

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MIKE
OVERTURF

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep admiration that I stand before this body of Congress to recognize the determination of fifteen year-old Mike Overturf of Olathe, Colorado, who is recovering from a recent stroke. The fortitude he has shown in the face of hardship, and the spirited manner with which he lives his life, are an inspiration to us all.

Although having suffered a stroke just a few short months ago, Mike has remained active. He has been riding his dirt bike, playing drums, making plans to go fishing, and even completing a major project in school in order to catch up on his studies. Mike's teachers note his remarkable performance and the extraordinary attention he has devoted to his schoolwork.

Throughout his ordeal, Mike has been a positive influence in the lives of his friends, family, and in his community. He has supported the performances of his school's band, even following them to Grand Junction for the Colorado West Band Festival. Mike plans to play with the band this spring and not only knows how to play the drums, but also the trombone, trumpet, saxophone, guitar, clarinet and flute.

Mr. Speaker, Mike Overturf is an inspiration to us all. His determination to overcome adversity and his commitment to recovery says volumes about his character and desire to succeed. Mike, I join your friends, family and all of Olathe in wishing you a speedy recovery and success in all of your future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO CAPT. MITCHELL A.
SMITH

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of this nation's most dedicated citizens, Captain Mitchell A. Smith, of the Santa Rosa Sheriffs Office. This past Thursday, June 5, 2003, Mitch was taken from us. He tirelessly served Santa Rosa County for the past 25 years, leaving a lasting impact on the Northwest Florida Community that he came to know so well. We will forever miss Mitch, but his memory will never be forgotten.

Mitch began his adult life by dedicating himself to the United States Army. He chose to serve his country, defending the freedoms and liberties that we as Americans have come to hold so dear. It was this passion to serve and help others that would continuously be shown throughout his life.

In May of 1978, Mitch retired from the U.S. Army and came to the Santa Rosa Sheriffs Office. He began his career in law enforcement as a Deputy, but quickly showed his dedication and commitment to serving and protecting the people of Northwest Florida, resulting in his subsequent promotions to the ranks of Corporal, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. Just two weeks ago, Mitch received the honor

and recognition of his final promotion to the rank of Captain.

Just two months shy of retirement, Mitch served everyday to the best of his abilities. Over the course of his career he received numerous letters of commendation for his service to the citizens of Santa Rosa County. He was an officer respected by his peers, admired by his community, and loved by his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Capt. Mitchell A. Smith for their loss. Although his time with us was cut short, we will be forever grateful for the time that Mitch did have with us in Santa Rosa County. On this such occasion, we honor one of America's greatest citizens, Capt. Mitchell A. Smith, whose legacy will live on long beyond his passing.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, due to a death in the family, I was absent from the House on Wednesday, June 4 and Thursday, June 5. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: rollcall vote 236—yea, rollcall vote 237—yea, rollcall vote 238—yea, rollcall vote 239—yea, rollcall vote 240—nay, rollcall vote 241—nay, rollcall vote 24—yea, rollcall vote 243, H. Res. 256—yea, rollcall vote 244—yea, rollcall vote 245—yea, rollcall vote 246—yea, rollcall vote 247—yea, rollcall vote 248—yea.

In particular, I would like to specifically express my strong support for H.R. 760, the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. This has been a bill that I have supported for many years and I am glad that it has again seen passage in the House. For nearly a decade Congress has attempted to see this legislation become law, and I am pleased that my colleagues have yet again affirmed the message that partial birth abortion is wrong by passing this bill.

There has been overwhelming support for a ban on partial birth abortions. The partial birth abortion ban has been passed in various forms by the House eight times, including multiple veto overrides. Having been first considered during the 104th Congress, we have seen numerous state legislatures take action and vote to end partial birth abortions in their states.

I am pleased that we have acted strongly and unmistakably by voting once again to preserve life and ban the heinous practice of partial birth abortions. The administration has stated their support of this bill and is willing to take positive action and sign this ban into law.

