fencing—all of which elevate this beautiful memorial to its rightful status a ''The Arlington of the West.'' Every Memorial Day, the Veterans Park Conservancy works with scout troops to place American flags on each of the 85,000 veterans' graves, creating fields of inspirational red, white and blue.

I also want to commend Veterans Park Conservancy for their effort to pass legislation to name the chapel at the National Cemetery the ''Bob Hope Veterans Chapel.'' I am also pleased to have had the opportunity to work with the group along with the gentleman from California, Mr. Waxman, in creating a lasting honor to our country's most beloved honorary ''veteran.''

For all these reasons, it is my pleasure to pay tribute to the many good works of the Veterans Park Conservancy and to wish them many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, due to prior commitments in my home state of Michigan, I was unable to cast votes yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted:

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 174, H.R. 3833;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 175, H.R. 1877;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 176, H.R. 3375;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 177, H.R. 4626;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 178, H. Con. Res. 405;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 179, Lantos amendment to H.R. 3994;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 180, Jackson-Lee amendment to H.R. 3994;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 181, Waters amendment to H.R. 3994;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 182, H.R. 3994;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 183, H.R. 4514;

''Yes'' on rollcall No. 184, H.R. 4015; and

''Yes'' on rollcall No. No. 185, H.R. 4085.

A TRIBUTE TO THE NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, it is a testament to the courage, strength, and honor of Americans that of the many reactions to the events of September 11, only few were expressions of suspicion and hostility against innocent residents of our nation. However, any reaction reflecting suspicion and hostility, any violence against those targeted because of their religion, country of origin, skin color, language, or dress is shameful, and we all must work diligently to prevent them.

I am proud to recognize the Neighbor to Neighbor program in my district. Volunteers organized this program to protect the safety and dignity of all who live in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural area of the Central Coast of California.

Neighbor to Neighbor acts as a clearinghouse to pair community members who need help with those who need to help. Volunteers assist neighbors with shopping, running errands, short and long distance travel; they provide shelter, translation, safe companionship, vandalism cleanup, and other needed services. Assistance is free, confidential, and available all hours of the day and night. Collect calls are accepted. All nationalities are welcomed; those who request help need not speak English.

Neighbor to Neighbor also recruits speakers for local schools and community groups to foster discussion, provide education, and attempt to dispel ignorance and fear.

Neighbor to Neighbor asks that we prove to the world, to our children, and to ourselves that we refuse to succumb to hate, ignorance, and that we do not ignore the needs of our neighbors. The ultimate goal of the Neighbor to Neighbor program is the discovery that its existence is no longer needed, that our neighbors are living peacefully with each other. I look forward to this day.

HOLD FEDERAL CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE TO WORKPLACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article by Ken Silverstein appearing in the May/June issue of Mother Jones magazine. The article reports that the Federal Government continues to let billions of dollars worth of contracts to dozens of companies that have been repeatedly cited for serious violations of workplace safety and environmental laws.

Over a six months investigation, Mother Jones identified the 200 corporations that did the most business with government between 1995 and 2000. The magazine then matched that list against two other federal databases identifying companies prosecuted by the Justice Department for environmental violations and companies cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for conditions posing a serious risk of injury or death to workers.

Among the article's findings: forty-six of the 200 largest government contractors were prosecuted by the Justice Department and ordered to pay cleanup costs for dumping hazardous waste and for other environmental violations; fifty-five of the 200 largest contractors were cited for 1,375 violations of workplace safety laws; and thirty-four contractors were penalized for violating both environmental and workplace safety laws. Those thirty-four firms faced total EPA penalties of $12.6 million and OSHA fines of $5.9 million, but received $229 billion in federal contracts over the same period.

Mr. Silverstein documents the following cases in his compelling article: ''In 1997, TRW settles criminal charges growing out of violations of workplace safety laws. The same company is later found to have intentionally dumped chemical waste from the same plant in three states. As a consequence, the company pays a record $24 million in civil and criminal penalties. However, even that penalty is pittance compared to the more than $10 billion in taxpayer money that the company received between 1995 and 2000.''

''In 2000, Northrup Grumman pays nearly $6.7 million to settle two separate cases involving allegations that the company cheated the government by inflating the costs of parts and materials for warplanes. In 1995, General Dynamics pays nearly $2 million to resolve allegations that it falsified employee time cards. Yet between 1995 and 2000 those two companies received a total $38 billion worth of federal contracts.''

