

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY TAX REDUCTION ACT AND THE SENIOR CITIZENS' TAX ELIMINATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce two pieces of legislation to reduce taxes on senior citizens. The first bill, the Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act, repeals the 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. Repealing this increase on Social Security benefits is a good first step toward reducing the burden imposed by the federal government on senior citizens. However, imposing any tax on Social Security benefits is unfair and illogical. This is why I am also introducing the Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act, which repeals all taxes on Social Security benefits.

Since Social Security benefits are financed with tax dollars, taxing these benefits is yet another example of double taxation. Furthermore, "taxing" benefits paid by the government is merely an accounting trick, a shell game which allows Members of Congress to reduce benefits by subterfuge. This allows Congress to continue using the Social Security trust fund as a means of financing other government programs, and masks the true size of the federal deficit.

Instead of imposing ridiculous taxes on senior citizens, Congress should ensure the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by ending the practice of using trust fund monies for other programs. This is why I am also introducing the Social Security Preservation Act, which ensures that all money in the Social Security trust fund is spent solely on Social Security. At a time when Congress' inability to control spending is once again threatening the Social Security trust fund, the need for this legislation has never been greater. When the government taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to help free senior citizens from oppressive taxation by supporting my Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act and my Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act. I also urge my colleagues to ensure that moneys from the Social Security trust fund are used solely for Social Security benefits and not wasted on frivolous government programs.

TRIBUTE TO WALTER THEOPHILUS LUNSFORD, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man and outstanding citizen who passed away on December 28, 2006.

Walter Theophilus Lunsford, Sr. passed away at the age of 90 years old in Columbus, Ga., the city where he was born, raised, and spent much of his life making an impact as a businessman, family man and positive contributor to the community.

Success came early in Mr. Lunsford's life and he never let it go. After graduating as valedictorian from Spencer High School in 1933, he furthered his academic pursuits at Fisk University where as a physics major, he pledged Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Later, he became a charter member of the Eta Theta Chapter at Columbus State University, as well as the Columbus Alumni Chapter.

Mr. Lunsford first developed his business acumen by working in the family grocery store. He learned entrepreneurship first-hand as his parents expanded their business into real-estate, building houses at a time when public housing did not exist. He later built on that knowledge at the University of Chicago, studying business administration and international relations.

In the early 1940's, Mr. Lunsford carried his initial business experience into his own ventures, first as the sole owner and proprietor of Fox Deluxe Wholesale Beer Distributing Company and later, as the first black owner of a Georgia taxicab company. At the peak of its operation, he employed over 100 blacks between the Checker, Blue Bird and Red Bird Taxicab Companies. Since much of his clientele was comprised of black soldiers stationed at Fort Benning, his business filled both a social and economic void for members of the local community.

Mr. Lunsford did not stop there—as an offshoot to his taxicab business, he opened a Shell Service Station. Eventually, he closed his taxi business and opened a full auto station and grocery store, a forerunner to the modern convenience store. Along the way, he found a way to integrate his love of entertainment by opening the Pierce Amusement Company, leasing coin-operated vending and game machines to other establishments.

Above all, Mr. Walter Lunsford was a successful, well-respected entrepreneur who placed God and family first. For 62 years, he accomplished it all with his wife, Sally Bryant Lunsford, at his side. Together they raised their ten college-educated children, an accomplishment in itself.

Today, we thank and honor Mr. Lunsford, not only for his contributions to Columbus, but also for the example he set for others. He will be remembered as an inspirational figure to

not only those in Columbus, but to all who have the opportunity to learn about his life.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO HAROLD LEE MEYER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Harold Lee Meyer who passed away on December 14, 2006.

Born in Paullina, Iowa on January 1, 1927, Harold settled in Littleton, Colorado with his wife of 55 years, Natalie Meyer. After spending his career in the savings and loan industry, Harold used his retirement to give back to his community. Harold was active in both local and state pursuits, having served as a member of the Denver General Hospital Board and as director of Good Shepherd Lutheran Home of the West. As a member of the Littleton City Council and as mayor of the City of Littleton, Harold enriched and improved countless lives. His other philanthropic pursuits included being a member of DRCOG, a volunteer at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, a driver for the Red Cross, and being an active member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church community.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the life and legacy of Harold Lee Meyer. His professional success and dedication to community should serve as an example to us all. Harold dedicated his life to enriching the lives of those around him. I applaud all his efforts; he was truly a distinguished humanitarian and will be profoundly missed.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address an inequity facing America's men and women in uniform who seek an education in return for their military service.

For years, the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) has allowed thousands of men and women in uniform attend college or to receive vocational training to prepare for a new career after the military.

It is an excellent program and one we must preserve.

However, Madam Speaker, I would like to remedy an inequity that exists in this program with legislation I am introducing today.

To receive the benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill, our service members must pay into the program at the beginning of their military service.

A \$100 is deducted each month from their military pay for the first 12 months.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

With the legislation I offer today, our service members would still make the initial contribution. However, this contribution would no longer count against them later on when they apply for federal student aid.

In many cases, Madam Speaker, the Montgomery GI Bill alone does not cover the cost for college or job training. Our service members must also apply for federal student aid to cover tuition and other expenses.

The Department of Education considers their benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill as "income"—thereby reducing the amount they are eligible to receive from federal student aid programs.

This legislation goes back to the \$1,200 out-of-pocket contribution that a service member made to become eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill.

It is not fair to ask our service members to pay the original amount out of their own pocket and then penalize them for it later on.

This bill would simply exempt the original contribution that came from their own pocket from the Department of Education's income consideration.

This legislation does not present significant cost to the federal government but would go a long way to help America's individual service members afford college.

During the last Congress, I offered the provisions contained in this legislation as part of the College Access and Opportunity Act (H.R. 609) when it was on the House floor.

Unfortunately, the amendment was not accepted, but I plan to pursue the issue until we correct this inequity.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to offer legislation benefiting America's military service members and helping them to attend college or receive job training.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ANIMAL PROHIBITION ACT OF 2007

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, today I reintroduce the Animal Fighting Prohibition Act to address the brutal, inhumane practice of animal fighting, something I have been trying to federally criminalize for the past several Congresses.

A few years ago, Congress enacted legislation to tighten federal law and close some loopholes that were allowing the barbaric practices of animal fighting to thrive nationwide, in spite of bans in virtually every state.

But Congress didn't finish the job. We left in place weak penalties that have proven ineffective. Misdemeanor penalties simply don't provide a meaningful deterrent. Those involved in animal fighting ventures—where thousands of dollars typically change hands in the associated gambling activity—consider misdemeanor penalties a "slap on the wrist" or merely a "cost of doing business." Moreover, we've heard from U.S. Attorneys that they are reluctant to pursue animal fighting cases with just a misdemeanor penalty.

In recent years, we've seen a marked rise in the frequency of animal fighting busts in communities across the country. Local police and sheriffs are increasingly concerned about

animal fighting, not only because of the animal cruelty involved, but also because of the other crimes that often go hand-in-hand, including illegal gambling, drug trafficking, and acts of human violence. Furthermore, there is an inherent danger for the children of animal fighters to be close to these animals.

There is the additional concern that cockfighters spread diseases that jeopardize poultry flocks and even public health. We in California experienced this first-hand, when cockfighters spread exotic Newcastle disease, which was so devastating to many of our poultry producers in 2002 and 2003. That outbreak cost U.S. taxpayers "nearly \$200 million to eradicate, and cost the U.S. poultry industry many millions more in lost export markets," according to former Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. Cockfighting has been identified as the major contributor of the spread of avian flu throughout Thailand and other parts of Asia, where the strain originated. Many of the humans who contracted avian flu and died from it contracted it from fighting birds. Experts say it's just a matter of time before it reaches our shores.

It is time Congress finishes the job and helps state and local law enforcement officials who have requested a strengthening of federal laws to rid animal fighting from communities that do not want it.

This legislation makes violations of federal animal fighting law a felony punishable by up to three years in prison, makes it a felony to transport an animal across state or international borders for the purpose of animal fighting, and prohibits the interstate and foreign commerce in knives and gaffs designed for use in cockfighting.

In the past, this legislation has been endorsed by nearly 400 law enforcement organizations, 110 animal control and humane organizations, and a number of industry organizations as well, and I expect to have their support again. The Animal Fighting Prohibition Act of 2006 had 324 cosponsors and was passed through the Senate by unanimous consent. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation so we can end the deplorable practice of animal fighting and all of the destructive behavior associated with it.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SENIOR'S HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Seniors' Health Care Freedom Act. This act protects seniors' fundamental right to make their own health care decisions by repeal federal laws that interfere with seniors' ability to form private contracts for medical services. This bill also repeals laws which force seniors into the Medicare program against their will. When Medicare was first established, seniors were promised that the program would be voluntary. In fact, the original Medicare legislation explicitly protected a senior's right to seek out other forms of medical insurance. However, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 prohibits any physician who forms a private contract with a senior from filing any Medicare reimbursement claims for two years.

As a practical matter, this means that seniors cannot form private contracts for health care services.

Seniors may wish to use their own resources to pay for procedures or treatments not covered by Medicare, or to simply avoid the bureaucracy and uncertainty that comes when seniors must wait for the judgment of a Center from Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) bureaucrat before finding out if a desired treatment is covered.

Seniors' right to control their own health care is also being denied due to the Social Security Administration's refusal to give seniors who object to enrolling Medicare Part A Social Security benefits. This not only distorts the intent of the creators of the Medicare system; it also violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join an additional government program!

At a time when the fiscal solvency of Medicare is questionable, to say the least, it seems foolish to waste scarce Medicare funds on those who would prefer to do without Medicare. Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the program to refrain from doing so will also strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to participate in it. Of course, my bill does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits or to use his own resources to obtain health care.

Forcing seniors into government programs and restricting their ability to seek medical care free from government interference infringes on the freedom of seniors to control their own resources and make their own health care decisions. A woman who was forced into Medicare against her wishes summed it up best in a letter to my office, ". . . I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed." I urge my colleagues to protect the right of seniors to make the medical arrangements that best suit their own needs by cosponsoring the Seniors' Health Care Freedom Act.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR BOB POYDASHEFF

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I have the distinct privilege of recognizing a man of remarkable vision and unyielding commitment to the community, which he has so faithfully served. Through the leadership of Mayor Bob Poydasheff, the city of Columbus has experienced extraordinary growth and prosperity. During his tenure as mayor, the area has gained in excess of seven thousand new jobs and under his leadership the Columbus Consolidated Government has exercised fiscal responsibility resulting in balanced budgets and a surplus.

Bob Poydasheff has always exhibited exceptional character throughout his professional

careers. He served in the U.S. Army for twenty-four years and retired at the rank of Colonel. During his military career, Mayor Poydasheff served as Legislative Counsel to Secretary of the Army Howard (Bo) Calloway, Staff Judge Advocate at Ft. Belvoir, VA, Legal Counsel to Secretary of the Army and Secretary of Defense on Labor Relations (1955–1979). In recognition of his exemplary service to our country he has received the Vietnam Ribbon, Legion of Merit, Commendation Medal, and 2 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Mayor Poydasheff's determination to excel is apparent in virtually every aspect of his life—and in none, more evident than in his pursuit of education. After receiving a B.A. in Political Science from the Citadel in 1954, he went on to earn his Juris Doctorate from Tulane University. Mayor Poydasheff later received a M.A. in International Relations from Boston College. He has also attended The Academy of International Law and the Army War College.

Perhaps, his greatest accomplishment is the bond that he unwaveringly nurtures with his family. Mr. Bob Poydasheff and his wife, Stacy, are enjoying a wonderful and fulfilling marriage of forty-two years. Of this union, they were blessed with two children, through whom they have two lovely grandchildren.

His affiliation with many civic organizations outside of the political arena demonstrates the genuineness of his nature. These organizations include: Chattahoochee Valley Citadel Club (President); Chattahoochee Boy Scout Council (Past President); Association of U.S. Army (Past President); Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home (Past President); Fort Benning Sojourners (Past President); Board of Directors American Red Cross (Past Chairman); Military Affairs Committee, Columbus Chamber of Commerce (Past Chairman); Civilian-Military Council (Past Chairman); Military Order of World Wars (Past Commander); Minority Business Development Council; Black History Month Steering Committee; Urban League (Director); Columbus Lawyer's Club; Georgia Council of the Humanities; Kiwanis Club of Columbus; Leadership Columbus Alumni; Shriner; Scottish Rite; and Masons.

Today, we thank and honor Mayor Bob Poydasheff for his selfless dedication and steadfast commitment to the welfare of others and his community. His commendable service to the citizens of Columbus serves as an attribute which we should all strive to emulate as we attempt to make the world a better place to live for humankind. As he leaves the Mayor's office we extend our best wishes for joy and happiness in the weeks, months and years ahead.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TOM STONE

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Tom Stone for his many years as a dedicated public servant.

For the past eight years Tom has represented the citizens of Eagle County, Colorado as County Commissioner. Tom has proved to be a champion for the environment through his appointments to the Colorado

River Water Conservation District, the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Committee, the National Association of Counties Public Lands Steering Committee, the Colorado State Forest Advisory Board, and Colorado Counties, Inc. Committees for Public Lands, Agriculture & Wildlife, and Land Use & Natural Resources. Most notably, Commissioner Stone created and implemented the Eagle County Youth Conservation Corps, a program of education, funding and service projects in our National Forests by Eagle County youth.

Tom worked tirelessly to develop the infrastructure necessary for the future health, safety, welfare, economy, housing and care of the citizens of Eagle County. Tom created the first of its kind public/private partnership to construct 282 affordable homes for the local workforce at Miller Ranch. He also spearheaded the building of a joint Veterans and Emergency Service Personnel Memorial on the banks of the pond to honor those who have given the greatest measure of devotion to their community and their country.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Eagle County Commissioner Tom Stone. His amalgamation of professional success and community activism is exemplary. I applaud his efforts and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Federal Election Integrity Act of 2007. This legislation would take the long-overdue step of prohibiting chief state election officials from taking part in the political campaigns of federal candidates in elections over which the officials have supervisory authority.

As a former President of the League of Women Voters in San Diego and an American voter myself, I know that election officials are entrusted with a crucial responsibility for our democracy. Their only allegiance must be to the will of the voters, not to partisan political agendas.

I think we can all agree that an inherent conflict of interest exists when a state's chief election official is responsible for monitoring and certifying the results of a federal election while actively participating in the campaign of one of the candidates in that election.

In the last several years, multiple Secretaries of State have captured national attention and incited great controversy because of their political involvement in elections they were responsible for overseeing.

