

Rhoden, to recognize his service to our Nation and the Navy as he leaves the Pentagon to pursue his first love, commanding a Naval ship.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House and on the Appropriations Committee, I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his distinguished and dedicated service.

It was through his assignment with the Navy's Appropriations Liaison office that I first came to know Commander Rhoden. In this capacity, he served as an invaluable liaison for the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations to me, the members of my committee, and our staff.

In addition to providing timely and accurate information on budget matters, Commander Rhoden also has escorted me and other Members of Congress on several occasions as we traveled both home and abroad to review military operations and confirm the health and welfare of our troops. He provided special insight on matters of national security, naval shipbuilding, and the direct relationship between the two. His candor, intelligence, and steadfast devotion to duty, was always very much appreciated and he was an invaluable asset to me during deliberations regarding funding programs for our armed forces. His perspective on the needs of the Nation with respect to our sea services provided me with the clarity and detail I needed to make important decisions regarding appropriations for the Department of Defense.

In addition to the respect I have for the work Commander Rhoden did in representing the Navy, I also thank him for the calm demeanor and sense of humor he shared with us all. Chris has become a mentor and friend to me and to my family, and for that I will always be grateful. It is this same sense of purpose and professionalism that I am confident will make Commander Rhoden a tremendous role model for those who serve under his command.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Commander Rhoden for his distinguished service to our nation. My wife Beverly and I have the highest respect for those who serve in uniform, and I appreciate and honor all the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in defense of freedom. Recalling our national anthem, to our veterans and Armed Forces, I say, we would not be "the land of the free" were we not also the "home of the brave."

Mr. Speaker, My colleagues and I want to express our thanks and appreciation for the special contribution Commander Rhoden has made to the United States Navy. We wish him and his family continued success and the traditional naval wish of "Fair winds and Following seas" as he closes out his service to the Congress and continues toward the pinnacle of Naval service, command at sea of a United States warship.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. Holt. Mr. Speaker, I want to explain why I voted against the Rapid Acquisition Authority for Combat Emergencies Bill (H.R. 4323), when it was added to the suspension calendar for a vote earlier this week.

During the past year, we have seen repeated examples of waste, fraud, and abuse in contracts awarded by the U.S. Defense Department to the Halliburton Corporation and other military contractors that have poorly served our troops and the American taxpayers. Not only do I lack confidence that such procurement sloth has stopped, those of us in Congress who have called for in-depth congressional investigations have been stonewalled.

In light of this dismal track record, Congress should not open the door even wider and provide even greater authority for the Pentagon to award lucrative contracts to contractors without competition and with even less scrutiny and congressional oversight. Nevertheless, H.R. 4323 would waive existing safeguards against war profiteering and other contract abuses.

Congress is already moving to authorize and appropriate up to \$1.2 billion to provide additional equipment for our troops in every instance where critical shortages have been identified. That is one of the important reasons why I voted in favor of the FY 2005 Defense Authorization Bill, when the House passed it last month.

Finally, the supporters of this bill claim it is needed to cut through existing, cumbersome Pentagon acquisition regulations to respond to urgent needs of our troops in combat emergencies. But there is mounting evidence to the contrary. I believe the equipment shortages among some of our troops in Iraq during the past year resulted from poor pre-war planning and serious miscalculations in the Pentagon by the architects of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Quite simply, U.S. Army war planners didn't issue enough purchase orders, before the invasion of Iraq was launched, to ensure that all of our troops on the ground in Iraq had what they needed during the conventional combat phase of this conflict. Those mistakes and the equipment shortages they caused became even more costly since President Bush announced the end of combat in Iraq on May 1, 2003, and the nature of the military threat changed and the armed insurgency expanded. This Congress should act to address those mistakes, not use them as an opportunity to hand out more no-bid contracts.

I believe H.R. 4323 could actually make a bad situation worse.

IN HONOR OF EDWARD LICHT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Mr. Edward Licht, Bailiff for the Garfield Heights Municipal Court, as he is being honored as the Regional Court Officer of the Year by the Ohio Bailiff and Court Officers Association.

A life-long resident of Cuyahoga County, Mr. Licht served as a Special Agent with the U.S. Treasury Department for twenty-five years. During his tenure as Special Agent, Mr. Licht assisted in the investigation, apprehension and conviction of criminals involved in major gambling, illegal drug and money laundering operations. For his invaluable service, Mr. Licht was honored with several awards, includ-

ing two Special Achievement awards, One Superior Service award, and an Honorable Mention for Outstanding Community Service award. Since 1999, Mr. Licht has held the position of Baliff with the Garfield Heights Municipal Court. His unwavering integrity, outstanding communication abilities and strong work ethic continues to uplift all facets of this regional court system.

Beyond his significant professional contributions, Mr. Licht continues to volunteer his time and talents within our community. He continues to be an active member of the Democratic Party within our community. A long-time member of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, Mr. Licht currently serves as Deputy Treasurer. He has also been very active in the Independence Democratic Party for many years, as a member and an officer. Moreover, Mr. Licht continues to make an impact upon the lives of many as a volunteer probation officer with the Bedford and Garfield Heights court systems. His positive outlook and kind nature, combined with his sense of compassion and wonderful sense of humor, continuously serves to uplift those around him.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Mr. Ed Licht, upon being selected as the Regional Court Officer of the Year. Mr. Licht's professional contribution to our federal and regional justice system—reflected by strong ethics and a high level of integrity, continues to be significant and invaluable. Moreover, Mr. Licht's concern for his community and commitment to the democratic process continues to instill strength and integrity throughout the Democratic Party, and serves to strengthen our entire community.

HONORING EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR KATHY PUTMAN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kathy Putman, an exemplary educator, who is retiring after forty years in the classroom at John F. Kennedy High School in Fremont, California. Immediately after graduating from San Jose State University, Kathy's career in education began at Kennedy High School.

She was among the first instructors when the new high school was opened in 1965. Teaching Government and Economics to high school seniors at Kennedy High School is the only job Kathy has ever had. She was only a couple of years older than her first students. Over the decades, she has taught many children of former students in her class.

For years Kennedy High School had a contest for "Most Popular Teacher." Kathy won so often the contest was discontinued. Each year her yearbook is filled with the penned thoughts of adoring students. Thousands of young Fremont students have passed through her classroom where the walls are covered with photographs and notes from former students. Assuming Kathy had 200-300 students a year, for 40 years, this adds up to between 8,000-12,000 students she has touched during her career.

I, along with former Congressman Don Edwards, California Attorney General Bill Lockyer