I understand that the issue of abortion is difficult for many. Well-intentioned people on both sides of this debate will continue to disagree. How long, though, can our society continue to justify its denial of the right to life to the defenseless unborn? The value of life has been consistently cheapened.

Partial birth abortion is a graphic example of the worst of abortion. Congress has taken a stand to uphold the value of life, especially in these instances in which life is so blatantly being destroyed. I am pleased that many have

acted in support of this legislation. My colleagues have continued to support of human life and have voted in favor of a ban on partial birth abortions. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on this important bill.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO VERNA BARR

SPEECH OF

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to recognize the many years of public service that Verna Barr of Austin, Colorado has given to the citizens of my state. I would like to take this time to pay tribute to Verna's selfless contributions to the well being of so many children, seniors, and others who have had the pleasure of her company and her kindness.

Verna started her life of volunteer service at the age of eight, helping to print and fold her church's bulletin. Verna's mother, Florence Petersen, instilled in Verna a philosophy of life in which helping others has central importance. Over the years, Verna has volunteered her services to a number of worthy causes and projects, including preserving the history of Surface Creek Valley and Pioneer Town through disseminating information and indexing it for future generations. Verna has also spent a great deal of time and effort assisting the American Cancer Society, as well as the Colorado Cancer Society, from whom she has twice received official recognition for her assistance with Relay for Life. Even in her professional life, Verna's work continues the spirit of service. For seventeen and a half years Verna has worked with seniors at Horizon Health Care and Retirement Community, helping to enrich the lives of many with books, plays, music, and creative activities. Throughout this time, Verna's example has inspired scores of others to volunteer as well. Colorado is truly thankful.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great admiration that I recognize Verna Barr for her innumerable contributions to the quality of life for the citizens of Colorado. I am proud to represent Verna in this body of Congress, and wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude for her life of public service. Colorado is now a more beautiful place. Good luck, Verna, and best wishes on all of your future endeavors.

TRIP REPORT ON VISIT TO IRAQ

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from spending two days in southern Iraq. I was there Sunday, May 25, and Monday, May 26. I also spent a day, Tuesday, May 27, in Kuwait, where I met with Kuwaiti government officials, members of the U.S. military, State Department officials and staff from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Today I want to share with our colleagues some details of my trip. On another day, I will

share a number of recommendations concerning the reconstruction of Iraq.

Let me begin by praising the efforts of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and members of the Coast Guard who served—or are continuing to serve—in Operation Iraqi Freedom. They are the best of the best. I cannot emphasize enough how good a job they have done and continue to do. They and their families all have made tremendous sacrifices.

I was particularly impressed with the soldiers and Marines I talked with who are reservists called to active duty. Many left good jobs and/or school to serve. Their professionalism and attitude were exceptional.

I also want to express my heartfelt sympathy to all the families who lost loved ones during the war. We will never forget—and will always be grateful for—their service to the cause of freedom.

All the soldiers and Marines I met in Iraq are doing an incredible job under extremely difficult conditions. The heat in Iraq and Kuwait is oppressive and will only get worse as summer approaches. It was over 100 degrees both days I was in Iraq. I was told that the temperature can sometimes reach 140 degrees in July and August. The living conditions for most of the soldiers that I saw were primitive.

REASON FOR TRIP

I believed it was important to go to Iraq to get a first-hand look at the reconstruction efforts that are under way and to assess the humanitarian assistance that is being provided. I crossed over the border into Iraq from Kuwait. I visited the towns of Nasiriyah, Al Kut and Al Amarah.

I spent the night in Nasiriyah—where some of the heaviest fighting during the war took place—then traveled northeast to Al Kut on Monday morning. From there I headed south to Al Amarah then passed through the outskirts of Basra on the way back to the Iraq-Kuwait border.

During the trip I talked with a number of Iraqis, visited two hospitals, including the one from which Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch was rescued, met with military officials, and spent a considerable amount of time with representatives from several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Iraq.