Although such individuals may be honorable public servants with no improper intentions, it is of the utmost importance for the integrity of our democracy that we provide legal safeguards to ensure the public trust is never violated.

This is not a partisan issue. The record shows that officials of both parties have in the past held these two types of positions simultaneously. Rather, this is an issue of preserving the American people's faith in the integrity of our democracy.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to offer this important legislation to protect the public's trust in the electoral process.

INTRODUCTION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND IDENTITY THEFT LEGISLATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, today I introduced six bills that focus on the problems of illegal immigration and identity theft.

The first priority for this new Congress and any Congress, for that matter, should be to reduce the high levels of illegal immigrants entering this nation. This is a problem that goes directly to our responsibilities as a sovereign nation to secure our borders and enforce our laws.

Two of my bills address the crux of the illegal immigration problem in the United States. We know that most illegal immigrants come here looking for work. If we stop illegal workers from gaining employment, they would be less likely to enter our country illegally in the first place.

To get a job, a person must provide his employer with a social security number. In many cases, an illegal immigrant simply provides a name and a fictitious social security number. Too often, an illegal immigrant has adopted the identity of a hard working American who is unaware that his identity has been stolen until he is refused a loan or contacted by an irate creditor.

The federal government currently has the capability to deter identity theft. Every year, employers have to file W-2 forms with the Social Security Administration that include the names, social security numbers and addresses of their workers.

Today, when the Social Security Administration receives multiple W-2 forms with the same social security number and different names and/or addresses, it simply ignores it, even when it is obvious that more than one person is using a Social Security number!

In other cases, when an employer files a W-2 with a name and Social Security number that does not match, the government simply mails the worker a letter explaining the discrepancy. That's it. The Social Security Administration does little to no follow-up. This has led to many discrepancies that the Social Security Administration has yet to resolve. In fact, a GAO report found that as of November 2004, there were 246 million unresolved discrepancies—involving \$463 billion—dating back to 1937, the beginning of the Social Security program.

My legislation would change that.

The Employment Eligibility Verification and Anti-Identity Theft Act would require workers to resolve discrepancies if their names and Social Security numbers do not match. Employers would have to terminate workers who do not resolve discrepancies. The Social Security Administration would also be required to notify the Department of Homeland Security so it can investigate whether a crime has been committed.

The Identity Theft Notification Act of 2007 would require the Social Security Administration to investigate if it receives more than eight (8) separate W-2 forms with the same Social Security number if the number corresponds with four (4) different addresses in a single year. If the Social Security Administration finds

evidence of fraudulent activity, it is required to notify not only the Department of Homeland Security, but also the legal possessor of that Social Security number. This will enable innocent people to take steps to protect their credit, identity, and good name.

Although jobs are the primary magnets that bring illegal immigrants to this country, I have also introduced another bill that will remove a major incentive for people to come to this country illegally.

The Citizenship Reform Act of 2007 would simply bring our laws into line with virtually every other nation on earth by requiring that at least one parent be a citizen or permanent resident in order for a child to become automatically a citizen.

Additionally, I have also introduced a bill that will make our current immigration law more fair. Under current law, an illegal immigrant who leaves the country faces a bar of up to three years if he has been in the country illegally for more than 6 months, and a ten year bar if he has been here illegally for more than a year. However, if an illegal immigrant never leaves the country but applies to adjust his status, he faces no reentry prohibitions. This is fundamentally unfair. My legislation provides that all illegal immigrants face the same penalty—even if they are eligible for a change in status.

Finally, I have introduced two bills that would criminalize actions common among illegal immigrants.

Unfortunately, many illegal immigrants who are apprehended and agree to voluntarily depart either fail to leave or leave only to return. My bill would make it a felony, with a mandatory one year jail sentence, for illegal immigrants agree to leave and then either fail to leave or return illegally.

I have also found that too many illegal immigrants have figured out that they are given a “get out of jail free card” when they are given a notice to appear. Another bill I have introduced would make it a felony, with a mandatory one-year jail sentence, when illegal immigrants ignore the law and refuse to appear in court when ordered.

I know that these bills, if passed, will dramatically reduce illegal immigration and identity theft. I ask my colleagues for their support to protect our nation's sovereignty and our citizens' identities.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY PRESERVATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to protect the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by introducing the Social Security Preservation Act. The Social Security Preservation Act is a rather simple bill which states that all monies raised by the Social Security trust fund will be spent in payments to beneficiaries, with excess receipts invested in interest-bearing certificates of deposit. This will help keep Social Security trust fund monies from being diverted to other programs, as well as allow the fund to grow by providing for investment in interest-bearing instruments.

The Social Security Preservation Act ensures that the government will keep its prom-

ises to America's seniors that taxes collected for Social Security will be used for Social Security. When the government taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

With federal deficits reaching historic levels the pressure from special interests for massive new raids on the trust fund is greater than ever. Thus it is vital that Congress act now to protect the trust fund from big spending, pork-barrel politics. Social Security reform will be one of the major issues discussed in this Congress and many of my colleagues have different ideas regarding how to best preserve the long-term solvency of the program. However, as a medical doctor, I know the first step in treatment is to stop the bleeding, and the Social Security Preservation Act stops the bleeding of the Social Security trust fund. I therefore call upon all my colleagues, regardless of which proposal for long-term Social Security reform they support, to stand up for America's seniors by cosponsoring the Social Security Preservation Act.

TRIBUTE TO MR. NATHAN SUBER

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding citizen of Columbus, Georgia who has distinguished himself as a dedicated and exemplary public servant. Mr. Nathan Suber joined the Columbus City Council in 1994 and for the past 12 years has served as City Councilman of Post 1.

Mr. Suber was born just across the waters of the Chattahoochee River in nearby Phenix City, Alabama. Being the oldest of three children in a military family, Mr. Suber learned at an early age the true meaning of “service before self.” As his father responded to the call of duty, Nathan Suber and his family relocated several times throughout his father's military career. It was not until the mid-sixties that the Suber family's roots were once again firmly planted in the Columbus, Georgia area. In 1968, Mr. Suber graduated from South Girard High School and later went on to earn an A.A. in Criminology at the City College of San Francisco and a B.A. in Criminal Justice at Columbus State University.

During his tenure as a Columbus Councilman, Mr. Suber served as Budget Review Committee Chairman for 1999–2000. In this appointed position, he was instrumental in changing policy to allow the citizens of Columbus access to budget sessions, which had previously been kept closed to the public. As Chairman of this committee, Mr. Suber exhibited steadfast dedication when he fought tirelessly to keep the Fluellen Recreational Center's doors open and, in the process, secured \$462,000 in additional funding for the facility.

Mr. Suber also served on the Public Safety Committee and had a major role in ensuring the security of our neighborhoods by implementing measures to monitor the use of community resources. Among the many notable and worthy projects to which he has contributed vital energy and leadership were his ef-

forts in designating the Midtown area of Columbus as a historic district. This vital rezoning measure provided a protective ordinance to the surrounding area, which prohibits development that would otherwise degrade the historic quality of the neighborhood.

Nathan Suber is known as a devout Christian and is a faithful member of Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church, where he currently serves as Chairman of Trustees. His faith in God is shared with the younger generation through the Sunday school lessons he provides. His goodwill is further evident in his devotion to his family—his wife of twenty-nine years, Charlene B. Suber; two daughters, Kelly Suber Jones and Cynthia Suber; and one lovely grandchild, Morgan L. Jones.

Mr. Suber currently serves as Chairman of the Board of the Metro Columbus Urban League, which further attests to his unwavering commitment to community.

Today we honor Mr. Nathan Suber and thank him for all he has done for the benefit of Columbus, Georgia—as an elected official and as a private citizen driven by the compassion for others. His exemplary service to his community has set a standard of dedication and leadership that we are all compelled to emulate.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO CREATE A COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce legislation to establish a cooperative research program for hazardous materials transportation capable of meeting our Nation's urgent need for applied research that examines hazardous materials transportation from a comprehensive, multi-modal perspective.

During the 109th Congress, I introduced similar legislation and, although it failed to pass as introduced, provisions from that bill were included in the most recent federal transportation authorization, SAFETEA-LU. Those provisions provided a total of \$1.25 million in federal funding per year from fiscal year 2006 through fiscal year 2009 to support the conduct of multi-modal studies of hazardous materials transportation.

While the first of these 9 studies are now being planned for implementation and will cover such topics as technologies to improve safety and security and methods for improving the utility of data collected from hazardous materials incidents, I believe it is crucial that we create a permanent research program for hazardous materials transportation.

Madam Speaker, it is estimated that one million hazardous materials shipments move through thousands of local communities across the United States every single day—usually without the knowledge of residents or even of local officials. Between 1994 and 2003, unintentional releases of hazardous materials resulted in 210 fatalities and more than 3,400 injuries.

Unfortunately, it is our tendency to focus on mitigating the risks that these shipments pose

only after an accident occurs. In 2001, such an accident occurred in my district in Baltimore when a train derailed in a tunnel, puncturing a tank car and releasing a hazardous material that subsequently ignited.

This incident in the heart of Baltimore demonstrated to me and to my constituents in the most dramatic possible way the risks of hazardous materials transportation. Having seen first-hand these risks, I will never forget them—and it is for this reason that I am again introducing legislation to create a permanent hazardous materials cooperative research program.

Under our Nation's current regime for regulating the shipment of hazardous materials, more than a dozen federal agencies—as well as literally thousands of state and local agencies—regulate some aspect of hazardous materials transportation.

While each of these entities is critical and necessary to ensuring the safety of hazardous materials transportation, each entity is typically looking at hazardous materials from the perspective of a single mode, a single type of material, or a single travel route.

What we now lack is a comprehensive, multi-modal perspective that can examine risks and develop mitigation strategies that are applicable across modes, material types, and travel routes.

To fill this gap, the legislation I am introducing today will bring together representatives of federal agencies, private sector shippers and carriers, and state and local governments in a formal program to study cross-cutting topics in hazardous materials transportation that are not adequately addressed by existing mode-specific research programs.

The study program will be particularly focused on completing research projects that yield practical results immediately applicable to transportation issues.

Without the ability to adequately research and respond to issues in hazardous materials transportation that are multi-modal in scope and national in application, our ability to make informed legislative, regulatory, and operational decisions regarding hazardous materials transportation is unacceptably limited.

Therefore, I urge you to join with me in supporting the formulation of a cooperative research program for hazardous materials transportation by co-sponsoring this critical legislation.

INTRODUCING THE IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the Identity Theft Prevention Act. This act protects the American people from government-mandated uniform identifiers that facilitate private crime as well as the abuse of liberty. The major provision of the Identity Theft Prevention Act halts the practice of using the Social Security number as an identifier by requiring the Social Security Administration to issue all Americans new Social Security numbers within 5 years after the enactment of the bill. These new numbers will be the sole legal property of the recipient, and the Social Security

Administration shall be forbidden to divulge the numbers for any purposes not related to Social Security administration. Social Security numbers issued before implementation of this bill shall no longer be considered valid federal identifiers. Of course, the Social Security Administration shall be able to use an individual's original Social Security number to ensure efficient administration of the Social Security system.

Madame Speaker, Congress has a moral responsibility to address this problem because it was Congress that transformed the Social Security number into a national identifier. Thanks to Congress, today no American can get a job, open a bank account, get a professional license, or even get a driver's license without presenting his Social Security number. So widespread has the use of the Social Security number become that a member of my staff had to produce a Social Security number in order to get a fishing license!

One of the most disturbing abuses of the Social Security number is the congressionally-authorized rule forcing parents to get a Social Security number for their newborn children in order to claim the children as dependents. Forcing parents to register their children with the State is more like something out of the nightmares of George Orwell than the dreams of a free republic that inspired this nation's founders.

Congressionally-mandated use of the Social Security number as an identifier facilitates the horrendous crime of identity theft. Thanks to Congress, an unscrupulous person may simply obtain someone's Social Security number in order to access that person's bank accounts, credit cards, and other financial assets. Many Americans have lost their life savings and had their credit destroyed as a result of identity theft. Yet the Federal Government continues to encourage such crimes by mandating use of the Social Security number as a uniform ID!

This act also forbids the Federal Government from creating national ID cards or establishing any identifiers for the purpose of investigating, monitoring, overseeing, or regulating private transactions among American citizens. In 2005, this body established a de facto national ID card with provisions buried in the "intelligence" reform bill mandating Federal standards for drivers' licenses, and mandating that Federal agents only accept a license that conforms to these standards as a valid ID.

Nationalizing standards for drivers' licenses and birth certificates creates a national ID system pure and simple. Proponents of this scheme claim they are merely creating new standards for existing State IDs. However, imposing Federal standards in a Federal bill creates a federalized ID regardless of whether the ID itself is still stamped with the name of your State.

The national ID will be used to track the movements of American citizens, not just terrorists. Subjecting every citizen to surveillance diverts resources away from tracking and apprehending terrorists in favor of needless snooping on innocent Americans. This is what happened with "suspicious activity reports" required by the Bank Secrecy Act. Thanks to BSA mandates, Federal officials are forced to waste countless hours snooping through the private financial transactions of innocent Americans merely because those transactions exceeded \$10,000.

Turning State-issued drivers licenses into federally controlled national ID cards is yet another Federal usurpation of State authority and another costly unfunded mandate imposed on the States. According to a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislators, turning drivers licenses into national ID cards will cost the States more than \$11 billion.

Madam Speaker, no wonder there is a groundswell of opposition to this mandate. There is even a movement in several State legislatures to refuse to comply with this mandate! The Identity Theft Prevention Act not only repeals those sections of the Federal law creating a national ID, it forbids the Federal Government from using Federal funds to blackmail States into adopting uniform Federal identifiers. Passing the Identity Theft Prevention Act is thus an excellent way for this Congress to show renewed commitment to federalism and opposition to imposing unfunded mandates on the States.

This legislation not only repeals those sections of Federal law creating the national ID, it also repeals those sections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 that require the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a uniform standard health identifier—an identifier which could be used to create a national database containing the medical history of all Americans. As an OB/GYN with more than 30 years in private practice, I know the importance of preserving the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship. Oftentimes, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. What will happen to that trust when patients know that any and all information given to their doctors will be placed in a government accessible database?

By putting an end to government-mandated uniform IDs, the Identity Theft Prevention Act will prevent millions of Americans from having their liberty, property, and privacy violated by private and public sector criminals.

Some members of Congress will claim that the Federal Government needs the power to monitor Americans in order to allow the government to operate more efficiently. I would remind my colleagues that, in a constitutional republic, the people are never asked to sacrifice their liberties to make the jobs of government officials easier. We are here to protect the freedom of the American people, not to make privacy invasion more efficient.

