe it to the miners who perished in Raleigh County last week. We owe it to their families. We owe it to their coworkers.

So many strong and tough West Virginians came together to pray and to help these families. Our West Virginia State Police stood by every family's side to help in any way they could. The American Red Cross, Billy Graham's Crusade, family members of previous mine disaster victims, and most importantly, our ministers, our pastors, our West Virginia Council of Churches, all who came from all over our great State to counsel, to cry, and to call upon God, who above all else will guide these families through this healing process.

With that inner strength that comes to the West Virginia people, we will get through this tragedy together. We will

hold accountable those who failed our miners, so help me God.

Today the House of Representatives honors the 29 miners lost in Raleigh County last week. We express the condolences of our Nation to their families, and we recognize above all the valiant efforts of the rescue workers, those who placed their lives on the line to save other lives, who answered the call the other day. Our first responders, our paramedics, our law enforcement personnel all came together.

May the Good Lord keep our lost miners, may He care for their families, and bless those rescue personnel who risked their own lives in service to others. And may He watch over each and every coal miner who continues to work and continues to walk in the wake of risk in service to our Nation.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Every day thousands of men and women go to work in coal mines to bring electricity to our homes to make our lives easier, more comfortable. The working conditions for these miners are anything but comfortable or easy. I rise today to honor their work, and sadly, the sacrifice of 29 men last Monday in the Upper Big Branch Mine.

This resolution offers our condolences to these miners' families as well as the Nation mourns with them. It is also a time to pledge that we will work with the Federal agencies tasked to investigate this accident, determine the cause, and take the appropriate actions.

On Monday, April 5, we watched as mine rescue teams and mine safety officials descended on Whitesville, West Virginia, to go into the Upper Big Branch Mine. The frustration was apparent as rescue teams attempted to reach refuge chambers that night, but were unable to proceed far enough into the mine because of the dangerous levels of gases. Mourning began for seven families who knew immediately that their loved ones were killed by the blast. And then the agonizing waiting began.

For a week, families waited for news of those who might have made it to safety and those who had not. Four missing miners had the slightest hope that they were safely barricaded in a chamber. The miracle that we hoped for did not happen.

We cannot, however, forget the tireless efforts of the mine rescue teams and the government officials who worked around the clock to reach those trapped. Mine rescue teams volunteer their time to train for the unthinkable, to put themselves in harm's way. The burden of recovery falls on these miners as they try to bring closure to the families by bringing their loved ones home one more time. We honor their courage in these very trying circumstances.

I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on House Resolution 1236, mourning the loss of miners in the Upper Big

Branch Mine, and honoring those participating in the rescue and the recovery operations.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN).

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding, and I thank him also for his leadership on mine safety and workplace safety.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the sponsor of this resolution, my colleague from West Virginia's Third Congressional District, NICK RAHALL. Coal miners and the coal industry have no greater champion than the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, Chairman RAHALL.

Mr. Speaker, tragedy has visited West Virginia's coal mines again. It is a visitor our State knows all too well. The names of the communities change with each visit, and the years do as well. Monongah in 1907, Dola in 1963, Farmington in 1968, Sago in 2006, and now Raleigh County, April 2010. The names change, Mr. Speaker, but the grief and the sorrow, they stay exactly the same. The mother who lost her son last week is united with the sister who lost her brother in 1968 and the daughter who lost her father in 1907.

Mr. Speaker, shy of 2 million people live in my State. Maybe one in 90 earns a living as a coal miner in the coal fields. Most West Virginians have never been underground, and most never will be. But every one of us lives with the knowledge and the full appreciation of what can go wrong whenever a new shift of miners goes underground. Coal mining is not just my State's most important industry, it is central to our culture and our social identity. When tragedy visits one of our communities, it visits our entire State. It brings us together. It reminds us in sometimes a difficult life we can always look to that larger community for support.

We saw those bonds in the rescue crews last week battling fatigue and risking their lives. We see those bonds in the volunteers on-site in Raleigh County today. And we see those bonds in the churches and the union halls and the schools throughout the State, wherever West Virginians come together.

There is hard work ahead of us and there is pragmatic work ahead of us. The engineers and the experts, they will come and they will analyze what went wrong in Raleigh County last week. This Congress will debate what went wrong last week. We will assign responsibility. And we will consider what actions are necessary to make the hard work of taking coal from the ground less dangerous, to do all that is possible to prevent such future tragedies. That will be the most lasting testimonial we can offer those who lost their lives in Raleigh County.