I saw what was left of one of Saddam Hussein's infamous torture chambers, heard ghastly stories about the brutality of Saddam's regime and was told of mass graves. I saw paintings, posters and statues of Saddam defaced or destroyed. His name was scratched off or punched out from signs on buildings bearing his name. I saw "No to Saddam Yes for Bush" spray painted in green letters on the side of a building just after crossing over the border from Kuwait.

I saw very sick children, many of whom are probably now dead, and was amazed by the bravery of a young boy I saw in the emergency room of a hospital. He had been brought in just minutes before I arrived. He had been playing outdoors and came in contact with either a land mine or unexploded ordnance. His face was severely burned and a piece of shrapnel was deeply embedded in his right eye. Blood was streaming down his face onto his chest. He looked to be about 10-years-old. He never cried.

I saw the results of precision-guided bombing. It is amazing. In Nasiriyah, I was taken by what was left of the former home of a Baath

Party leader. The house was sandwiched between several other homes. While it was reduced to rubble, none of the surrounding houses appeared to sustain any damage.

I was told that Radio Sawa, a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week Arabic-language network whose programming originates from the United States and is broadcast in the region, is very popular. The network plays a mix of the best Western and Arabic pop music and has balanced up-to-the-minute news and analysis. It also broadcasts features on a variety of political and social issues and does in-depth reports on the development of freedom and democracy in the Middle East.

Some were skeptical of the success of the broadcasts. But I was told by locals that since Radio Sawa went on the air in spring 2002, few listen to Arabic radio stations anymore.

TOUGH CONDITIONS

Life in southern Iraq is difficult. Poverty is widespread. Buildings are dilapidated. Trash and rubble litter the streets. Many of the trees have been cut down and used for firewood because propane was so scarce under Saddam's rule. The water is putrid.

Saddam Hussein did everything in his power over the last decade to make life in towns like Nasiriyah as miserable as possible because of the uprisings following the first Gulf war. It was their punishment for opposing his iron-fisted rule. Thousands of men who defied Saddam literally disappeared and have never been heard from since; they are presumed dead.

The conditions in the two hospitals I visited—while dramatically improved over the last month—are pitiful. At what was once the Saddam General Hospital in Nasiriyah—now just called the General Hospital—there are no screens on the doors. As a consequence, any time a door is opened, bugs—particularly flies—come streaming in. Flies were swarming over two of the empty beds in the emergency room.

There is no monitoring equipment for the beds in the emergency room. In fact, I saw very little monitoring equipment anywhere in the hospital. Imagine walking into your local hospital and not seeing a machine to monitor your pulse or take your blood pressure. Medicine also is in short supply. It was depressing.

Security in Iraq remains a real concern, not only for coalition forces but for the general public. Lives continue to be lost. Whether I was talking to military officials, NGOs or Iraqis, security was the first issue they always addressed. Looting is still a problem in some parts of the country and I heard several stories about robberies and carjackings. I was told MPs in Nasiriyah successfully stopped a car jacking the Sunday night I was there.

Many Iraqis are afraid to go back to work for fear their home may be looted or that they may be robbed. Several people told me that hearing random gun fire after sundown has become commonplace.

The NGOs that I talked with said that it was not unusual for their vehicles to be pelted with rocks in some parts of the country. Civilian convoys are threatened. No one travels after sunset.

One reason for the lawlessness is that before the war started, Saddam Hussein opened all the prisons, releasing both political prisoners and hardened criminals. Murderers. Rapists. Robbers. Getting these criminals back behind bars is critical.

BLUEPRINT FOR IRAQ

In order for the United States to win the peace in Iraq it is imperative that we restore law and order. We need to redouble our efforts to ensure that Iraq is safe.

In "Play to Win," the final report of the bipartisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, security is one of the four "pillars" of post-conflict reconstruction. The other three are: justice and reconciliation; economic and social well being, and governance and participation.