Madam Speaker, while I do not question the sincerity of those members who suggest that Congress can ensure that citizens' rights are protected through legislation restricting access to personal information, the only effective privacy protection is to forbid the Federal Government from mandating national identifiers. Legislative "privacy protections" are inadequate to protect the liberty of Americans for a couple of reasons.

First, it is simply common sense that repealing those Federal laws that promote identity theft is more effective in protecting the public than expanding the power of the Federal police force. Federal punishment of identity thieves provides cold comfort to those who have suffered financial losses and the destruction of their good reputations as a result of identity theft.

Federal laws are not only ineffective in stopping private criminals, but these laws have not even stopped unscrupulous government officials from accessing personal information.

After all, laws purporting to restrict the use of personal information did not stop the well-publicized violations of privacy by IRS officials or the FBI abuses of the Clinton and Nixon administrations.

In one of the most infamous cases of identity theft, thousands of active-duty soldiers and veterans had their personal information stolen, putting them at risk of identity theft. Imagine the dangers if thieves are able to obtain the universal identifier, and other personal information, of millions of Americans simply by breaking, or hacking, into one government facility or one government database?

Second, the Federal Government has been creating proprietary interests in private information for certain State-favored special interests. Perhaps the most outrageous example of phony privacy protection is the "medical privacy" regulation, that allows medical researchers, certain business interests, and law enforcement officials access to health care information, in complete disregard of the Fifth Amendment and the wishes of individual patients! Obviously, "privacy protection" laws have proven greatly inadequate to protect personal information when the government is the one seeking the information.

Any action short of repealing laws authorizing privacy violations is insufficient primarily because the Federal Government lacks constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal identifier for health care, employment, or any other reason. Any Federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty because it ratifies the principle that the Federal Government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate judge of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the Federal Government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

Madam Speaker, those members who are not persuaded by the moral and constitutional reasons for embracing the Identity Theft Prevention Act should consider the American people's opposition to national identifiers. The numerous complaints over the evergrowing uses of the Social Security number show that Americans want Congress to stop invading their privacy. Furthermore, according to a survey by the Gallup company, 91 percent of the American people oppose forcing Americans to obtain a universal health ID.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I once again call on my colleagues to join me in putting an end to the Federal Government's unconstitutional use of national identifiers to monitor the actions of private citizens. National identifiers threaten all Americans by exposing them to the threat of identity theft by private criminals and abuse of their liberties by public criminals, while diverting valuable law enforcement resources away from addressing real threats to public safety. In addition, national identifiers are incompatible with a limited, constitutional government. I, therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Identity Theft Prevention Act.

RECOGNIZING J. CHRIS KOLLMAN, III, MAYOR, CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA FOR HIS SERVICE AND DEDICATION

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Mayor J. Chris Kollman. After serving 28 distinguished years in public service, Mayor Kollman has decided not to pursue another term in order to devote more time to his family.

Mayor Kollman began his tenure with the City of Colonial Heights nearly three decades ago when he was elected to City Council. During his time on the Council he has served two terms as Mayor and two terms as Vice-Mayor. He has been a part of many accomplishments of the city, including the building of the vocational school, the development of Southpark Mall, the building of the Colonial Heights Public Library, the building of the Government Center, the revitalization of the old City Hall Building into a Public Safety Building, the development of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Schools, and his many efforts to help beautify the city.

In addition to his public service, Mr. Kollman served in the United States Army where he received an Honorable Discharge. He is also retired, after 30 years of service, from Bell Atlantic and currently owns and operates C & C Lawn Service, Inc. He is a lifelong resident of Colonial Heights and is a graduate of the Colonial Heights school system.

Mr. Kollman is a former volunteer fireman, a member of the Colonial Heights Optimist Club, served as co-chairman of the Colonial Heights After Prom Committee, and is a member of Highland United Methodist Church where he serves in various leadership positions.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Mr. J. Chris Kollman.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND REAUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the Multinational Species Conservation Fund Reauthorization Act. This legislation will extend the authorization of appropriations for the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988 and the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994. These acts have been two of the most effective conservation laws ever approved by the United States Congress.

First enacted nearly two decades ago, the African Elephant Conservation Act was designed to assist range countries who were fighting a losing battle against heavily armed poachers who were systematically annihilating the flagship species of the African continent. By the mid-1980's, the population of African Elephants had fallen from 1.3 million to less than 500,000 animals. In fact, only in Bot-

swana, South African and Zimbabwe were elephant populations stable.

In response to this growing wildlife crisis and the real likelihood that this species could face extinction throughout most of its historic range, Congress passed the African Elephant Conservation Act. This landmark law was used to ban the importation of carved ivory into the United States and its established the African Elephant Conservation Fund. Under the terms of P. L. 100-478, the Secretary of the Interior was directed to review conservation projects submitted by government entities and non governmental organizations and to approve those that significantly advanced the conservation needs of this important species.

Since its inception, the Secretary has approved 280 conservation grants in 23 African range countries. These grants have received nearly \$17 million in U.S. tax dollars and nearly \$72 million in private matching funds. This favorable ratio of more than 4 to 1 in private donations has been truly remarkable.

The types of conservation projects approved include the training of wildlife personnel; determining the population status, characteristics and habitat needs of elephants in various range countries; providing uniforms, tents and security equipment to wildlife rangers; monitoring the impact of elephants on agriculture; research the seasonal migration patterns of elephants; train local residents in the collection of baseline elephant data and provide local communities with viable economic alternatives to poaching elephants and other species.

One of the more interesting conservation projects has been the partnership between local communities in Zambia and The McHenry Company of Avery Island, Louisiana. What has transpired is that local farmers are growing chilli peppers which are sold to be used in various tabasco products. These peppers have produced badly needed income for local African communities and they assisted in the conservation of elephants who find the scent of growing and burning peppers unacceptable to their sensory glands. The net effect is that not only are pepper plants not trampled but adjoining agricultural crops are protected by their cultivation. This innovative idea has been a real conservation achievement.

While one of these projects would not by itself save the African elephant, together, they have stopped the precipitous slide towards extinction. Sadly, there is no question that elephants are still being poached and that illegally obtained ivory remains a serious international problem. This is why this law must be extended. This small investment of taxpayer dollars is making a significant positive difference in saving this species.

Section III of this legislation will extend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act. This act was designed to assist these two highly imperiled species. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has noted that: "rhinos and tigers remain among the most charismatic and some of the most endangered species on earth".

At the time of its initial enactment in 1994, the number of rhinoceros living in the wild had fallen from 65,000 in 1970 to fewer than 16,000 animals. The five subspecies of tigers were facing an ever more perilous future. At the turn of the 20th century, there were more than 100,000 tigers living in the wild. By 1994, there were fewer than 6,000 tigers which represented a decline of roughly 95 percent. By

comparison, there are more than 25,000 tigers currently living in captivity.

While there are many factors causing the decline of these species, there is no question that poaching and loss of habitat are the two primary reasons rhinos and tigers are facing extinction. A 1994 Newsweek cover shouted that the tiger was "doomed" unless the international community took some concrete steps to save them. The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act was one of those positive steps. It was a lifeline to two species on the brink of disappearing and this fund remains the only dedicated annual source of money for rhinos and tigers in the world.

In the last 12 years, the Fish and Wildlife Service has received 744 conservation grant proposals to assist rhinos and tigers. The service has approved 321 projects in range countries throughout Africa and Asia. These proposals have received \$7.8 million in federal funds with nearly \$20 million in private match-fundings.

This money has been used to finance a host of projects including the training of wildlife managers; facilitating the reintroduction of white rhinos; a database on tiger poaching; a tiger community education program in Indonesia; monitoring tigers, prey and their habitat in India's tiger reserves; providing emergency veterinary services to treat injured black rhinos in Zimbabwe and investigating the poaching and trade of wild tiger parts in India. The sponsors of these projects include the International Rhino Foundation, The Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund.

According to the World Wildlife Fund: "there is no question that these programs have been instrumental in the conservation progress that we have seen in the last decade". In fact, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that: "it has been expressed by field experts that both the Javan and Sumatran rhinos might now be extinct were it not for the multinational species conservation funds".

The purpose of my legislation is to extend the authorization of appropriations for the African Elephant Conservation Act and The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act for an additional five years until September 30, 2012. While I extend the existing annual authorization levels of \$5 million for elephants and \$10 million for rhinos and tigers, the stark reality is that it is highly unlikely that these species will receive \$15 million in funding each year. In fact, sadly, the more likely outcome is about \$2 million per year.

Nevertheless, \$2 million is a huge amount of money in many local African communities who do not have the funds to equip their wildlife rangers with such basic equipment as tents, uniforms or weapons to battle heavily financed and armed poachers.

This small investment of U.S. tax dollars has made a tremendous difference in the fight to save these species from extinction. However, the battle has not been won and it is essential that we reauthorize these two highly effective conservation funds. In the words of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: "continued funding is critical in order to help support efforts for these critically endangered species". It will be a monumental tragedy if we allow these flagship species to disappear forever.

I urge my colleagues to support the Multinational Species Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2007.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS ONLY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the Social Security for American Citizens Only Act. This act forbids the federal government from providing Social Security benefits to non-citizens. It also ends the practice of totalization. Totalization is where the Social Security Administration takes into account the number of years an individual worked abroad, and thus was not paying payroll taxes, in determining that individual's eligibility for Social Security benefits!

Hard as it may be to believe, the United States Government already provides Social Security benefits to citizens of 17 other countries. Under current law, citizens of those countries covered by these agreements may have an easier time getting Social Security benefits than public school teachers or policemen!

Obviously, this program provides a threat to the already fragile Social Security system, and the threat is looming larger. The administration's totalization proposal, a version of which passed the other body in the 109th Congress, actually allows thousands of foreigners who would qualify for U.S. Social Security benefits actually came to the United States and worked here illegally. Adding insult to injury, the federal government may even give Social Security benefits to non-citizens who worked here for as little as 18 months.

That's right: the federal government may actually allow someone who came to the United States illegally, worked for less than the required number of years to qualify for Social Security, and then returned to Mexico for the rest of his working years, to collect full U.S. Social Security benefits while living in Mexico. That is an insult to the millions of Americans who pay their entire working lives into the system and now face the possibility that there may be nothing left when it is their turn to retire.

The proposed agreement is nothing more than a financial reward to those who have willingly and knowingly violated our own immigration laws. Talk about an incentive for illegal immigration! How many more would break the law to come to this country if promised U.S. government paychecks for life? Is creating a global welfare state on the back of the American taxpayer a good idea? The program also establishes a very disturbing precedent of U.S. foreign aid to individual citizens rather than to states.

Estimates of what this latest totalization proposal would cost top one billion dollars per year. As the system braces for a steep increase in those who will be drawing from the Social Security trust fund while policy makers seriously consider cutting Social Security benefits to American seniors and raising payroll taxes on American workers, it makes no sense to expand Social Security into a global welfare system. Social Security was designed to provide support for retired American citizens who worked in the United States. We should be shoring up the system for those Americans who have paid in for decades, not expanding it to cover foreigners who have not.

It is long past time for Congress to stand up to the internationalist bureaucrats and start looking out for the American worker. I therefore call upon my colleagues to stop the use of the Social Security Trust Fund as yet another vehicle for foreign aid by cosponsoring the Social Security for American Citizens Only Act.

TRIBUTE TO BEN STONE

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I, along with my colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, rise today to honor Ben Stone, who recently completed 20 years of service as head of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. Under Ben's quiet but dynamic leadership, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has successfully implemented programs that have more than met the mandate of the County Board of Supervisors to enhance economic development by concentrating on new and innovative programs that enable businesses to remain competitive in a changing economy.

Ben came to Sonoma County from the Seattle area where he had been a county administrator in Port Angeles, Washington, a consultant with Arthur Andersen & Co. and a Special Projects Director with Scafo Corporation. He graduated from Whitman College in Walla Walla and received his masters of Public Administration from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Ben tells the story that, after coming to Sonoma County, he was informed that a decision had been made to close the EDB. However, he commenced creating programs atypical of economic development, which bolstered the local economy, and, 20 years later, the EDB is thriving under his leadership.

With the help of a small staff and interns, Ben has developed a number of award-winning programs in concert with local private and public sectors. Many of these programs have been successfully transitioned to community-based organizations.

Among them are the Sonoma County Tourism Program, which served to increase tourism 31 percent; two technology groups (SofTech, a trade group, and the North Bay Technology Roundtable, a policy group); Youth Business Week; the Business Environmental Alliance; the North Bay World Trade Association; the Small Business Center now operated by Santa Rosa Junior College; a home-based business project; and a business crime prevention program. Ben's office still operates the Sonoma County Film Commission.

Ben also initiated a broad-based strategic planning process resulting in the formation of bachelors and master's degree programs in Engineering Science at Sonoma State University, a new cooperative agricultural marketing program, and an economic research program. An EDB forum, the Business Regulatory Roundtable, involving elected officials, regulatory agencies, and business executives to improve local regulatory processes, resulted in Northern California's first multi-agency Permit Assistance Center.

By creating the Economic Development Board Foundation, the EDB is able to support

research projects, bring expert speakers to discuss aspects of the economy at local presentations twice annually, present an annual State of the County program, and recognize local business men and women at the annual Spirit of Sonoma County Awards program.

Ben developed one of the most visited websites in the County. The EDB pages contain all the research reports, information on upcoming events, the latest initiatives sponsored by his office, and the first live web cast of the State of the County event. In addition, Ben helped establish the California-Swiss Foundation, the World Affairs Council, and has been on the boards of the Sonoma County Museum, the Sonoma County YMCA, and presently is a member of the President's Council at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Some form of the Economic Development Board has been a part of Sonoma County since the late 1950s. If you wanted assistance from Ben in the early days of his 20-year tenure, your first task would be to find his office, which moved four times in the first 10 years before finding a home on College Avenue in Santa Rosa. His long-time friends particularly recall his small office on Cleveland Avenue piled with filing boxes that a visitor clambered over to reach his desk.

A wall of certificates and plaques now greets visitors to his office, including a Grand Prize for Excellence from the California Association of Economic Development; four Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties; and six Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations.

Madam Speaker, we want to honor Ben Stone today for his 20 years of service to Sonoma County and the Economic Development Board. He has made many friends in the many communities he serves and is always willing to give a boost to new arrivals or make that important contact for someone who needs assistance. As Ben always says to others, we wish him many more "Onward and Upward" years at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

INTRODUCTION OF LOWER BRULE AND CROW CREEK TRIBAL COMPENSATION ACT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act. This bill would fully compensate the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota for the lands that they lost in the last century as a result of the federal government's construction of the massive dams on the main stem of the Missouri River.