But today we acknowledge their loss, we thank those who tried to save them, we offer our deepest condolences to the

miners' families, and we come together again in support of our community.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the ranking member of the Education and Labor Committee.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to honor the memory of the 29 miners who lost their lives in the Upper Big Branch Mine, and to express our gratitude to the rescue teams who bravely pursued a tragic recovery mission. The Nation watched in collective apprehension last week as mine rescue teams rushed from the coal fields of Appalachia to the small town of Whitesville to help their own. For a week we all clung to the hope that four missing miners might have found refuge. It was not to be.

Over the weekend, the mine rescue teams performed a more solemn duty, bringing these men out of the mine one final time. Under the best conditions mining is dangerous work. After an explosion the mines are even more treacherous. Mine rescue teams undertake rigorous training and exercise valiant resolve. Today we recognize their bravery in the face of danger and tragedy. H. Res. 1236 honors their commitment to service.

Chairman MILLER has announced our intention to investigate this tragedy and seek answers on behalf of the families and the entire mining community. Our focus must be to determine what caused this devastating loss so we can prevent it from ever happening again.

The cameras have gone elsewhere and this tragedy has faded from the hourly broadcasts. For the families, however, the devastation of the Upper Big Branch Mine will never disappear. With this resolution we offer our condolences, we honor their loved ones, and we pledge our commitment to get to the bottom of this.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

As my colleagues have recounted, on Monday, April 5, an explosion rocked the Upper Big Branch Coal Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia, killing 29 miners and injuring others. This was the worst mine disaster in the United States in almost four decades. For over two centuries, millions of West Virginians' livelihoods have depended on extracting the State's richest coal deposits.

Coal has left an indelible mark on the communities throughout West Virginia and Appalachia. For many of these communities, the mine may be the only way to earn a decent living. These miners are proud of their work and their contribution to the American economy. Coal is in their blood, it is in their tradition, and it is their career.

But we also know that underground mining is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Every day miners show up for their shift knowing that

there is a chance that they may not return to their families, yet they show up every day. At 3:30 p.m., during the shift change, a massive explosion ripped through the Upper Big Branch Mine and took the lives of 29 miners and sent others to the hospital. While the cause of this tragedy is still under investigation, today we memorialize those 29 miners who perished.

Our Nation sends our deepest condolences to those who have suffered this terrible loss. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to families who have lost a husband, a father, a brother, a son, or more. Those thoughts are with you and your communities in your suffering these devastating losses. These losses will remain long after the headlines fade from national attention.

Today we also recognize the valiant efforts of the many rescue teams, who in many cases traveled long distances and risked their lives in hopes of saving their fellow miners. Many rescuers had to evacuate the mine at least four times as a result of explosive levels of methane gas. These brave men and women, who worked around the clock day after day, have the appreciation of this Congress and this Nation for their selfless efforts.

I would also like to recognize Congressman NICK RAHALL, who grew up in Beckley, West Virginia, only a few miles south of the mine. Congressman RAHALL sponsored this resolution and provided the much-needed rock of support for his constituents during this disaster. Reports have come back to me of his consoling and listening to families, neighbors, and friends in his community. I know how much these families appreciate his support and those efforts.

Over the last few years I have met many families who have suffered similar tragic losses in mining disasters. And what I have learned is that the impacts of these disasters far range what we see in the general society because of the history of these communities, the culture of these communities, the work ethic in these communities. These tragedies spread across in an indelible way with the loss of a single miner.

In the face of these overwhelming tragedies, these families are showing incredible strength and determination. I made a promise to the families of Sago, to Aracoma Alma, to Darby, to Crandall Canyon that we would do everything in our power to uncover the cause of these tragedies and do everything possible to prevent other miners from suffering these similar fates. I want to extend that same promise to these families of Upper Big Branch Mine and to the miners in the community, that we will continue that promise and to get to the bottom of this tragic incident.

They paid the ultimate price in doing the job our Nation depends upon. Every miner who goes to work every day must be able to return home safely to their families at the end of that shift. And Congress has an obligation to ensure that that remains the case.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

□ 1345

Mrs. CAPITO. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my fellow West Virginians and those of us in this Congress in support of today's resolution to extend our condolences to the families of the 29 miners who were killed in last week's mine disaster in Montcoal, West Virginia.