''Between 1990 and 1996, nine workers died at the Avondale shipyard, a death rate of three times that of other Navy shipyards. In 1999, OSHA documents hundreds of health and safety violations and fines the company $717,000. One month after the fines are levied, the government awards Avondale another $22 million contract to work on amphibious assault ships. The following year, three more workers are killed at Avondale, one of whom dies as a result of a repeat scaffolding violation.''

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that many of my colleagues would agree with me that federal procurement policy should not reward companies that flagrantly disregard tax law, environmental laws, labor laws, antitrust law, or civil rights laws. Federal procurement law already requires government contractors to have a ''satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.'' Unfortunately, when President Bush revoked the contractor responsibility rule, he rendered that requirement virtually unenforceable.

As this article shows, by repealing regulations intended to give meaning to the requirement that government contractors demonstrate integrity and business ethics, President Bush has implemented a policy that does not punish big corporations for disregarding the law, but effectively rewards them instead.

I commend the article below to the attention of my colleagues. I also would like to point out that the magazine compiled an extensive database of the violations which can be found on its web site. The article printed below is the version that appears on the magazine's web site. There is a longer version of the story that appears in the actual May-June version of the magazine and I would be happy to provide copies of the complete article to any of my colleagues who may wish to see it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

UNJUST REWARDS

(By Ken Silverstein)

In 1994, an explosion claimed the life of a worker at an Arizona air bag factory run by TRW, the huge Ohio-based manufacturing conglomerate. The company, which had a record of violating federal workplace safety laws at the plant, paid a $1.7 million penalty in order to settle criminal charges brought against it. Later, federal environmental officials discovered that TRW, following a policy described as ''clearly approved by management,'' was illegally dumping chemical waste at landfills in three states. Last year, the company paid a record $24 million in civil and criminal penalties related to the dumping case.

But even as TRW was repeatedly violating workplace and environmental laws, it was still earning billions under contracts awarded by the federal government. Between 1995 and 2000, the company received a total of $10.3 billion in federal business, placing TRW among the nation's 10 largest government contractors despite its record of jeopardizing the safety of its employees and polluting the nation's air and water.

That's not supposed to happen. Federal contracting officers are charged with reviewing the legal records of companies that do business with Washington and barring those that fail to demonstrate ''a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.'' But officials are given no guidelines to follow in making such decisions, and there is no centralized system they can consult to inform them of corporate wrongdoing. As a result, a government report concluded in 2000, those responsible for awarding federal contracts are ''extremely reluctant'' to rule out potential contractors, even when they are aware of violations. And in the rare instances when the rule is enforced, it is almost always against small companies with little clout in Washington.

Shortly before leaving office, President Clinton issued an executive order providing clear guidelines for deciding whether firms should be considered for a share of the roughly $200 billion in federal contracts awarded each year. Clinton's ''contractor responsibility rule'' specified that federal officials should weigh ''evidence of repeated, pervasive, or significant violations of the law.'' Officials were told to consider whether a company has cheated on prior contracts or violated laws involving the environment, workplace safety, labor rights, consumer protection, or antitrust activities.

The order was never implemented. In one of his first acts as president, after only 11 days in office, George W. Bush put the rule on hold, saying the issue needed further study. With big business suing to block the new guidelines, Bush quietly revoked the rule 11 months later.

Some 80,000 contractors do at least $25,000 in business with the federal government each year, and the great majority comply with the law. But a six-month investigation by Mother Jones of the nation's 200 largest government contractors found that Washington continues to award lucrative contracts to dozens of companies that have been repeatedly cited for serious violations of workplace and environmental laws. The government's own database of contractors was matched with lists of the worst violations documented by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) between 1995 and 2000. Among the findings:

Forty-six of the biggest contractors were prosecuted by the Justice Department and ordered to pay cleanup costs after they refused to take responsibility for environmental violations, including the illegal dumping of hazardous waste. General Electric—which received nearly $9.8 billion from the government, making it the nation's 10th-largest contractor—topped the EPA list with 27 cases of pollution violations for which it was held solely or jointly liable.

Fifty-five of the top 200 contractors were cited for a total of 1,375 violations of workplace safety laws that posed a risk of death or serious physical harm to workers. Ford Motor Company, which between 1995 and 2000 ranked 177th among contractors with $442 million in federal business, led the OSHA list with 292 violations deemed ''serious'' by federal officials.

Thirty-four leading contractors were penalized for violating both environmental and workplace safety rules. The firms were hit with a total of $12.6 million in EPA penalties and $5.9 million in OSHA fines—costs more than covered by the $229 billion in federal contracts they were awarded during the same period.