The 1944 Flood Control Act cost these tribes much in terms of lost land. It also took an enormous toll on the people of both tribes and their economies. It is critically important that we seek to fully reimburse these tribes for the lands they lost.

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe are both constituent bands of the Great Sioux Nation. Both border on the Missouri River in central South Dakota and are connected by the Big Bend Dam.

Congress created a trust fund for the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in 1996, and a separate trust fund for the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in 1997. These trust funds sought to compensate the tribes for the value of their land that is now permanently inundated as a result of the construction of the Big Bend Dam. Unfortunately, the compensation amounts between different but similarly situated tribes varied greatly along the Missouri River. The result was unfair and inadequate compensation trust funds for these tribes. This act is designed to create consistency among the affected tribes and to bring some long-overdue closure to two tribes whose best lands were inundated decades ago.

This legislation already has a history that spans multiple Congresses. An earlier version of this bill was reported by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in the 108th Congress and ultimately passed the Senate. In the 109th Congress it was amended in the Senate after further hearings and then reported. I am hopeful that the House will move quickly in the 110th to Congress to advance this important legislation.

Compensation for these tribes would mean an ability to actively work for the betterment of their communities. It would mean adequate roads and improved community facilities. It would mean better health care and newer schools. It would mean attracting commercial business and improving the local economy. Most importantly, it would mean a real chance for these tribes to provide future generations with the tools that so many of us take for granted.

I would ask all of my distinguished colleagues to support the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act and work with me to enact legislation that would fairly and appropriately compensate members of the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Sioux Tribes. I ask you to do it because of the tremendous positive difference it would make in the lives of those affected—and because it is the right and fair thing to do.

HONORING BEN STONE OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I, along with my colleague Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, rise today to honor Ben Stone, who recently completed 20 years of service as head of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. Under Ben's quiet but dynamic leadership, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has successfully implemented programs that have more than met the mandate of the County Board of Supervisors to enhance economic development by concentrating on new and innovative programs that enable businesses to remain competitive in a changing economy.

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INTRODUCING THE PRESCRIPTION
DRUG AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Prescription Drug Affordability Act. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. While Congress did add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, many seniors still have difficulty affording the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors lose coverage once their prescription expenses reach a certain amount and must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. This tax credit will help seniors cover the expenses provided by the doughnut hole. This bill will also help seniors obtain prescription medicines that may not be covered by the Medicare prescription drug program.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. This process will make safe and affordable imported medicines affordable to millions of Americans. Madam Speaker, letting the free market work is the best means of lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

I need not remind my colleagues that many senior citizens and other Americans impacted by the high costs of prescription medicine have demanded Congress reduce the barriers which prevent American consumers from purchasing imported pharmaceuticals. Congress has responded to these demands by repeatedly passing legislation liberalizing the rules governing the importation of pharmaceuticals. However, implementation of this provision has been blocked by the federal bureaucracy. It is

time Congress stood up for the American consumer and removed all unnecessary regulations on importing pharmaceuticals.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Act also protects consumers' access to affordable medicine by forbidding the Federal Government from regulating any Internet sales of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals by state-licensed pharmacists.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Internet makes pharmaceuticals and other products more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. However, the federal government has threatened to destroy this option by imposing unnecessary and unconstitutional regulations on web sites that sell pharmaceuticals. Any federal regulations would inevitably drive up prices of pharmaceuticals, thus depriving many consumers of access to affordable prescription medications.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make pharmaceuticals more affordable and accessible by lowering taxes on senior citizens, removing barriers to the importation of pharmaceuticals and protecting legitimate Internet pharmacies from needless regulation by cosponsoring the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL DESIGNATED AS MAGNET HOSPITAL BY THE AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 20, 2006, the University of Kansas Hospital became the first hospital in Kansas to attain the coveted Magnet™ designation. The Department of Nursing began working toward this goal in 2002.

Since the American Nurses Credentialing Center developed the Magnet Recognition Program® in 1990, approximately 225 facilities—less than 3 percent of all hospitals—have attained Magnet designation. To join this exclusive group, both the nursing staff and hospital have demonstrated their ability to meet and exceed more than 150 professional standards of excellence.

Magnet designation recognizes the quality and importance of our nursing department. It also emphasizes the important role our nurses play in the hospital's success. Magnet hospitals exemplify the very best in patient care and outcomes. Just 3.5 percent of health care organizations are Magnet hospitals.

This designation proves the commitment of the University of Kansas Hospital to excellent patient care outcomes. Magnet designation means a hospital outperforms others and is statistically proven to have: higher quality care; better patient outcomes; lower mortality rate; significantly higher levels of patient satisfaction; salaries typically above average; excellent nursing recruitment; higher nursing retention; and greater consumer confidence. Madam Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to bring this noteworthy designation to your attention, and to the attention of the House of Representatives as a whole.

PROTECTING IMPACT AID FOR
NORTH SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to ensure the federal government fulfills an important obligation to the families of servicemen and women in my district. In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to assist school districts and communities that lose their property tax base because of the presence of the federal government. Without this federal money, the burden would fall to the remaining residents whose property taxes would continue to rise while impacting the quality of education which can be provided. The Impact Aid program helps to alleviate this problem by directly reimbursing public school districts for the loss of traditional revenue sources.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment, and it is time to reverse this trend.

While I support fully funding the Impact Aid program, I believe the situation in my district warrants special attention. In order to ensure that our students most in need continue to receive necessary resources, I have introduced this bill to help North Chicago to continue to qualify for heavily impacted payments, and Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

Due to a unique housing situation for the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, Impact Aid funding should be higher in five of my school districts. This Naval base is located in North Chicago, one of the poorest school districts in my state. However, some service members and their families live in Navy housing obtained when Ft. Sheridan and Naval Air Station Glenview, located in other suburbs, were closed in the 1990's. These former bases are located within the boundaries of other school districts that now must bear the economic cost of educating children from a base, but receive none of the economic benefits a base provides. Thus, it is vitally important that we both ensure North Chicago continues to receive heavily impacted payments for the benefit of students living there, and that the surrounding communities are more fairly compensated for their loss of property taxes.

By passing this bill, the federal government will be fulfilling its responsibility to these communities, and giving our military families the support they deserve.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND RETIREMENT OF CHARLES E. COOKE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member—Charles E. Cooke—who retired this month from the

House Science Committee. As a professional staffer on the Energy Subcommittee, Charlie's expertise on the issues of energy production, energy research and development, and energy conservation have been unmatched.

Charlie has been working on energy issues since the 1960s, when he was a staffer for the Texas State Legislature. In the 1970s he moved to Washington to work with the Federal Power Commission. He represented Southern California Edison in its Washington office in the late seventies. From 1979 to 1985 he was a principal in a consulting firm that represented Texas interests in Washington and Austin.

Charlie came to Capitol Hill in 1985, first as a legislative assistant to Rep. RALPH HALL (TX) and then as staff of the Committee on Science. In 1990, Charlie went back to work for Southern California Edison on energy restructuring, telecommunications, electric transportation, and tax issues. After leaving Edison, he joined the EOP Group, an energy and environmental consulting firm, and then returned to the Hill in 1998 to serve as Special Assistant to Congressman HALL, working on utility restructuring. Finally, in 2000 Charlie returned to the Science Committee as a professional staff member with responsibility for energy issues.

Before switching to the political science field, Charlie began his early studies in electrical engineering, and his engineering training comes through, both in his approach to problems and in his passions: home improvement and landscape architecture. He has been an active volunteer in planning the House botanical gardens and on the Advisory Board of the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Texas.

Charlie's easy going personality, issue expertise, and his talent for making great barbeque will be long remembered on this Committee. The Science Committee's Members and staff wish him well as he moves on to new endeavors and a relaxing retirement. Thank you, Charlie, for your many years of dedicated and loyal service.

TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to pay my respects to the First Greek Orthodox Church in Springfield, Massachusetts upon the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

In 1907 an old house was acquired on Auburn Street, converted into a place of worship and it was here that the rapidly growing Greek community held their first church services.

By 1920 the Greek population had grown so large that the Auburn Street building no longer could accommodate the members of St. George's Greek Orthodox Church. A building fund campaign was soon inaugurated to raise the funds to buy a new church. A building was purchased on Patton Street which provided adequate facilities for church services, a Greek School and administrative offices.

By 1940 the Greek population had again increased greatly. It was at this time that the

Congregational Memorial Church at Main and Plainfield Streets became available. The Greek Community took advantage of this opportunity and purchased the Memorial Church and its spacious parish house on October 7, 1940. This magnificent Gothic Church, built in 1866, was designed by the noted architect, Richard Upjohn, with a high vaulted ceiling and priceless stained glass windows.

By 1975 the Church began looking at new sites for a community center and by June 1977 it was decided that St. George would expand and stay in Springfield. A General Assembly approved plans for a parish center by purchasing the old Memorial Square Library Building. The St. George Greek Orthodox Church Cultural Center was opened in 1978 and to the present time it houses administrative offices, classrooms for Sunday and Greek Schools, a gymnasium and facilities for social functions. A Chapel was added to the building in 1986.

The first Greek immigrants in Springfield brought with them their history, their philosophies, their democratic ideals, their courage, their culture and traditions, their Greek language and customs, their festive celebrations, their foods, music and dance and most of all their Greek Orthodox faith which they have handed down from one generation to the next all of which we celebrate this Centennial Year.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GERALD R. FORD, JR. POST OFFICE ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation to name the post office in Vail, Colorado, after our Nation's 39th President, Gerald R. Ford, Jr.

I believe this legislation is appropriate as another means of honoring the legacy of President Ford, in large part because of his special connection to Colorado and the Vail Valley.

In 1968 then-Congressman Ford and wife, Betty, first came to Colorado with their children to celebrate Christmas and to ski in the mountains at Vail. Like many other visitors, President Ford was inspired by the beauty of the area and found a connection to the land and to the surrounding community.

The Fords later owned a home and continued to vacation in Vail. When he became President, his vacations in Colorado helped introduce the world to the Town of Vail, and in fact, the family home was dubbed "the Western White House."

Vail residents knew President Ford and his family as neighbors and friends and are proud of their long association with them. Gerald Ford was beloved in Vail, where he was known to be a good neighbor, an avid golfer and a lover of the outdoors.

President Ford will rightly be remembered for his personal warmth, his decency, his interest in bridging the many divisions in America during the 1970s. My father, Mo Udall, served in Congress with Gerald Ford, and while they were often on different sides in political matters—so much so that my father hoped to run against President Ford in the famous election of 1976—they were united by a common view

that politics should unite people. They both were firm believers that in public life one could disagree without being disagreeable.

This is a credo I continue to believe in, and I commend the memory of both good men to this House, an institution they loved.

Coloradans, especially those in the Vail Valley, have come to think of him as the first President from Colorado because he was a great ambassador for the State, who established long ties to the people of Colorado.

As a dedicated public servant, President Ford served honorably in his years in Congress and in the White House. Most important, when America needed someone to reassure their trust in government after Watergate, he filled that leadership role with authenticity.

I believe President Ford's special relationship and legacy in Colorado should be appropriately recognized by naming the postal facilities in Vail, Colorado, in his honor.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, in the last two Congresses we have spent considerable time on the extremely important issue of immigration and homeland security. In the 108th Congress, we passed the National Intelligence Reform Act, a landmark piece of legislation to overhaul our intelligence agencies. But, as I noted at that time, the bill unfortunately did not go far enough in addressing the major security vulnerability presented by the porous nature of our borders.

Seeing that need, in the 109th Congress we debated immigration extensively and even passed H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Regrettably, the Senate failed to act on this important piece of legislation. That is why I rise to ask for the support of my colleagues for an illegal immigration control plan that I am pleased to introduce today. This proposal, the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, is designed to eliminate up to 98 percent of the illegal border crossings into the United States.

I believe that in order for any proposal to stop illegal immigration to be successful, it must get at the root cause of what attracts illegal immigrants to our country—and that is the lure of economic opportunity and the ease with which illegal workers can find jobs. Under the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, we will dramatically increase the enforcement of laws which prohibit American businesses from employing illegal immigrants. Regrettably, too many employers have been unwilling to comply with the law. The growing availability of counterfeit identity documents has also undermined the current system because employers are increasingly unable to establish the authenticity of documents presented by job applicants.

Our legislation adds new features to the Social Security card to deter counterfeiting and make it easier for employers to determine whether a card is genuine by including a digitized photo of the cardholder on the card.

The improved Social Security card will also be encoded with a unique electronic encryption code to allow employers to verify each prospective applicant's work eligibility status prior to hiring, through either an electronic card-reader or a toll-free telephone number. The Department of Homeland Security will be required to establish and maintain an Employment Eligibility Database with information on a person's proof of citizenship data, work, and residency eligibility information, including expiration dates for non-citizens. This database will also include information from the Social Security Administration that the Commissioner determines necessary and appropriate for the purpose of verifying an individual's work eligibility status. Employers who hire an illegal immigrant or choose not to verify a prospective employee's work eligibility will face stiff federal fines of \$50,000 and up to 5 years in prison. The employer would also be required to reimburse the government for the cost of deporting the illegal immigrant. Moreover, this bill provides that no officer or employee of the Department of Homeland Security shall have access to any information contained in the Employment Eligibility Database for any purpose other than the establishment of a system of records necessary for the effective administration of this act, and will impose penalties of \$10,000 in fines and mandatory-minimum sentence of 5 years in prison on anyone who misuses information on the database.

With the improved Social Security card and national verification system, employers will have no excuse for hiring illegal immigrants. By eliminating the supply of jobs for illegal workers, we will end the incentive for illegal immigrants to enter the United States because they will know that they will be unable to make a living here. Legal workers will only need to update their Social Security card once to have their photo placed on the card and for other long-overdue anti-fraud measures to be applied. Moreover, a worker would only need the updated Social Security card when applying for a new job. I want to make it very, very clear that this proposal does not represent the creation of a national identification card. This bill strictly prohibits the use of the Social Security card as a national ID card, and stipulates that the card not be required to be routinely carried on one's person. Social Security cards are often already required to be provided to new employers; the changes we are proposing to the Social Security card take us no further down the road of creating a national ID card. It should be noted that the government already has the information that would be contained in the Employment Eligibility Database. An individual's eligibility to work under the law is dependent on whether they are a U.S. citizen, and if not, their immigration status. Finally, the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act also puts teeth into the new enforcement procedures by calling for the addition of 10,000 new Homeland Security officers whose sole responsibility will be to enforce employer compliance with the law. These new agents will free up the rest of the Border Patrol to exclusively focus on border enforcement and terrorism prevention.