I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman RAHALL, for his steadfast support, his compassion, and his empathy for those in his district who have suffered an unimaginable loss. His strength and compassion was very evident to all of us who watched the activities as they unfolded in Raleigh County.

I would also like to thank our Governor, Governor Manchin. He was a stalwart comforter in chief to many of us because, as my fellow colleagues from West Virginia has said, if one West Virginian suffers, we all suffer.

I would also like to thank the outstanding efforts of the mine rescue teams and the many volunteers who provided their support and prayers.

The accident that occurred at Performance Coal Company's Upper Big Branch mine has taken an immense toll on all West Virginians and left a community shattered, very sad, and very shaken. After 6 days of waiting for any news, rescue workers located the four missing miners and found no survivors. While we were all hoping for a miracle, unfortunately, we were left with the sad conclusion.

Too many families have suffered the tragic loss of losing a loved one in a mine disaster. Last week's explosion was the worst mining disaster in an American mine in 40 years and the third major mining disaster in West Virginia in the last 4 years. An explosion at the Sago mine in my district on January 2, 2006, trapped 13 miners for nearly 2 days. By the grace of God, one miner survived.

We cannot forget the grief and suffering of the families, friends, and co-workers of all the miners who have died. These are deaths that can and must be prevented. The rescue workers were valiant, working around the clock to find their fallen brothers and to help the families in their horrible time of grief.

Following Sago, Congress rightly passed stricter mine safety regulations to enhance inspector programs, improve emergency response, and put in place protections to prevent future mine disasters. To ensure that all mines receive regular inspection, Congress has increased MSHA funding, because MSHA had been unable to meet these mandated responsibilities.

However, new rules and regulations are useless if they are not enforced.

The coal companies must be vigilant and must follow the rules in every case. No excuses. Keeping our miners safe requires a collaborative approach between the regulators and the mining industry. Both must expand their health and safety programs to prevent hazards from starting in the first place. Otherwise, reforms Congress clearly intended to address with the passage of the MINER Act will be rendered meaningless. Congress has a very important oversight role in scrutinizing issues that lead to this disaster.

There must be, and I am sure there will be, a very thorough investigation into this tragedy to determine what further action must be taken to prevent this from ever happening again. I vow to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the safety and health of our coal miners.

I join today with my colleagues and really the entire Nation to extend our condolences to those families of the lost miners and to the communities surrounding. This is a devastating loss for all of us, and the warmth and prayers that have been sent to those of us living in West Virginia and particularly in the Montcoal area are welcomed and well received.

I ask my colleagues to join me in passing this resolution.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), subcommittee chairman of Workforce Protections.

Ms. WOOLSEY. This resolution rightly honors the 29 courageous coal miners who were senselessly killed in the explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine in Raleigh County, West Virginia, last week; and it supports those family members left behind. Our deepest sympathies go out to these families, and we also hope for the speedy recovery of the two miners who were injured.

Miners, like all working people, are the basis for America's future. And it is true that miners work in a very dangerous profession, but there is absolutely no excuse for a tragedy like this one. We don't know yet the cause of this explosion, but the investigations have begun.

We do know, however, that Massey Energy, the mine owner, was cited for 450 safety violations in the year 2009 for the Upper Big Branch mine. Massey contested most of these citations, keeping the violations in legal limbo and preventing MSHA from establishing a pattern of violations that could have led to a shutdown of the mine; and it could have increased scrutiny of this owner and possibly prevented these disasters.

These appeals filed by the companies like Massey have created a tremendous backlog at the MSHA Review Commission, a backlog that has increased from 1,500 cases in the year 2005 to 16,000 cases today. The Review Commission does not have the resources to resolve a backlog of this size in a timely fashion, so we as Members of Congress im-

mediately must provide the background and the legal authority for more funds to hire more administrative law judges so that we can expedite the appeals process.

In addition to scrutinizing Massey Energy's role in this disaster, we need to look at MSHA's role as well. Is MSHA using all the authority it has under current law to prevent these explosions? Does MSHA need more authority to carry out their mission? As the chair of the Workforce Protection Subcommittee, I will be working closely with Chairman MILLER, with Ranking Member KLINE, and Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS and Representative RAHALL and all of the others in this Congress, which is probably 435 of us, knowing that we must take the steps that are necessary to prevent any future mining disasters.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE).