This comprehensive report published in January 2003 by the Association of the United States Army and the Center for Strategic and International Studies should serve as the blueprint for the reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Members of the commission include retired military officers, representatives from the NGO community and international aid organizations, former high-ranking executive branch officials, and Members of Congress with expertise in foreign affairs.

Among those on the commission are: Dr. John Hamre, former deputy secretary of defense; Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; Gen. Gordon Sullivan, former chief of staff of the U.S. Army; Senator PAT ROBERTS, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rep. DOUG BEREUTER, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy and National Security. (I, too, was a member of the commission, although I did not have a leading role.)

The report makes 17 recommendations "on what the United States will have to do to enable itself to help countries successfully rebuild themselves following conflict."

I have asked the commission to provide me with 535 copies of the report so I can share it with my colleagues. It also can be found on the Internet at <http://www.pcrproject.org>

Below is an excerpt from the report on the issue of security:

"Security is the sine qua non of post-conflict reconstruction. Though every case is different, there is one constant—if security needs are not met, both the peace in the given country and the intervention needed to promote it are doomed to fail. Unless comprehensive security needs are addressed up front, spoilers will find the weak areas and retain leverage to affect the political outcomes, vitiating the peace. While peace is essential, it never will be one hundred percent guaranteed and the perfect must not become the enemy of the good. In order to achieve acceptable levels of security, 'coalitions of the willing' and the UN peacekeeping operations need coherent military leadership and core troops from a lead nation that provide the backbone of the operation. The international community must also enhance its ability to deploy civilian police to address temporary needs. In addition, efforts to design and reconstruct local security institutions, including both military and police, must begin early in the process."

I believe the Bush Administration would be well served to have several members of the commission visit Iraq to measure how the reconstruction efforts match the recommendations in the report. Dr. Hamre and Gen. Sullivan, who served as the co-chairmen of the commission, could be charged with selecting which members should go. There should be no objection to this recommendation. Each of the commission members has a distinguished

and extensive background. Their insight and observations could prove to be invaluable.

In addition to members of the Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction visiting Iraq, members of Congress should visit as well. In my opinion, it would make sense for the chairman and ranking member—or their designees—of the following committees to travel to Iraq:

House and Senate Armed Services committees;

House International Relations Committee;

Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and

House and Senate Appropriations committees.

Members should spend time in all parts of Iraq. Obviously safety and security are issues that must be considered, but the trips could be made in small groups without publicity. The only way to get a feel for what is happening is by visiting the towns and cities and talking to the people living there.

In addition to meeting with military commanders, these members or their designees should meet with Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III, the civilian administrator of Iraq, and other officials from the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA)—now called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)—USAID officials, and representatives from the NGO community and other international aid organizations. Meetings with Iraqi citizens also should be set up.

Congress needs to be involved in-and kept up-to-date on-the reconstruction of Iraq. Clearly, there is a great deal at stake for the United States in Iraq. The reconstruction effort is going to be long and arduous. No one is naive enough to believe it is going to happen overnight. Nor is anyone naive enough to think that it is not going to come without problems and challenges.

Yet, if Congress is not involved, the Bush Administration is going to be left without a partner in rebuilding Iraq. The Congress is the Bush Administration's greatest ally. There should be nothing to hide. And after my trip, I believe there is great deal to tell-much of it positive.

We must, however, be realistic. We have a long, long way to go in the reconstruction of Iraq. We have won the war, and we must be careful not to lose the peace. Failure cannot be an option. A well developed plan for reconstruction is imperative and congressional involvement will help the Bush Administration from steering off course as it works to rebuild Iraq.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
TAXPAYER ABUSE PREVENTION
RESOLUTION OF 2003

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker today I am introducing the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Resolution of 2003, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that private sector debt collection agencies should not be paid on a commission basis or as a percent of the amount of federal taxes they collect.

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed paying private debt collectors a 25 percent

commission to collect unpaid tax debt. That proposal will jeopardize the rights and privacy of American taxpayers. The following organizations oppose the IRS proposal and have expressed their strong support for this important consumer protection legislation I am introducing today: Citizens for Tax Justice, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, National Consumer Law Center, National Consumers League.