Madam Speaker, I do not stand here today to tell the rest of the world that we intend to limit opportunities for the American dream to be fulfilled. As my good friend Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of my home state

of California and an immigrant himself has said, many arrive in America "owning nothing but a dream." However, the Governor has also noted that the first order of our government must be to provide security for our borders. If foreign nationals wish to come to the United States, they must, as Governor Schwarzenegger said, "play by the rules," and we must make clear that there will be no economic opportunity for anyone who enters this country illegally. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in this effort, and hope they will consider joining me as we take action on this vital national security priority.

I would like to thank my original co-sponsors for this legislation, including, Mr. REYES of Texas, who began his career in public service with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in the U.S. Border Patrol, where he worked for 26½ years, as well as my colleagues from California, Mr. ISSA, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. BILBRAY.

THE PATERSON GREAT FALLS
NATIONAL PARK ACT OF 2007

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce the Paterson Great Falls National Park Act of 2007. This bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by every Member of the New Jersey Congressional delegation, and would designate a National Park at the majestic Great Falls in Paterson, New Jersey. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Fifteen miles west of New York City, the Great Falls was the second largest waterfall in colonial America. No other natural wonder in America has played such an important role in our Nation's historic quest for freedom and prosperity. At the Great Falls, Alexander Hamilton conceived and implemented a plan to harness the force of water to power the new industries that would secure our economic independence.

Hamilton told Congress and the American people that at the Great Falls he would begin implementation of his ambitious strategy to transform a rural agrarian society dependent upon slavery into a modern economy based on freedom. True to Hamilton's vision, Paterson became a great manufacturing city, producing the Colt revolver, the first submarine, the aircraft engine for the first trans-Atlantic flight, more locomotives than any city in the Nation, and more silk than any city in the world.

New Jersey's Great Falls is the only National Historic District that includes both a National Natural Resource and a National Historic Landmark. In a special Bicentennial speech in Paterson with the spectacular natural beauty of the Great Falls in the background, the late President Gerald R. Ford said, "We can see the Great Falls as a symbol of the industrial might which helps to make America the most powerful nation in the world."

Preeminent Hamilton biographers; an esteemed former Smithsonian Institution curator, the former chief of the National Park Service Historic American Engineering Record, and

distinguished professors at Yale, Princeton, Harvard, NYU, Brown and other universities have filed letters with the National Park Service strongly recommending a National Historical Park for the Great Falls Historic District. Editorial boards, federal, state, and local officials and community groups have also endorsed the campaign to award a National Park Service designation to the Falls.

Scholars have concluded that Pierre L'Enfant's innovative water power system in Paterson, and many factories built later, constitute the finest remaining collection of engineering and architectural structures representing each stage of America's progress from a weak agrarian society to a leader in the global economy. It is a little known fact that L'Enfant was hired by Hamilton to create Paterson as the sister city to Washington, DC, having completed his plan of Washington only months before arriving in Paterson.

This proposed National Park would also encompass historic Hinchliffe Stadium, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service in 2004. This stadium, built in 1932, is adjacent to the Great Falls and was home to the New York Black Yankees. Baseball legend Larry Doby played in Hinchliffe Stadium both as a star high school athlete and again as a Negro League player, shortly before becoming the first African-American to play in the American League.

Madam Speaker, Congress must act now to pass this vital piece of legislation, so that we may fully recognize these cultural and historic landmarks that have played such a seminal role in America's history.

STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION OF
THE COMMISSION TO STUDY
REPARATION PROPOSALS FOR
AFRICAN-AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I come before this body to reintroduce the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act. I have advanced the Commission bill for over 15 years to direct attention to a historical wrong that warrants substantial consideration and discussion. Since introduction in 1989, I have never intended to spark controversy or promote division. Rather, I have worked to further a national dialogue on the plight of African Americans in the context of slavery, Jim Crow, and other legally sanctioned discrimination.

As a result, our dialogue has become more substantive and afforded us invaluable knowledge over the years. This Congress I intend to continue such discourse. I will also work to ensure that more people understand the benefit and the promise of a Commission. Unfortunately, there are too many that do not understand its purpose. This means that we must dispel the myths and correct the mistruths surrounding the Commission bill.

Each Congress, the conversations and efforts surrounding the Commission bill become more mature and sophisticated. Today we have a better understanding of slavery and its implications than we did 16 years ago. Since

1989, over forty states and cities have passed legislation in support of the Commission bill. In 2002, lawsuits were filed against U.S. corporations for their role in perpetuating slavery. The following year, in 2003, Brown University created the Committee on Slavery and Justice to assess the University's role in slavery and determine a response. And in 2004, a federal appeals court ruled that statute of limitations prevented redress in the case of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot, but opened the door for legislative recourse.

Most recently, on December 13, 2006, a federal appeals court ruled that U.S. corporations can be found guilty of consumer fraud for failing to disclose their roles in slavery. Just a few weeks earlier, on November 27th, Prime Minister Tony Blair condemned the African slave trade and Britain's participation. As Brown University prepares to act on Committee recommendations in February, and on the eve of the 200th anniversary of Britain's prohibition of slavery in March, productive discussions on both the national and global levels seem promised.

However, as this dialogue continues to grow, one entity is noticeably absent—the federal government. The Commission would ensure proper participation in this conversation, in addition to taking us giant steps towards closure on this matter. The truth is that the institution of slavery will continue to tarnish the American national story until we confront this part of our history. While a Commission will not erase the past, it can bring us closer to racial reconciliation and advancement.

A Commission would not only examine the institution of slavery, but the legacy of slavery that weighs heavily on this country. Just last Congress, a bipartisan collective reauthorized the Voting Rights Act because racial inequities and injustices are a reality. This reality is the result of the social, economic, and political disenfranchisement African Americans have endured throughout our experience in this country. For a majority of this nation's history, this disenfranchisement was mandated by law. Disparities in education, housing, healthcare and other critical aspects of society have resulted.

After examining the issues, the Commission would recommend appropriate remedies to Congress. There is this common misperception that "remedies" means monetary compensation. Let me be clear, the Commission bill does not mandate financial payments of any kind. Recommendations would be at the sole discretion of the Commission. It is unfair to dismiss the idea of a Commission based on a fear that monetary reparations will be warranted. We need to understand that a reparations discussion goes beyond money.

We must also recognize that understanding slavery and its modern day implications is in the best interest of our society. This nation should serve as an example for corporations, universities, and other countries. In the 110th Congress, I look forward to open and constructive discourse about the Commission bill.

TRIBUTE TO HARVEY CHRISTIE

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Harvey Christie, better known

to people across West Virginia as Chef Harv. Chef Harv was tragically killed at age 42 in a car accident near Romney, West Virginia on December 1, 2006. He is survived by his wife Christy and two children.

Chef Harv traveled across West Virginia, as a caterer, as the host of "West Virginia Cooks", a Public Broadcasting cooking show, and as a champion for local agriculture products in our state.

Chef Harv never stopped promoting West Virginia's small farmers and food products. Whether it was catering a community dinner or visiting 4-H camp, he inspired a love for our state's agriculture goods to countless people.

Each year Chef Harv made the trip to Washington to remind members of Congress of the importance of supporting our local farmers. On each trip he cooked for "A Taste of the Virginias" held in a House office building—providing a meal made entirely from items grown in West Virginia or Virginia.

The amazing food Chef Harv prepared, like his award winning "Harv's Hot Pepper Jelly" was matched only by his outgoing, engaging personality that was an inspiration to those around him. West Virginia's agriculture community has suffered a tremendous loss with his passing, and he will be missed by countless friends across our state.

On January 13, Chef Harv's family and friends will gather to remember a life that ended much too soon. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, children, and all of his friends and family during this difficult time.

NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, on December 8, 2006, the House considered H.R. 6406, which, among other things, authorized the permanent extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations) to the products of Vietnam. While I am a strong proponent of free trade and I am committed to helping broaden the United States' relationship with Vietnam, I could not, in good conscience, vote for this legislation.

I continue to hold serious concerns about Vietnam's human rights record, as well as their handling of cases regarding U.S. Armed Forces personnel missing and killed in action during the Vietnam War.

Madam Speaker, I truly believe that the overall benefits of free trade are numerous for our country and that of our trading partners. These positive aspects include a higher economic standard of living, a wider range of higher quality products at lower costs, and a migration of workers from less competitive markets to more competitive and productive markets. As a former small business owner, I am and will remain a strong advocate for free trade.

However I also believe that religious liberty and respect for human rights should be requirements for achieving the broadest possible economic success.

INTRODUCTION OF FEDERAL JUDGESHIP FOR U.S. DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a looming judicial crisis in my state of Nebraska. Today, with my Nebraska colleagues Congressman JEFF FORTENBERRY and Congressman ADRIAN SMITH, I am introducing legislation to create an additional federal judgeship for the United States District Court, District of Nebraska.

Nebraska has three permanent judgeships and three senior judges. An additional temporary judgeship was created in 1990 and lapsed in May 2004 when a judge took senior status, despite recommendations by the Judicial Conference of the United States to convert the temporary status to a permanent position. After the lapse, the Judicial Conference has continued to recommend an additional permanent judgeship. To further burden the district, two of the court's three senior judges are in their early eighties and do not take full caseloads. The third senior judge also cannot handle a full caseload due to health reasons, and as a result, the senior judges provided the equivalent of less than one active judge in 2005.

Our delegation has introduced this important legislation on the very first day of the 110th Congress because the need for immediate Congressional action has never been greater. Nebraska's federal district courts handle a heavy caseload, not unlike many federal district courts nationwide. However, the number of Nebraska federal district court judges' criminal felony filings ranks them 5th nationwide and is more than twice the national average. Furthermore, the Nebraska judges have increased their overall number of completed trials by 41 percent since 2001 and now rank 2nd nationwide on a per-judgeship basis.

Weighted filings currently total 590 per judgeship, the 7th highest total in the Nation. Based on the current total of three authorized judgeships, the court's weighted filings are well above the standards of 500 per judgeship for small courts.

These numbers mean nothing unless they are put into a real life context. Nebraska is a rural state and the judges must travel long distances in order to try cases. For example, judges in Omaha must travel almost 600 miles four times per year to conduct two-week jury sessions. Additionally, magistrates are sent out one month prior to the judge's arrival to conduct pretrial conferences on all cases pending trial. All this travel takes its toll on these judges and forces them at times to use the services of judges from other districts.

The strain on assistance from senior judges, the high number of felony criminal cases and the heavy weighted caseload demonstrate clearly that the district of Nebraska requires four permanent judgeships. I call on all of my colleagues to recognize the pressing need for immediate Congressional action to create an additional federal judgeship in Nebraska.

TRIBUTE TO MARE ISLAND
ORIGINAL 21ERS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to join me in honoring the Mare Island Original 21ers for their efforts to end racial discrimination at Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

On Nov. 17, 1962, twenty-one African American workers at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, CA, took a historic step by filing a racial discrimination complaint with President Kennedy's newly created Committee on Equal Job Opportunities. The complaint quickly helped lead to sweeping changes locally at the shipyard and nationally at military installations, including early Affirmative Action-type programs. All the men wanted was a wage comparable to their white co-workers and to be treated equally. What they started was a chain reaction that reverberated around the country. The group would become known as the Mare Island Original 21ers, and would forever change the base's social landscape.

Despite these pioneering steps, their early civil rights efforts remain in obscurity. The group's surviving members still talk about the movement, but the full story was buried in the 1960s and only recently came to light as a result of a series of newspaper articles by Vallejo Times Herald reporter Matthias Gafni.

Their story is typical of the time. Vallejo was a Navy town, and a separated one. With its naval shipyard, Vallejo has always had a population reflecting a wide range of ethnic backgrounds; but it was not always harmonious. In the late 1950s minorities were mostly working in unskilled positions at Mare Island as sandblasters, laborers and cleaners, with efforts to keep them out of certain positions. The discrimination was not restricted to withholding promotions and unfair hiring practices, according to one of the workers. At every phase of each work day they faced discrimination.

By 1960 the Civil Rights Movement was in its infancy and the African American workers were losing patience. In March 1961, President Kennedy issued an executive order establishing a sweeping, government-wide Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. Twenty-one workers began organizing under the leadership of Willie Long, meeting in complete secrecy to protect their safety and their jobs. A complaint was drafted and twenty-five workers ultimately signed it. The complaint covered deplorable conditions for black workers, involving promotions, the apprenticeship program, and general unfair treatment. The shipyard commander found no pattern of discrimination, but President Kennedy's committee was inundated with similar complaints from around the country and changes were finally made after several years. Almost everyone who signed the original complaint was promoted to supervisor and fortunately escaped any of the serious reprisals they feared.

Their quiet but risky fight for equal treatment helped change our Nation. These heroic men included Willie Long, Boston Banks, Jr., Matthew Barnes, Louis Greer, Jake Sloan, Charles Fluker, Clarence Williams, James Davis, Thomas King, Robert E. Borden, James O. Hall, Matthew Luke, Herman Moore,

Jimmie James, John L. McGhee, James J. Colbert, Virgil N. Herndon, Eddie Brady, Brodie Taylor, W.J. Price, Levi Jones, Herbert H. Lane, Kermit Day, and Charles Scales.

Madam Speaker, in tribute to these men and their fight for equal rights, it is proper for us, and it is indeed my honor, to formally recognize the Mare Island Original 21ers, and thank them for their heroic actions.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
UDALL-EISENHOWER ARCTIC
WILDERNESS ACT

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act honors two great American visionaries by designating the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness in their names and giving permanent protection to this great unspoiled wild place. Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower began the bipartisan legacy of fighting to protect this majestic area for future generations of Americans when he set aside the core of the Refuge in 1960. Twenty years later, in 1980, Democratic Representative Morris Udall succeeded in doubling the size of the Refuge, protecting even more of this untrammeled wilderness from oil drilling.

President Eisenhower and Morris Udall had the vision to protect a remote but very special piece of pristine wilderness. I am proud to introduce legislation today along with Representative JIM RAMSTAD of Minnesota that would complete the job they began by giving permanent protection to the coastal plain of the Refuge.

I am also proud to introduce this legislation under the bill number H.R. 39, a bill number with important historical significance in the effort to preserve the land within the Arctic Refuge. H.R. 39 was the bill number given to Mo Udall's Alaska Natural Interest Lands Conservation Act that became law in 1980, expanding the area President Eisenhower had set aside and renaming it as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Representative Udall later began introducing his legislation to designate the coastal plain of the Refuge as wilderness under that same bill number. This bill number offers an important reminder of the history of this special place.