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, on April 5, 29 hardworking men—fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands—left home for a day at work. All thought they would return home safely to their families that night, but, sadly, they didn't.

I stand in solidarity with my colleagues from West Virginia and all across this Nation in honoring the 29 coal miners that were lost.

I wish to express my deepest sympathies to each of the families of the workers who perished in the West Virginia mine explosion. I know the loss you have experienced will stay with you forever, and I hope that you can take some solace in knowing that all Americans share in your grief.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my utmost gratitude to the rescue teams who have so tirelessly and heroically risked their own lives in an effort to save others. Your bravery does not go unnoticed and is appreciated by all Americans.

The explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine was America's worst mining disaster in 40 years, and the toll on all West Virginians has been devastating. It requires us to again ask our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, with four mine disasters in the last 4 years, how many more tragedies have to occur before we start taking mine safety more seriously and implement strong reforms to protect all of our miners?

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work with Chairman MILLER and Chairwoman WOOLSEY to honor these miners through action. While we cannot bring back the men that were lost, we can do more to advance the cause of workplace safety across this country; and we should start by ensuring that MSHA has the tools, the staff, and technology to prevent tragedies such as these. The report yesterday that a computer error prevented Upper Big Branch mine from

being identified as a risk is deeply disturbing and completely and totally unacceptable. All Americans deserve to work in a place that is safe, and we must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure a disaster like this will never happen again.

Again, I want to join my colleagues in expressing my deepest condolences to those affected by this devastating tragedy. I assure each of the affected families and communities that your loss will not be forgotten and the memory of these coal miners will inspire me and my colleagues to take bold action on mine safety.

I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. I thank the chairman for yielding.

I rise simply to thank my many colleagues in this body on both sides of the aisle that have expressed their condolences this week in the debate that has just occurred or rather to me personally or in phone calls. I know that my colleague from northern West Virginia, Representative MOLLOHAN, called every day for a status update; and I appreciate the gentlewoman from the Second District, Representative CAPITO's, comments.

But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I do recognize the work of the distinguished chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, my dear friend GEORGE MILLER. We worked together following previous disasters that have been referenced during this debate, the Sago and Aracoma disasters that occurred in West Virginia as well about 4 years ago.

Reference has been made to the MINNERS Act that was passed following past disasters. Many good parts of that were put in place by our operators across the State and were in place at this particular mine. Unfortunately, due to the severe nature of this blast, these features did not have a chance to trigger or to come into play. So something else needs to be done to prevent these disasters.

I salute the chairman again.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I appreciate the remarks of the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL). But, tragically, we have been through this before. It's clearly the intent of the chair to work with the entire delegation. I tried to state it, maybe not as articulately as I had hoped to, but we fully understand that these tragedies in the mining community are felt across the State. They are felt across the region. The deaths may be isolated, but because of the history and the culture and the economy of these regions, we know that they are felt across the region, and we expect to work with the entire delegation and with the Senate delegation as we try to

uncover what has taken place here with the tragedy that existed.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the Speaker of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the chairman for yielding. I thank him for his leadership on this important issue and the attention that he has called to it over time and the focus that he has had since day one when we learned of this tragedy.

I want to join our colleagues, Chairman RAHALL, in whose district this tragedy occurred, Mr. MOLLOHAN and Mrs. CAPITO to extend condolences to them. Because while this occurred in Mr. RAHALL's district, I know the grief is felt throughout the State of West Virginia as it is being felt throughout our country.

Mr. Speaker, today in towns across Raleigh County, West Virginia, flags are flying at half staff. Their residents are mourning the loss of their fathers, brothers, and sons in last week's deadly mine explosion in Montcoal. Since then, people across our country have cried for them, have joined in the mourning; and today in the Congress we officially join these proud Americans in expressing our deepest condolences for the loss of 29 coal miners, 29 coal miners, in the worst mining accident in four decades.

We do so led by Chairman NICK RAHALL, who has been on the scene of this catastrophe the last 1½ weeks. Congressman RAHALL has prayed with his constituents, and he has consoled them. He has committed to work for better conditions, vigorous oversight of the mining industry, and rigorous enforcement of safety standards for America's mines. In doing so, he has worked with our chairman, Mr. MILLER, in this regard.

