

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
WATSON FEED STORE

**HON. CHET EDWARDS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations to the historic Watson Feed Store in Mart, Texas on their recent Texas Historical Marker Dedication. After nearly a century of service to the Central Texas community, the Watson Feed Store has become a vital part of the social fabric of the Mart community and an inspiring example of the very best of Texas.

That the Watson Feed Store still stands today just as it was almost 100 years ago is truly remarkable and a reflection of the commitment and dedication of Murray Watson and family to preserve the history of this building for future generations. Watson's Feed Store is not only a historic reminder of the past, but an enduring symbol of the belief in community that Watson's Feed Store has come to represent.

Today, the Watson Feed Store is still a daily meeting place for many citizens of Mart, enjoying conversation and comfort in the building known as "home" to many, a living testament to the impact that Murray Watson and family continue to have on the Mart community.

I personally want to thank Murray Watson for his many years of friendship and the countless contributions he has made to the community of Mart and Central Texas. Murray Watson is a true Texas leader and there is no doubt that the state of Texas and the Nation would benefit greatly from more leaders like Murray in our communities.

REPORTS OF VOTING FRAUD AND  
IRREGULARITIES

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, like many of my constituents, I am very concerned about the widespread reports of voting irregularities surrounding the recent election.

Reports about voter intimidation, discrimination, fraud, partisan election officials, misplaced ballots, discarded provisional ballots, malfunctioning electronic voting machines, delays in mailing absentee ballots, and countless other suspicious or illegal activities, all raise potential doubts about the legitimacy of our system of elections.

And there is mounting credible evidence that indeed some potentially illegal and fraudulent activity did occur before, during, and after the election.

That is why I have joined onto the efforts of my colleagues, Representatives JOHN CONYERS, JERROLD NADLER, and ROBERT WEXLER, in asking the GAO to investigate the 2004 election. And I am pleased to say that the GAO has agreed with the necessity and urgency of our request and is moving forward with a formal investigation.

As history has repeatedly shown, the right to vote and the right to have our votes counted are fundamental to our democratic system of government.

The moment that we become complacent and cease to insist on the fundamental value and equality of every individual vote is the moment that we begin to undermine the democratic ideal that this nation was founded upon.

That is why I believe it is so important to investigate any reports of voting irregularities.

And that is also why in July, I was one of the leaders in Congress to call for international monitors to observe our system of elections.

Although the administration refused to invite the United Nations to send an observation team, the 55 member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was invited.

While the OSCE was severely hamstrung in its ability to fully observe the election, according to their preliminary report, they did observe many of the same problems that were reported by the media.

I hope that with the GAO report, and the forthcoming report from the OSCE, we can take a hard look at our current election system and make a concerted bi-partisan effort to fix the problems that still clearly remain with us from the 2000 election.

As elected representatives of the people, we hold a sacred responsibility to every voter across this nation to ensure that their vote is counted and recorded properly.

We cannot, and we should not accept any flaws in our election process.

HONORING THE BIRTH OF HARPER  
NATALIE BRUCKENTHAL

**HON. STEVE ISRAEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the birth of Harper Natalie Bruckenthal. On Friday, November 19, 2004, this beautiful young girl was born to Patricia Bruckenthal, the widowed wife of Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal, an American hero lost to us in the conflict in Iraq. The birth of Harper Natalie Bruckenthal ensures that everything that was good about Nathan Bruckenthal will live on for another generation and many more to come. In that infant baby's eyes can be seen the images of her heroic father. It is tragic that she will grow up not knowing her father, but I hope that she will be able to find some comfort in his legacy and allow his spirit to guide her.

Today, I honor once more the sacrifice of Nathan Bruckenthal; I honor his wonderful wife Patricia, mother of his infant child; and, most importantly, I welcome his new daughter, Harper Natalie Bruckenthal, the child of an American hero, to our world. It is a better world because people like Nathan Bruckenthal answered the call to duty, made great sacrifices and met the greatest challenge posed to every generation: leaving behind a better world for their children.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the following votes on Satur-

day, November 20, 2004, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 538: I would have voted "nay" on waiving the House rule to allow for the same day consideration of legislation. Congress should follow the House rules and have adequate time to review legislation before casting its votes.

Rollcall vote 539: I would have voted "yea" on the resolution recognizing the Boy Scouts of America for the public service the organization performs for neighborhoods and communities across the United States.

Rollcall vote 540: I would have voted "nay" on the resolution waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the fiscal 2005 omnibus appropriations bill.

Rollcall vote 541: I would have voted "yea" on passage of the Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act. While this legislation only allows the Federal Aviation Administration to regulate technologies that "have resulted in a serious or fatal injury," this will be an interesting test for safety regulations of a very narrow group of consumers who are aware of the risks they face.

Rollcall vote 542: I would have voted "yea" on passage of the fiscal 2005 omnibus appropriations bill. The uproar caused by the last-minute insertion of a provision opening up tax returns to the Appropriations Committee is not a surprise based on the manner in which the bill came to the floor under a "Martial Law" rule. Congress deserves the opportunity to have the time to thoroughly review bills before being asked to vote on them. While I disapprove of the manner in which the omnibus bill was brought to the floor, funding for the 15 governmental agencies receiving funding from this bill are indispensable to my district and the country.

TRIBUTE TO LANCE CORPORAL  
DIMITRIOS GAVRIEL

**HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fallen hero, LCpl Dimitrios Gavriel, of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Lance Corporal Gavriel was killed in action during the conflict in Fallujah, Iraq, on November 19, 2004, only days after voluntarily returning to the battlefield from a shrapnel wound. "Dimmy," as he was known to those close to him, is survived by his mother, Penelope; his father, Chris; and his sister, Christina.

Dimmy's family describes him as a deep thinker with big dreams. A quote from his diary says it all: "I have heard that Great Men often kept journals—I'd like to be great."

After losing two friends in the September 11th terrorist attacks, Dimmy knew he wanted to make a difference in the world by joining the Marine Corps. When the service turned him down because of lingering injuries from his days as a high school wrestling champion, he wrote a letter to his local recruiting office pleading for them to reconsider. He would go on to turn down a lucrative career on Wall Street for the chance to serve our country as a Marine.

Mr. Speaker, there is perhaps no better way to pay our respects to Dimmy Gavriel than to