The coastal plain is the biological heart of the Refuge and is central to the survival of many unique species of animals including caribou, polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, and over 160 species of birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls the coastal plain the "center for wildlife activity" in the Refuge. If we were to allow drilling in the Refuge it would irreparably disrupt this important ecosystem and one of our last great wild places will be forever scared and destroyed.

In this last year, we have seen so-called "environmentally-gentle" oil drilling exposed once and for all as the myth that it is. On March 2, 2006, BP workers discovered a quarter-inch hole in a pipeline on Alaska's North Slope that had leaked 267,000 gallons of oil onto the arctic tundra. That recent spill was the largest in the history of the North Slope.

Subsequent spills led to the discovery that BP had grossly mismanaged and severely neglected its pipelines and North Slope oil drilling operations, which had previously been touted by drilling proponents as the best and most technologically advanced in the world. The reality is that drilling for oil is a dirty business and opening the Arctic Refuge to drilling would forever ruin this untouched special place.

Moreover, if we were to allow drilling in the Arctic Refuge, the crown jewel of the Wildlife Refuge System, it would represent a colossal shift in the policy and precedent governing our wildlife refuges. Prying open the Arctic Refuge for drilling would set a dangerous precedent that would allow the oil companies to select any of the other 544 as the next target for oil drilling.

The Bush administration has argued that we have no choice—that we are so dependent on oil that we must start defiling our wildlife refuge system to keep feeding our oil addiction. That is wrong. We have a choice, a better choice, and it is about time that we enact real changes in our energy policy by focusing on conservation rather than seeking to drill for a few short months worth of oil in this pristine refuge.

The United States consumes 25 percent of the world's oil but controls only 3 percent of the world's oil reserves. We cannot drill our way out of our dependence on foreign oil but we can choose to harness our technologic genius to do something real about our dependence on oil.

Two-thirds of the oil we consume everyday in the U.S. goes into the gas tanks of our cars, trucks and SUVs. From an energy standpoint, drilling in the Refuge is completely unnecessary. If our cars, trucks and SUVs traveled just 3 miles more per gallon today, we would save more oil than drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would produce at its peak levels of production. But more than that, if we increased fuel economy standards to 40 miles per gallon over 10 years, we would save more oil within 15 years than we would be able to get out of the Arctic Refuge over its entire 40–50 year production life.

The oil fields on the North Slope already annually produce more air pollution and greenhouse gases than the municipality of Washington, D.C. and the Arctic is showing the strains of global warming.

Just this last month, the Bush Interior Department proposed listing the Polar Bear as an "endangered species" because global warming appears to be so drastically affecting its habitat—particularly the summer ice floes needed to hunt—that the bears are drowning far from shore when the floating ice melts. Last week scientists confirmed that a giant ice shelf—the Ayles Ice Shelf—snapped off of its land anchor just 500 miles south of the North Pole in the Canadian Arctic. This is a feature of the Arctic landscape that is thousands of years old. The remaining ice shelves are 90 percent smaller than when they were first discovered in 1906.

Our addiction to oil is real and enduring and still largely untreated. Drilling in the refuge would amount to a declaration that we remain in denial about this addiction, its impact on our planet and our obligation to future generations.

If Congress were to ever turn the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge into an industrial footprint by allowing oil drilling, the impact on

the land and the wildlife would be permanent but the hoped-for energy benefits only temporary. There are some places in our world that are so rare and so special, that we have a responsibility to protect them. The Arctic Refuge is one of those places. As Mo Udall said, "In our lifetime, we have few opportunities to shape the very Earth on which our descendants will live their lives. In each generation, we have carved up more and more of our once-great natural heritage. There ought to be a few places left in the world the way the Almighty made them." The Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act would ensure that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is never carved up by the big oil companies but is instead forever protected for future Americans.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CALLING
FOR 2-1-1 ACT OF 2007

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act of 2007. I am proud to lend my support as an original cosponsor of this bill, which was introduced today by my colleague, Ms. ESHOO of California. I would also like to note a concern I have with the bill as introduced, which I hope will be resolved prior to a vote in the full House of Representatives.

2-1-1 is the number designated by the Federal Communications Commission to provide citizens with information and referral about important community services and volunteer opportunities. United Way and its affiliates operate more than 200 call centers in 41 states nationwide, including my home state of Nebraska. About two-thirds of American citizens currently have access to 2-1-1 referrals. The Calling for 2-1-1 Act will help achieve nationwide coverage for all citizens.

More than 50 percent of the calls made to 2-1-1 call centers are placed to meet basic needs such as food, heat, clothing and shelter for citizens facing difficulty. 2-1-1 helps to keep citizens off long-term government financial aid such as welfare and food stamps by meeting immediate needs before they become crises. 2-1-1 also enhances homeland security by serving as an emergency backup to 9-1-1 during natural disasters and other crises.

In my Congressional District alone, almost 40,000 Nebraskans sought information through 2-1-1 between November 2005 and October 2006. The top needs were for assistance with utilities, rent, food, housing, health and dental care, furniture and tax preparation. Thousands of Nebraskans were able to obtain assistance from federal and non-profit community service agencies because of the existence of 2-1-1.

2-1-1 was crucial during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. When 9-1-1 emergency lines were inoperational, 2-1-1 stepped up to link citizens in dire need with critical services, including emergency medical care, food and housing, and crisis recovery and relocation services nationwide. Volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross also benefit from people who call 2-1-1 seeking opportunities to give back to their communities. 2-1-1 meets critical needs and merits federal aid, provided

that additional protections are put in place before this legislation is brought to a vote.

It was my privilege to work last year with Ms. ESHOO and Mrs. CLINTON in the Senate, as well as Mr. PICKERING and Mr. BILIRAKIS in the House of Representatives, to address important concerns for "socially sensitive" referrals before bringing the Calling for 2-1-1 Act to a vote. As Members of Congress with deep convictions for the protection of human life, we drafted language to refer callers seeking pregnancy-related services to public health departments.

This reasonable compromise was designed to ensure the 2-1-1 legislation does not become a vehicle for taxpayer funding of controversial referrals such as abortion. Unfortunately, this important language, which had been agreed upon by all parties, was not included in the legislation introduced today. I look forward to working with my Ms. ESHOO and my other colleagues to correct this situation.

If my concerns are not addressed, I would be forced to vote against and actively fight against the legislation I have cosponsored and worked to enact into law, despite my strong support for increasing access to 2-1-1 for more American citizens. The fact that I have again cosponsored this legislation despite my concern is testament to the good working relationship I have enjoyed with Ms. ESHOO and Ms. CLINTON, and which I trust will continue during this new Congress.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to help this legislation become law while ensuring it protects and upholds the sanctity of human life.

IN HONOR OF UNIVERSITY PARK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate University Park Elementary School upon its receipt of the Department of Education's prestigious Blue Ribbon School Award.

University Park Elementary School is among the first selected in the 2006 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program. It is among only 250 schools nationwide honored for either superior academic achievement or dramatic gains in student achievement.

The Blue Ribbon Award is a testament to the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the students, parents, teachers, and administrators of University Park Elementary. This Award also recognizes the values that make the Highland Park Independent School District a beacon of academic excellence.

It is my honor and privilege to recognize University Park Elementary School for its outstanding achievement in preparing our children for the challenges of tomorrow. May University Park Elementary School continue to be a shining example of superior leadership and commitment to excellence in education.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION FOR
SWEARING IN CEREMONY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, please excuse my absence from the formal House of Representatives swearing in ceremony today as I was unavoidably detained while paying my respects to a fallen soldier from my district at his funeral in Arlington National Cemetery. I appreciate the opportunity to take my oath of office on my return to the U.S. Capitol.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW A. PILCH
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew A. Pilch, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Matthew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Matthew A. Pilch for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Matthew in the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLES BANK

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand before you today to recognize the many accomplishments of Peoples Bank and offer my congratulations on their 97th Anniversary in the Northwest Indiana community. To commemorate this special occasion, Peoples Bank will hold an anniversary celebration on Saturday, January 6, 2007, at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, Indiana.

Peoples Bank was established in 1910 and was organized with a focus to meet the many needs of its consumers. Peoples Bank was originally known as the First Polish National Building and Loan Association. During that time, it was the main hub for church and social activities in East Chicago, Indiana. Over several decades, the association's name changed numerous times, and in 1989, it was renamed Peoples Bank.

Peoples Bank was the first savings and loan association to receive a federal charter in East

Chicago after the Great Depression. In the 1950s, the bank played an integral role in assisting former servicemen to build or purchase homes through G.I. Loans. At this time, Peoples Bank expanded its access to the Northwest Indiana community by moving into a multi-office operation. The Woodmar section of Hammond was chosen as the second office location for Peoples Bank.

It was during the 1960s that Peoples Bank added another branch location in Merrillville. Due to the success of these initial offices, additional branches were eventually established in the area, including branches in Dyer, Munster, Schererville, and a second branch in Merrillville. In the year 2000, Peoples Bank opened its eighth branch location in Hobart.

With all of this expansion taking place, Peoples Bank introduced a new corporate headquarters in 2003. Located on two acres, this four-story building houses the many departments and offices necessary to operate such a professional organization, where the customers always come first.

Peoples Bank's Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, Mr. David Bochnowski, has served as the leader of the organization since 1981, after serving on the board since 1977. With his guidance, along with all the hard work of the staff, Peoples Bank has continued to be an active force in providing superior customer service and assistance to all of Northwest Indiana.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring and congratulating Peoples Bank on their 97th Anniversary. Their dedication to the people of Northwest Indiana and their constant efforts throughout the years are worthy of the highest commendation.

TRIBUTE TO YVONNE SCARLETT-GOLDEN

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the late Honorable Yvonne Scarlett-Golden, Mayor of Daytona Beach, Florida.

On Tuesday, December 5, this great pioneering lady succumbed to cancer at the age of 80, even as she continued performing her duties as the first female and African-American Mayor of that city. She was buried with full honors in her native Daytona Beach on Wednesday, December 13, surrounded by her six grandchildren, two brothers and a be-reaved constituency. Her untimely passing will truly leave a deep void in our midst, especially in our state's African-American leadership and among the august membership of the National League of Cities, which looked up to Mayor Scarlett-Golden as one of Florida's truly great mayors.

Affectionately called "The Mayor," by her constituents and friends, Mrs. Scarlett-Golden was one of the best and noblest of Florida's leaders. She dedicated 38 years of her life toward championing the education and academic achievements of Florida students and those who came under her tutelage at the San Francisco (California) Unified School District. She advocated comprehensive academics for

her students, along with scholastic projects designed to help students at the junior and senior college levels. Mrs. Scarlett-Golden believed that education was the best way for children of the poor to achieve and serve as responsible and productive citizens.

A native of Daytona Beach, Mayor Scarlett-Golden obtained her early education at Daytona Beach's Campbell and Kaiser Laboratory School. She went on to get her Bachelor's degree, graduating with Honors from Bethune-Cookman College (B-CC), and later on obtained her Master's Degree in Education from Boston University. In 1999, her alma mater (B-CC) conferred upon her the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Former Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, a longtime friend, said of her, "Yvonne was an incredible woman who achieved a tremendous amount in her life. She took on challenges and she was a real fighter. I never would've guessed the end was so near for my dear friend." "She lived everyday as though her incredible life was never going to end."

This public servant was a multi-dimensional leader, an indefatigable community-builder, and a loving mother and grandmother. Her leadership was truly admirable. Mrs. Scarlett-Golden was a faithful steward of Daytona Beach. She was God's faithful servant, bringing hope and optimism to thousands of ordinary folks whose lives she touched so deeply, never holding anyone at arm's length. This remarkable lady was a friend of the family. She was my confidante, and I was blessed to have her as my god-mother. Indeed, for me, she will serve as an indelible reminder of the noble commitment and awesome power of public service on behalf of the less fortunate. Her faith was deep and resolute and she was blessed with a sunny disposition and enviable optimism. She will be truly missed.

She taught us the virtues of hope, optimism and faith during her earthly sojourn. This is the wonderful legacy Mayor Yvonne Scarlett-Golden left behind. And this is the gift with which she blesses us now.

INLAND EMPIRE REGIONAL WATER RECYCLING INITIATIVE

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to re-introduce the Inland Empire Regional Water Recycling Initiative, to authorize water recycling projects under the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program. This legislation, which passed the House in the 109th Congress, is an important component of southern California's regional water management.

The Inland Empire Water Recycling Initiative authorizes \$30 million for the Inland Empire Utilities Agency and the Cucamonga Valley Water District to assist in constructing two water recycling projects. The projects will produce nearly 100,000 acre-feet of new water annually to the area's water supply. This initiative has the support of all member agencies of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, which encompasses 240 square miles in southern California. It also serves a number of cities I represent, including the cities of Rancho Cucamonga, Upland and Montclair.

These water agencies are using high quality recycled water in many water intensive applications, like landscape and agricultural irrigation, construction, and industrial cooling. This allows fresh water to be conserved or used for drinking, which reduces our dependence on expensive imported water. In addition, by recycling water which would otherwise be wasted and unavailable, these agencies ensure that we ring the last drop of use out of water before it is ultimately returned to the environment.

It is imperative that we continue to approve measures preventing water supply shortages in the Western United States. This recycling initiative will help meet the water needs of the Inland Empire and begin a strategic federal-local partnership to bring a significant amount of new water supply to the region. In fact, the Bureau of Reclamation has already recognized the Inland Empire Water Recycling Initiative as one of the most cost effective water reuse projects.

The Inland Empire Regional Water Recycling Initiative has the support of all member agencies of IEUA, as well as the water agencies downstream in Orange County. IEUA serves the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Fontana (through the Fontana Water Company), Ontario, Upland, Montclair, Rancho Cucamonga (through the Cucamonga Valley Water District), and the Monte Vista Water District.

I look forward to working closely with the House Resources Committee, and with the new Water and Power Subcommittee Chairwoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, who is a cosponsor of this bill and has been a champion of regional water solutions. I am also pleased to have the continued support of my colleagues, KEN CALVERT and GARY MILLER.

RECOGNIZING NICHOLAS J. PILCH FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Nicolas J. Pilch, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Nicolas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Nicolas has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Nicolas J. Pilch for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Nicolas in the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO THE VERY REVEREND
FATHER JOVAN TODOROVICH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I congratulate the Very Reverend Father Jovan Todorovich upon his retirement as parish priest at Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church in Merrillville, Indiana. I can truly say throughout his more than 36 years of service at Saint Sava, Father Todorovich has been one of the most dedicated, distinguished, and committed citizens of Indiana's First Congressional District. Northwest Indiana and Saint Sava have certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising loyalty he has displayed to the parish and the entire community.