As Congressman RAHALL and other West Virginia leaders, including Congressman MOLLOHAN and Congresswoman CAPITO, often remind us, this Nation is indebted to our coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they do. Their contributions are a rich part of our Nation's history. Their labor makes our way of life possible.

But, last week, 29 families received a phone call that every coal miner's family fears; and as the communities of West Virginia grieved, the Nation grieved with them.

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Now, with this tragedy first in our minds, we must redouble our efforts to minimize the risks to our mine workers and to ensure that they can do their jobs without a threat to their well-being.

When this tragedy occurred, I called Mr. RAHALL, and his concerns were very personal about the families who were affected. I called the President of the United Mine Workers, Cecil Roberts, a visionary leader in our country, and his concerns were about the families.

But as we move away from that tragedy, our concern for the families must be reflected in our decisions here and the insistence that we have on upholding standards. We must, as I say, redouble our efforts to minimize the risk to those workers.

Today we acknowledge the brave efforts of their fellow coal miners who were part of the response team and other first responders who worked tirelessly in the hope of rescue and bravely on behalf of recovery.

Mr. Speaker, many of the families who lost miners this week have spoken of their deep faith and how that has comforted them.

On this House floor this morning, we were led in prayer by Bishop Simms from West Virginia, Mr. RAHALL's constituent, and he shared with us how faith can see us all through, especially these families. On this House floor today we join them knowing that 29 brave souls are now in a better place.

Again, our condolences to every member of those families. To the communities, as Mr. Cecil Roberts said to us, we are all one family here in the mining community. I know Mr. RAHALL expressed that sentiment to me as well.

Well, at a time like this it's important for the families of West Virginia and the coal mining community to know that, as a Nation, we are one family with them as well. I hope it is a comfort to them that so many people in our country mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

I urge support for this resolution which honors the 29 men who perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine. These men were simply doing their job, extracting the coal that powers the Nation.

We recognize the Red Cross workers, volunteers and others in this close-knit community who banded together in a time of tragedy. We commend the rescue teams who went in after their brothers in the hope of bringing them to safety and with a commitment to bringing them home.

And we express our condolences to the family members who lost those that they loved so dearly. It has been said today that West Virginians stand together in times of tragedy. Today we stand together with them.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution. I thank the gentlewoman for her presentation of this resolution, and for all of those who participated in the debate.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, it is with the deepest sadness that I offer my condolences to the families of the 29 brave mineworkers who perished on April 5, 2010. I have been holding these families in my thoughts and my prayers.

For those of us representing Appalachia, this news is particularly saddening. The history

of our region will forever be linked to the mining of coal, a connection for which I hold great pride. For generations, residents of my district have fed their families from work in these mines, as they will for generations to come.

The loss of a miner is the loss of a brother and a friend. This loss cuts deep into the soul of our Appalachian towns and communities.

The deaths of these miners must not be in vain—we must take lessons from this tragedy to create a better future for mineworkers everywhere. The mineworkers of Appalachia deserve to go to work each day with peace of mind that their workplace is safe. Events like those that transpired earlier this month shake that trust, and we must determine the cause of the event if we are to properly ensure their future safety and to ensure the strength of the coal mining industry.

While we are truly blessed to live in a country bestowed with great resources, we hold a responsibility to protect those who risk life and limb to harvest them in the name of a greater, stronger nation. The strength of our Nation is a reflection of how we treat these soldiers of the coal mines, and we all must work to ensure their safety.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1236.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONGRATULATING DUKE UNIVERSITY ON WINNING THE NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1242) congratulating the Duke University men's basketball team for winning the 2010 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball National Championship.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1242

Whereas on April 5, 2010, the Duke University Blue Devils defeated the Butler University Bulldogs by a score of 61–59 in the finals of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (hereinafter referred to as the "NCAA") Division I Men's Basketball Tournament in Indianapolis, Indiana;

Whereas the Blue Devils now hold 4 national men's basketball titles, winning NCAA championships in 1991, 1992, 2001, and 2010;

Whereas Blue Devils head coach Mike Krzyzewski improved his record to 868–279, won his 77th NCAA tournament game, the

most in NCAA history, and won his fourth national championship, making him tied with Adolph Rupp for second most championships in NCAA history;

Whereas Coach Krzyzewski and his coaching staff, including Assistant Coaches Chris Collins, Steve Wojciechowski, and Nate James, as well as each manager, trainer, and staff member, deserve praise and credit for helping the Blue Devils reach the pinnacle of college basketball;