Two pilot projects were authorized by Congress to test private collection of tax debt for 1996 and 1997. The 1996 pilot was such a failure that the 1997 project was cancelled. Contractors violated the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) and did not protect the security of personal taxpayer information. An IRS Internal Audit Report found that contractors made hundreds of calls to taxpayers during times prohibited by the FDCPA, and that calls were even placed as early as 4:19 a.m.

The Administration's proposal to privatize tax collection services flies in the face of Section 1204 of the IRS Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, which specifically prevents IRS employees from being evaluated on the basis of the amount of taxes they collect in order to eliminate incentives to use overly aggressive tax collection techniques. Despite concerns about aggressive collection techniques, the Administration now wants to pay private debt collectors \$3.25 billion in commissions to collect taxes that IRS employees could collect for roughly one-tenth of that amount.

Paying private debt collectors on a commission basis will be costly and will threaten the rights and privacy of the American taxpayers. We must ensure, as this resolution seeks to do, that federal tax collection functions will not be handed over to private sector bounty hunters. Our constituents deserve that assurance.

Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers need to know that their government works for them, not against them. I urge this Congress to pass the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Resolution of 2003.

HONORING PAUL LINN, SR., EARL CANTOR, SARAH CRISPIN, DON CANTOR, ANNA MAE PORTER, AND JAMES DAUGHERTY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to have the chance to come before this body with a story of great hope and inspiration. I am proud to stand before this body today to update you on the remarkable story of a family that I first brought to your attention back in October. Paul Linn Sr., Earl Cantor, Sarah Crispin, Don Cantor, Anna Mae Porter, and James Daugherty have traveled great distances and overcome many obstacles to reunite for the first time in 67 years. On Saturday, these fine individuals will meet face-to-face, reuniting as a family. Though they were separated from a young age, the dedication and love that they have shown in searching each other out is truly inspirational. I pay tribute to them again today for the dedication and resilience that has brought them together for this weekend of celebration.

Eight months ago, I relayed to you the remarkable story of this family. It is a story of a

family whose beginning was filled with pain, loss, and confusion. A story about a family suffering the ills of abandonment and tragedy. However, today I share with you a new story of a family reunited through the strength and persistence of the bonds of blood. What began as a random search for a replacement birth certificate ended in the reunification of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers and countless grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to once again recognize Paul, Earl, Sarah, Don, Anna, and James as they celebrate family and enjoy the rewards of faith and persistence. As I said eight months ago before this body, their story is one of great satisfaction and inspiration. I wish them all the best as an old family is reunited in Colorado.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for legislative business last week from June 2, 2003 through June 5, 2003 due to the birth of my son, Charles Wilson Ryan on Friday, May 30, 2003. As a result, I missed roll-call votes 227 through 248.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the following rollcall votes:

227, H. Res. 159, Expressing the Profound Sorrow on the Occasion of the Death of Irma Rangel;

228, H. Res. 195, Congratulating Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs for hitting 500 Major League Home Runs;

229, H.R. 1465, Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service in Iron Station, North Carolina as the "General Charles Gabriel Post Office";

230, S. 222, the Zuni Indian Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act;

231, S. 273, the Grand Teton National Park Land Exchange Act;

234, H.J. Res. 4, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Authorizing the Congress to Prohibit the Physical Desecration of the Flag of the United States;

235, H. Res. 231, Supporting the Goals of Peace Officers Memorial Day;

236, H. Res. 257, Providing for Consideration of H.R. 760, The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act;

237, H. Con. Res. 177, Recognizing and commending the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the allies of the United States and their armed forces, who participate in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and the dedication of military families and countless others for their support;

238, H. Res. 201, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that our Nation's businesses and business owners should be commended for their support of our troops and their families as they serve our country in many ways, especially in these days of increased engagement of our military around the world;

239, H.R. 1954, Armed Forces Naturalization Act;

242, H.R. 760, The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act;