Father Todorovich was born in Vratara, Serbia on July 5, 1940. From a very young age, he was inspired by his faith and realized that a life of service in the priesthood was his calling. In pursuit of his dream, Father Todorovich eventually went on to complete his courses, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Theological Studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary College in Prizen. Following the completion of his studies, Father Todorovich emigrated to the United States of America in 1964. In 1965, due to his perseverance and dedication, Father Todorovich's efforts came to fruition with his ordination into the priesthood.

Prior to joining the congregation at Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church, while serving as parish priest for Saint George Church, Father Todorovich served as the director of the Saint Sava Mission Summer Camp program in California. Shortly thereafter, in 1970, he arrived at Saint Sava Church, which was located in Gary, Indiana at the time. Early on during his tenure as parish priest at Saint Sava, Father Todorovich's abilities as a teacher and community leader began to emerge. It was through his efforts at this time that many new members joined the congregation, a new donation campaign was initiated, new church bylaws were introduced, and the need for social gatherings and activities for youth was realized.

When a fire destroyed the church in Gary, Father Todorovich led the parishioners of Saint Sava to a new chapel in Hobart, Indiana, where services were held until the construction of the current church, located in Merrillville, Indiana, was completed. Subsequently, the new church was consecrated in May 1991. Once again, with Father Todorovich's leadership and committed efforts, as well as the vast efforts of many parishioners, the people of Saint Sava were once again able to come together with their spiritual leader and each other to worship.

The new church's consecration, however, was not the only momentous occasion at this time, as Father Todorovich was awarded the highest honor, the Pectoral Cross with the title of Protojerej Stavrofor. To further illustrate the high esteem in which Father Todorovich is held by his parish and his community, in April 1993, he was appointed to the distinguished position of Deputy to the Metropolitan.

Another of the many ways Father Todorovich has touched the lives of so many

people is through his writing. Father Todorovich is quite the accomplished writer, having produced several literary works, including: Patron Saint-Krsna Slava, Our Slava: A Manual on Confession and Communion, and A Visitor's Guide to Saint Sava Church. He has also penned various articles for the Diocesan Observer, as well as for Saint Sava's church bulletin.

Although his pastoral duties and many additional responsibilities have required a vast amount of his time, what is most impressive is the fact that Father Todorovich has never let his busy schedule keep him from his greatest love, his family. Father Todorovich and his wife, Protinica Mirijana, are the proud parents of three daughters, and they have also been blessed with one grandchild.

Madam Speaker, America is a better place because of the tireless and unselfish service of its citizens. Very Reverend Father Jovan Todorovich is a man who has dedicated his entire life to serving others, and he has been the truest example of morality and wisdom. In so doing, he has strengthened his community and the whole of our society. I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Very Reverend Father Jovan Todorovich for his lifetime of enduring service and the unforgettable effect he has had on the people of Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church and Northwest Indiana. I wish Father Todorovich and his family well upon his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTY R.
PINKSTON

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Marty R. Pinkston, a longtime and dear friend of my family and one of our community's unsung heroines.

On Friday, December 15, 2006, her peers, friends and supporters will honor her at a farewell dinner as she retires from her position as Director of Governmental and Public Affairs at Florida Memorial University.

A preeminent educator, Dr. Pinkston is affectionately known as "Marty" to her countless admirers and is truly one of the most indomitable community activists of South Florida. Having dedicated a major portion of her life to making the public educational system work on behalf of Florida's minority and poor students, she has been relentless in developing innovative educational programs that succinctly responded to the needs of our community's underserved college student population. Responsible for developing strategies to secure additional resources for the university from local, state and federal sources, Dr. Pinkston was unrelenting in her dedication to providing quality education for all those willing to walk the extra mile in pursuing their college degree.

Having received her bachelor's degree from Florida A&M University, she went on to obtain her MA in Business Education from New York Institute of Technology and her Doctorate in Education from Nova Southeastern University. She complimented her educational achievements with her chairmanship of the Metro-

Miami Action Plan Trust and service on the United Way of Miami-Dade County and the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce, as well as on the Metro-Dade County Safe Neighborhoods Parks Oversight Committee.

Dr. Pinkston epitomizes an admirable spirit of compassion and her concern for the less fortunate in our society will forever be lauded. But she is more than that. Dr. Marty Pinkston is remarkable not just for her energy, achievements and leadership, but because of the kind of person that she is. People are naturally attracted to her. The day just goes better if you get the chance to spend some time with Marty Pinkston.

As one of those hardy spirits who conscientiously chose to reach out to the less fortunate, Dr. Pinkston thoroughly understood how leadership could truly change people's lives. She wisely exercised her leadership and political skills, alongside the mandate of her conviction and the wisdom of her knowledge. The crucial role she played all these years in developing the winning strategy for many a successful candidate for elective office evokes a genuine insight borne out of experience and expertise. She would often say that the accolades are not that important at all. Instead, she would note that what is important is that our community receives the recognition of its strength and promise amidst the tremendous challenges it has had to undertake all through the years.

It is an honor to have the the privilege of knowing this gentle and caring leader. I salute Dr. Marty R. Pinkston, a very dear friend, on behalf of a grateful community that she truly loves and cares for. Now, in retirement, she embarks upon new challenges in life and I am certain her legacy of greatness will only grow and develop as she enters this new phase of life. I wish her every happiness and success.

SAN GABRIEL BASIN
RESTORATION FUND

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will continue to provide safe drinking water to Southern California. In 2000, Congress created the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund after the discovery of perchlorate and other harmful contaminants in the basin's groundwater. The fund initially authorized \$85 million in federal funding to assist the state and local government agencies as well as the private companies found responsible for the contamination to effectively implement a comprehensive clean up plan that would protect the safety of our region's drinking water supply. After evaluation, it is evident that an increase in this authorization is necessary. Therefore, I am introducing legislation to amend the original authorization by increasing the total amount by \$50 million.

The San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) has done a tremendous job in administering the clean up program. In 1999, the WQA projected the cost of cleaning up the San Gabriel Basin at a total of \$320 million based on the level of contamination of the five original Operable Units of Baldwin Park, El

Monte, South El Monte, Whittier Narrows and Puente Valley. Since the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund was authorized by Congress in 2000, dramatically increased contamination levels have been identified in the South El Monte and Puente Valley Operable Units. This discovery has significantly increased both the capitol and operation and maintenance costs of the projects. With the cost of inflation, increased energy costs and the higher contamination levels found, the total cost is now estimated at \$1 billion. Significantly, the WQA has a number of treatment plants that are already operating at full capacity with more coming on line in the near future.

The San Gabriel Groundwater Basin covers more than 160 square miles in Los Angeles County and is the primary source of drinking water for over 1.2 million people. Furthermore, natural groundwater flows from the San Gabriel Basin are allowing the contamination to spread into the Central Groundwater Basin, a vast 277 square-mile underground aquifer that provides drinking water to over half of Los Angeles County.

In working with the WQA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation over the past decade on this regional solution, there is no doubt that this increase is warranted and will be utilized in the most effective way to continue to provide safe drinking water.

I look forward to working closely with the House Resources Committee, and with the new Water and Power Subcommittee Chairwoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, who is a cosponsor of this bill and has been a champion of regional water solutions. I am also pleased to have the support of my colleagues ADAM SCHIFF, HILDA SOLIS and GARY MILLER, who are cosponsors of this legislation.

RECOGNIZING ZACHARY R. BODE
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Zachary R. Bode, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Zachary has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Zachary has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Zachary R. Bode for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Zachary in the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO MR. DALE ENGQUIST

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKEY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor and pleasure that I stand before you today to recognize the many years of dedicated service of Mr. Dale Engquist. Having known Dale for many years, I can truly say that he is one of the most committed, knowledgeable, and honorable citizens in Northwest Indiana. Nowhere has his knowledge and commitment been more evident than in his faithful service to the National Park Service (NPS), and more specifically, to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Dale has served the Northwest Indiana community for the past 28 years, and his service to the NPS has spanned an astonishing 42 years. For many years, Dale has been a constant fixture at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and for his efforts, he will be honored at a retirement party on Tuesday, January 9, 2007, at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts in Michigan City, Indiana.

Following a summer position at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota, Dale Engquist began his professional career with the NPS in 1964 at the National Capital Parks in Washington, DC. From there, Dale went on to serve as Chief Park Naturalist at Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas and then Assistant Chief Park Naturalist at Everglades National Park in Florida. Following his departure from Everglades National Park in 1971, Dale accepted his first Superintendent position at the Biscayne National Monument in Florida. After moving on to other managerial positions in New Jersey and Washington, DC, Dale settled in Northwest Indiana in 1978, where he served as Assistant Superintendent of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore until January 1983. At that time, Dale was named to the distinguished position of Superintendent of the National Lakeshore, a position he has held for the past 24 years. Over the years, Dale has maintained this post, and he has done so with a selfless commitment to nature and to the community. Dale's education, knowledge, and experience with the NPS have made him successful and respected in all of the positions he has held.

Indisputably, Dale Engquist has been extremely successful throughout his career with the NPS. To attest to this fact, Dale has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards for merit and dedication. In 1987, he was awarded the Park Planning and Design Award for excellence in park design, as well as the Richard G. Lugar Award for recognition as an outstanding federal employee in the state of Indiana. In addition, Dale has also been honored with the 1991 Superintendent of the Year & Resource Stewardship Award, the National Park Service's 75th Anniversary Director's Award, the Sagamore of the Wabash, the Meritorious Service Award by then-Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, the Polish Cavalry Cross of Merit, and the Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Conservation Award.

Though it may be difficult to imagine where he finds the time, Dale has always been involved in several associations and organizations, including: the Association of National Park Rangers, the Eastern National Parks &

Monument Association, the National Park & Recreation Association, the Indiana Park & Recreation Association, the Indiana Historical Society, the National Audubon Society, and Rotary International.

Madam Speaker, Dale Engquist has devoted himself to improving and preserving the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and serving the people of Northwest Indiana throughout his many years of service. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in commending him for his lifetime of service and dedication.

TRIBUTE TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise in solidarity with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools on the occasion of National World AIDS Day. Miami-Dade County Public Schools are working hard within my community to provide much-needed prevention information, as well as assistance to those afflicted with the HIV/AIDS virus.

Indeed, the National World AIDS Day evokes once again a special opportunity for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, my North Dade constituents and the larger Miami-Dade County and South Florida communities to renew our collective and individual commitment to find a cure for this treatable and preventable disease. As we remember in our prayers those who passed on, as well as reach out to those who need our help, we are reminded of the urgency to fight against the spread of this virus. Despite the best efforts of our AIDS-support community organizations, in concert with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, HIV/AIDS continues to be a devastating disease. I commend our health care professionals, the volunteers from our community organizations, and our schools, who together exemplify a symbol of strength and resilience in a way that combines true professionalism and utmost compassion along the tradition of our stewardship for one another.

The leadership of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools is readily focused on providing the opportunities of outreach information and ongoing education in a way that advances the common good of our fellow human beings, especially those who are suffering from the effects of the AIDS disease.

Despite the strategies and activities that organizations of good-will have utilized to combat this virus, we are still saddled with the fact that the pace of the AIDS infection is staggering. According to recent statistics from the World Health Organization, the past year alone has seen more infection and death from HIV/AIDS than ever before.

Of the estimated 18,371 AIDS-related deaths in the United States in 2006, approximately 52 percent were from the Black community. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Blacks accounted for 54 percent of all new diagnoses of HIV/AIDS. In Florida, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among Black males and females, aged 25 to 44 years old. According to the Florida Department of Health, over half of all people living with HIV/

AIDS in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties are Black.

As we celebrate National World AIDS Day in light of these agonizing facts, we must put forth a much more aggressive and concerted effort to reach out to our communities, teaching our residents about this disease, insure proper treatment for AIDS victims and continue the research needed to bring this epidemic under control. This infectious disease should not be a partisan issue, but should be a commitment for all Americans. We can and we must address the HIV/AIDS epidemic aggressively, both at home and abroad.

I encourage everyone in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties and beyond to get tested; get informed about prevention and get treatment if you need it. Let's all renew our efforts to stop the spread of this dreaded disease and, as a caring community, reach out to those of our fellow residents who are already living with HIV/AIDS. I commend the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for their leadership role in raising the awareness level about HIV/AIDS and encourage school administrators, faculty, staff and students to continue with this most laudable effort.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES C. CROWE,
IV FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK
OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Charles C. Crowe, IV, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Charles has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Charles has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Charles C. Crowe, IV for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Charles in the United States House of Representatives.

COMMENDING LEE BANDY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, last month, the dean of South Carolina political reporters, Lee Bandy, announced his retirement from The State newspaper. Bandy joined The State in 1966, serving as Washington correspondent and bureau chief before relocating to Columbia. I well remember him giving me a tour of Congressional offices when I was a Senate intern in 1967.

I have known and worked with Lee extensively during my years in South Carolina poli-

tics. While his departure marks the end of an era, I know Lee will continue to exert tremendous influence on the South Carolina political scene.

At a recent meeting of Midlands First Tuesday Club, I presented Lee a Certificate of Achievement on behalf of Congress.

On December 14, 2006, The State's Aaron Gould Sheinin penned the following article marking Bandy's retirement:

AFTER 40 YEARS AND 3,000 COLUMNS, THE
STATE'S LEE BANDY IS RETIRING

Hailed as a legend by colleagues and a mover and shaker by sources, reporter has kept finger on pulse of S.C. politics

Legendary political reporter and columnist Lee Bandy will retire at the end of the year after 40 years with The State newspaper.

Bandy, 71, has been with the newspaper since 1966. He started as Washington correspondent, then served as Washington bureau chief. He moved to Columbia in January 1992.

While Bandy will retire from day-to-day reporting, he will continue writing his weekly Sunday column at least through 2007.

During a luncheon in his honor Wednesday at the newspaper, Bandy told his colleagues, "I've met a lot of fascinating people, and I might add I've worked with some wonderful people. You've been a source of inspiration to me."

As the top political reporter in South Carolina, Bandy often is sought out by politicians looking for a positive mention in his Sunday column. During Wednesday's lunch, in fact, potential 2008 presidential candidate John Edwards left a phone message for Bandy congratulating him on his coming retirement.

During 40 years of writing his column, Bandy never missed a week. He said he estimates he's written 3,000 columns. Each column is about 800 words. That's more than 2 million words, "and that's more than enough for anybody," Bandy said.

David Broder, longtime political reporter for The Washington Post, said Bandy was a legend in the Senate Press Gallery in Washington. Broder still occasionally calls Bandy to get the pulse of South Carolina politics.