Even contractors that commit the most obvious violations are never suspended or debarred. One federal study found that the government continues to award business to defense contractors that have committed fraud on prior contracts. General Dynamics Corp., the nation's fifth-largest contractor, paid the government nearly $2 million in 1995 to resolve charges that it falsified employee time cards, billing the Pentagon for thousands of hours that were never worked on a contract for testing F–16 fighters. Northrop Grumman, the nation's fourth-largest contractor, paid nearly $6.7 million in 2000 to settle two separate cases in which it was charged with inflating the costs of parts and materials for warplanes. Yet the two defense giants continue to receive federal contracts, collecting a combined total of $38 billion between 1995 and 2000.

''It is clear that, in many cases, the government continues to do business with contractors who violate laws, sometimes repeatedly,'' concludes a 2000 report by the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council, the agency that oversees federal contractors. Others put it more bluntly.

''Government should not do business with crooks,'' says Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), who has demanded that the Bush administration make public any meetings it had with corporate lobbyists during which the contractor responsibility rule was discussed. Bush's decision, Miller says, ''sends a message to contractors that the government doesn't care if you underpay your workers, or expose them to toxic hazards, or destroy the public lands—the government will do business with you anyway.''

The complete story on federal contractors is available in the May/June issue of Mother Jones magazine.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES WEATHER RESEARCH PROGRAM ACT OF 2002 (H.R. 4791)

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing a very important piece of legislation, the ''United States Weather Research Program Act of 2002.'' The human toll and dollar loss from severe weather events are staggering. More than 1,500 weather-related fatalities and $15.8 billion in weather-produced damage to property occurs annually.

The Weather Research Program, which is a partnership among academic and commercial communities and several government agencies—the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. Navy and many others. Led by NOAA, the program supports government and university-based research to improve severe weather forecasts and better utilization by emergency managers as well as the public.

The legislation authorizes $45 million over three years and clarifies the research focus on hurricanes and heavy precipitation events. The bill also incorporates the provisions of Congressman ETHERIDGE's legislation, H.R. 2846, that calls on the U.S. Weather Research Program to develop a new flood warning index that will give the public and emergency management officials more complete, clearer, and accurate information about the risks and dangers posed by expected floods.

I also note that my introduction of this legislation corresponds with President Bush's proclamation that this week is ''National Hurricane Awareness Week.'' With hurricane season quickly approaching, investment in the U.S. Weather Research Program will help provide better forecasts and warnings that will save lives and better prepare our Nation to handle severe weather events.

IN HONOR OF THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Girl Scouts of the USA as they celebrate their 90th Anniversary this year. Girl Scouting began on March 12, 1912, when founder Juliette Gordon Low assembled 18 girls from Savannah, Georgia, for a local Girl Scout meeting. She believed that all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually. Ninety years later, few can argue that those goals have not been met. Girl Scouting boosts over 3.8 million members, making it the largest organization for girls in the World.

I have long been in contact with Members of the Girl Scouts. I have been impressed by their poise as well as their plans for a sound future. The message of empowerment has been strongly resonated by the organization. For 90 years, the Girl Scouts organization has had a proven track record of empowering girls to become leaders, helping adults be positive role models and mentors for children, and helping to build solid communities. With the help and dedication of Congress, Girl Scouts is sure to continue this tradition for the next 90 years and beyond.

With time comes change. I have been impressed with the Girl Scouts' goal of reaching out to all girls, regardless of their socioeconomic background. It is my understanding that Girl Scout troops now meet in homeless shelters, migrant farm camps, and juvenile detention facilities. And through one of Girl Scout's signature initiatives, Girl Scouts Beyond Bars (GSBB)—girls meet in prisons where, in instances, their mothers may be incarcerated. It is these types of efforts that must continue to be praised.

I represent a rural area in North Carolina where teen pregnancy and high school drop out rates are higher than many areas of the State and Nation. Young people in my Congressional District and elsewhere need a message of empowerment and organizations that will provide them with a solid direction in their lives. I am proud that the Girl Scouts of America has a strong presence in my district. The Girl Scout Council of Coastal Carolina, Inc. was chartered by the Girl Scouts of the USA to develop and administer Girl Scouting to girls and adults in 25 eastern North Carolina counties. The Girl Scout Council of Coastal Carolina currently serves 6,500 girls and 2,700 adults in Eastern North Carolina.

Congratulations to the Girl Scouts for providing such a tremendous public service to our youth and to the country.