Whereas the Blue Devil team roster included seniors Jordan Davidson, Jon Scheyer, Lance Thomas, and Brian Zoubek, juniors Steve Johnson, Casey Peters, Kyle Singler, and Nolan Smith, sophomores Seth Curry and Miles Plumlee, and freshmen Andre Dawkins, Ryan Kelly, Mason Plumlee, and Todd Zafirovski;

Whereas junior Kyle Singler was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four, scoring 19 points and collecting 9 rebounds while playing all 40 minutes in the championship game;

Whereas Blue Devils Jon Scheyer, Kyle Singler, and Nolan Smith were each named to the all-tournament team;

Whereas during the 2009–2010 season, the Duke Blue Devils finished with a record of 35–5, tied for the most wins, and scored a total of 3079 points;

Whereas the Blue Devils went undefeated on their home court in Cameron Indoor Stadium for the 2009–2010 regular season;

Whereas the Duke Blue Devils won the 2010 Atlantic Coast Conference (hereinafter referred to as the "ACC") Tournament, their record 18 such tournament championship, and won a share of the ACC regular-season championship with a conference record of 13–3;

Whereas the Duke Blue Devils have played in 15 Final Fours and have played in at least one Final Four in 6 consecutive decades;

Whereas the Blue Devils have amassed a record overall winning percentage of 75.8 percent in the NCAA tournament;

Whereas the Blue Devil players, coaches, and staff are outstanding representatives of Duke University, a top ten university that is recognized annually as a national leader in academics and research;

Whereas in addition to their skill on the court, the Duke men's basketball team upholds a high standard of academic excellence, achieving an overall graduation success rate of 92 percent;

Whereas the Duke men's basketball program has had 31 ACC All-Academic basketball teams over the last 14 years, has had at least one player on the ACC All-Academic basketball team for a record 16 straight years, has received 5 Academic All-America selections over the past 12 years, and has had at least one team member on the ACC All-Academic basketball team in 23 of the last 26 years for a total of 46 selections;

Whereas the Blue Devils showed tremendous dedication to their team, appreciation to their fans, sportsmanship toward their opponents, and respect for the game of basketball throughout the 2009–2010 season;

Whereas Duke students, faculty, staff, alumni, and all fans of the Blue Devils are to be congratulated for their sportsmanship, dedication, and support of their team; and

Whereas the Blue Devils' 2010 NCAA championship further solidifies the tradition of basketball excellence that exists in the State of North Carolina, whose universities have won 4 of the last 10 NCAA championships: Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the 2010 national champions, the Duke University Blue Devils, for their win in the 2010 National Collegiate

Athletic Association Division I Men's Basketball Tournament;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, students, and support staff who were instrumental in the Blue Devils' victory;

(3) invites the Duke University men's basketball team to the United States Capitol Building to be honored; and

(4) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make available enrolled copies of this resolution to Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead, Athletic Director Kevin White, and Head Coach Mike Krzyzewski for appropriate display.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPPS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS ROGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous materials on H. Res. 1242 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Duke University men's basketball team for winning the 2010 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball National Championship.

When the final buzzer sounded in the 2010 Men's Basketball NCAA Championship game, two exceptional college basketball programs' seasons came to an end. Both the Duke University Blue Devils and the Butler University Bulldogs played with exceptional talent and dedication. The ball pressure and stifling defenses from both teams led to a low-scoring, yet entertaining, game. The game included five ties, 15 lead changes, and two potentially game-winning shots. In the end, Duke seized their fourth NCAA Men's Basketball Championship, cementing its legacy in college basketball history.

With a 61–59 victory Monday night at Lucas Oil Stadium, the Duke University Blue Devils proved that they are still one of the country's most elite college basketball programs. The Blue Devils finished their regular 2009–2010 season strongly, with a 35–5 record, followed by winning the 2010 Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament. In addition, they were cochampions of the ACC with a record of 13–3, while earning an NCAA tournament number 1 seed. In a tournament where the top seeds were falling and upsets were ample, the Blue Devils consistently dominated their opponents.

This Blue Devils men's basketball season marked Coach Mike Krzyzewski's 30th season at Duke and his fourth NCAA Men's Basketball Championship. Better known as Coach K, Coach K has led Duke to the Final Four 11 times during his time with the