"He's enormously generous and helpful and tells you stories you would never hear from any other source," Broder said.

Former S.C. Gov. David Beasley, a Republican, called Bandy his friend and said, "No one has become president of the United States without crossing his path in 40 years, and no one has had an impact on South Carolina government that hasn't dealt with Lee Bandy."

A native of Asheville, Bandy is a graduate of Bob Jones University. He is a member of the exclusive Gridiron Club of Washington journalists. He and his wife, Mary, have two sons, Ryan and Michael, a daughter, Alexa, and two grandchildren, Sophia and Nathaniel. They are members of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia and live in Forest Acres.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BALANCED
BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation that will amend the United States Constitution to force Congress to rein in spending by balancing the federal budget.

It is common sense to American families that they cannot spend more than they have—yet far too frequently, this fundamental principle has been lost on a Congress that is too busy spending to pay attention to the bottom line.

Our federal government must be lean, efficient and responsible with the dollars that our nation's citizens worked so hard to earn. We must work to both eliminate every cent of waste and squeeze every cent of value out of each dollar our citizens entrust to us. Families all across our nation understand what it means to make tough decisions each day about what they can and cannot afford, corporate officers are required to act in the best interests of their shareholders when using company resources, and government officials should be held to similar standards when spending the hard-earned dollars of our nation's citizens.

Congress took a dramatic step forward last year when it passed the Deficit Reduction Act. This new law found savings of approximately \$40 billion over the next five years by eliminating wasteful spending and programs. This legislation was an important first step, but it was just that—a first step. Furthermore, the legislation was passed by the Senate by a margin of just one vote and was passed by the House by a margin of two votes, which shows exactly how difficult the task of balancing the budget is—and how important it is to force Congress to do so.

In the 109th Congress, we were fortunate to have a majority in the House and Senate that had an appetite for reining in spending but we still have to make considerable strides to achieve a balanced budget. Only time will tell whether future Congresses will have this appetite as well. However, one thing is certain—if we pass an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that requires a balanced budget, Congress will have to act accordingly regardless of which party is in control in Washington, D.C. This is exactly why I am introducing this legislation today.

My legislation would amend the Constitution to require that total spending for any fiscal year not exceed total receipts and require the president to propose budgets to Congress that are balanced each year. It would also provide an exception in times of military conflicts that pose imminent and serious military threats to national security.

Furthermore, the legislation would make it harder to increase taxes by requiring that legislation to increase revenue must be passed by a true majority of each chamber and not just a majority of those present and voting. Finally, the bill requires a 3/5 majority vote for any increases in the debt limit.

This concept is not new. Forty-nine out of fifty States have a balanced budget requirement.

It has become clear that it is extremely difficult for Congress to agree on a budget that is fiscally responsible. By amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, we can force Congress to control spending, paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, rather than allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and in doing so leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

Yesterday, President Bush also highlighted the importance of a balanced federal budget

by announcing his plan to present Congress with a budget proposal that will balance the budget by 2012. I applaud the President for his announcement and look forward to working with him to bring fiscal responsibility back to the federal government.

Our nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that America's families face each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES T. ORTMAN FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Charles T. Ortman, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Charles has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Charles has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Charles T. Ortman for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Charles in the United States House of Representatives.

THE TEAM (TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVELY-FUELED VEHICLE MANUFACTURING) UP FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE ACT

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, climate change threatens the security and stability of our planet. The temperature of the earth is increasing at a rate unseen in modern times and is starting to melt the polar ice caps and disrupt weather patterns. Unprecedented levels of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere by automobiles and industries, with about one-fourth of the world's carbon dioxide emissions being produced by the United States, have led to current rates of warming.

Historically high gas prices and political instability in oil producing regions reinforce the need for the United States to secure our energy independence. We can make real progress by developing and distributing alternatively fueled vehicles. Through innovation and existing technology, we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and promote energy efficiency and conservation to secure a safe future for our country and the environment.

Alternatively fueled vehicles, such as those that use E85 ethanol fuel, could reduce our use of petroleum fuels by up to 40%, helping our country move towards sustainable energy independence. E85 ethanol fuel can be produced from agricultural products grown here in the United States, so that money spent on fuel supports farmers in the Midwest, not countries in the Middle East. Corn may not be the only answer to biofuels, as other sources of energy such as switchgrass or other renewable starch re-sources are also on the horizon.

Congress must do more to make alternative fueled vehicles practical and accessible to every American. There are currently only six million E85-capable vehicles on U.S. roads, compared to approximately 230 million gasoline- and diesel-fueled vehicles, according to the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition. Only 993 fuel stations in the entire country currently provide E85 fuel, and only four of these are located in California.

That is why I am again introducing this bill to encourage consumers and manufacturers to develop the infrastructure necessary for a cleaner energy future. We must do more to make alternatively fueled vehicles practical and accessible to everyone. The cost of producing flex fuel capable vehicles is minimal at the time of manufacture, but there are currently few incentives for the production of flex fuel vehicles and a lack of infrastructure to service them.

My bill will encourage the production of more alternatively fueled vehicles by phasing in a tax penalty on the manufacture or import of new, non-flex fuel vehicles. However, since the cost to convert fleets to flex fuel is nearly nil, it will be easy for manufacturers or importers to avoid these costs completely. Any revenues generated would be used to help independent gas station owners install alternative fuel equipment.

I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI for her hard work and dedication to increase investment in renewable energy and ultimately achieving energy independence. I hope this bill can be a part of the crucial national dialogue towards securing our energy independence and helping America move towards a more secure and sustainable future.

COMMENDING JOAN COUNTRYMAN

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Joan Countryman, who recently became the head of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa.

In 2005, Ms. Countryman stepped down as head of the prestigious Lincoln School for girls in Providence, Rhode Island.

Ms. Countryman, a Quaker, began her career first as a math teacher and then as an administrator at the Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia, which she attended as a student. She received a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College in 1962, and after taking part in the civil rights movement, she received a master's degree in urban studies from Yale. In 1966, Ms. Countryman received a Fulbright fellowship to the London School of Economics. She is also a former Columbia University Klingenstein Fellow and a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Ms. Countryman is also the author of works such as her 1992 book, *Writing to Learn Mathematics*, in which she explained how she approached the teaching of math by using such tools as journals, learning logs, and formal papers.

Before asking Ms. Countryman to head her new academy, Oprah Winfrey first asked her to lend her experience and expertise as a consultant. Oprah Winfrey founded the Leadership Academy with the goal of targeting South African girls from poor families and giving them an educational opportunity that they would otherwise not have received. Beginning with 152 girls in the seventh and eighth grades, the academy has a goal of expanding through grade 12.

I know that Joan Countryman will institute a welcoming and challenging school environment at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy. Rhode Island was honored to have Ms. Countryman as an educator for twelve years, and the girls in South Africa will be lucky to have her there now.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join with me in wishing Joan Countryman well in her new endeavor, as well as success to the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy.

RECOGNIZING JONATHAN VERNICKAS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jonathan Vernickas, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 214, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jonathan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jonathan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jonathan Vernickas for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Jonathan in the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING JOHN CASE, CHAIRMAN
OF THE PACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank John Case for his eight years of service as Chairman of the Pace Board of Directors. Under John's leadership, numerous improvements were instituted to North America's 6th largest bus system, resulting in better service for millions of Americans living in the Chicagoland area.

It is no surprise that John was chosen to serve as Chairman of the Board—he has a long history of serving his community and nation. As a retired United States Air Force Major with twenty years of service, including in the third bomber wing during the Korean War, he brought many valuable skills to his role as Chairman. His experience is evident in the many improvements he instituted. These include developing Board Committees to handle specific decision areas, implementing use of biodiesel in the Pace bus fleet, doubling the size of Pace's vanpool program, ensuring that retirement funds are being adequately funded, and implementation of the Intelligent Bus System, which provides real-time information on bus locations, ridership and on-time performance.

John is a dedicated public servant. For more than forty years, he has served his community in many public roles. He began his public career in Lisle Township—located in the 13th District of Illinois, which I represent—and, since then, has held the position of Township Trustee and Supervisor for Lisle Township. In Dupage County, in which Lisle Township resides, he has served as a DuPage County Board Member, County Board Chairman, and Forest Preserve President.

Once again, I would like to congratulate and thank John Case on his eight successful years as Chairman of the Pace Board of Directors and for all he has done for his community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GERALD
W. HEANEY FEDERAL BUILDING
AND UNITED STATES COURT-
HOUSE AND CUSTOMHOUSE ACT

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of a bill to name the Federal building and United States Courthouse and Customhouse in Duluth, Minnesota, in honor of Judge Gerald W. Heaney. Judge Heaney was appointed Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit on November 3, 1966. After 40 years of distinguished judicial service, Judge Heaney retired on August 31, 2006.

Judge Heaney was born on January 29, 1918, in Goodhue, a rural community in the southeastern part of Minnesota. As a child growing up in a farming community, Judge Heaney learned the value of a close family, honesty, and hard work. These qualities have

marked not only his personal life but also his life as a public servant. He was educated at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and received his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1941.

Gerry Heaney is a decorated World War II veteran. He was a member of the distinguished Army Ranger Battalion and participated in the historic D-Day landing at Normandy. He was awarded the Silver Star for extraordinary bravery in the battle of La Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, France. He also received a Bronze Star and five battle stars.

At the end of the war, Judge Heaney returned home and entered private practice in Duluth. During that time he was instrumental in improving the state education system, and served on the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota. He was instrumental in helping the Duluth school system develop a payroll system that equalized the pay for both men and women.

In 1966, President Johnson appointed Judge Heaney to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. In that capacity, Judge Heaney has been a champion of protecting the rights of the disadvantaged. He is devoted to making sure that every person has an equal opportunity for an education, a job, and a home. He firmly believes the poor, the less educated, and less advantaged deserve the protections provided by the United States Constitution.

As a hard working, well-prepared, and fair-minded jurist, Judge Heaney left his legal imprimatur on school desegregation cases, bankruptcy law, prisoner treatment, and social security law.

His public service is discerned by industry, brilliance, and scholarly excellence. His compassion and dedication to our most disadvantaged are unparalleled.

It is fitting and proper for Congress to designate the Duluth, Minnesota Federal Building and United States Courthouse and Customhouse in honor of Judge Gerald W. Heaney.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

RECOGNIZING ADAM ZELLER FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Adam Zeller, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 180, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Adam has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Adam has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Adam Zeller for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Adam in the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCING THE MAKE COLLEGE
AFFORDABLE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to help millions of Americans afford higher education by introducing the Make College Affordable Act of 2007, which makes college tuition tax deductible. Today the average cost of education at a state university is \$12,796 per year, and the cost of education at a private university is \$30,367 per year! These high costs have left many middle class American families struggling to afford college for their children, who are often ineligible for financial aid. Therefore, middle class students have no choice but to obtain student loans, and thus leave college saddled with massive debt.

Even families who plan and save well in advance for their children's education may have a difficult time because their savings are eroded by taxation and inflation. The Make College Affordable Act will help these middle class students by allowing them, or their parents or guardians who claim them as dependents, to deduct the cost of college tuition as well as the cost of student loan repayments.

The Make College Affordable Act will also help older or nontraditional students looking to improve their job skills or prepare for a career change, by pursuing higher education. In today's economy, the average American worker can expect to change jobs, and even careers, several times during his or her working life, making it more important than ever that working Americans be able to devote their resources to continuing their educations.

Helping the American people use their own money to ensure every qualified American can receive a college education is one of the best investments this Congress can make in the future. I therefore urge my colleagues to help strengthen America by ensuring more Americans can obtain college educations by co-sponsoring the Make College Affordable Act.

TRIBUTE TO LT. COL. D.B.
RICHWINE, JR.

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, we open the 110th Congress, I rise today to honor a fine American and a devoted public servant and to congratulate him on a significant achievement. Donald Bowen Richwine, Jr. serves our Nation as a Marine Corps Officer and served the Congress as a Congressional Fellow in my office from December 2003 to December 2004. Recently he served our Nation's ongoing efforts in the Global War on Terror by his exemplary conduct in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from October 2005 to April 2006. As a result of his devotion to duty and excellence as an officer, Bowen was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on January 3, 2007 in a ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Additionally, Bowen was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his meritorious achievement in connection

with combat operations against the enemy as Department of Border Enforcement Coordinator. The formal citation for this Medal follows below. I heartily congratulate Lt. Col. Richwine on his promotion and the recognition of his meritorious achievement. I share the pride felt by his wife Angela and their children, Owen and Charlie, at this time in Bowen's career.

For meritorious achievement in connection with combat operations against the enemy as Department of Border Enforcement Coordinator, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 04–06 and 05–07 from October 2005 to April 2006. During this period, Major Richwine was directly responsible for the development of Iraqi border forces along over 1000 kilometers of Iraq's borders. Coordinating movements of border forces, border fort construction, and Border Transition Teams, his determined efforts led to the strategically significant restoration of Iraq's borders on 30 November 2005. Identifying a significant problem at the Ports of Entry, Major Richwine developed an innovative plan involving the creation of a multi-agency task force formed to train, advise, and mentor the forces at the Ports of Entry. Ultimately this solution was briefed to the Commanding General Multi National Forces-Iraq who decided to duplicate this idea at other locations throughout Iraq. Finally, displaying an unusually prescient grasp on the mechanisms needed to grow new units, Major Richwine on his own initiative and despite the absence of Military Occupational Specialty Schools for the border police, sought out school seats at Ministry of Defense schools across Iraq. His vigorous efforts have led to the very first school trained Iraqi Border Police, giving them critical life support capabilities which will permit them to develop logistics systems that will support their force long after the Coalition Forces depart Iraq. Major Richwine's total effectiveness, forceful leadership, and loyal devotion to duty reflected great credit upon him and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

RECOGNIZING MR. TED NELSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Mr. Ted Nelson of Liberty, Missouri. Ted served in the United States Navy. He fought for our country during the Korean War.

Mr. Nelson enlisted in the United States Navy before he had the opportunity to graduate from high school. He continued to serve in the Navy during the Korean War. He served honorably and returned to Liberty, Missouri. Mr. Nelson recently received his high school diploma from the Marcus School District in Marcus, Iowa.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Mr. Ted Nelson. His many years of distinguished service and commitment to serving his country have been an inspiration. I commend him for his service, and I am honored to represent him in the United States Congress.

HONORING PRESIDENT GERALD
FORD

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, with the passing of President Gerald Ford our Nation, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Ford Family have lost a leader, a respected colleague and a loved one who was very special to their lives.

Few American leaders of our time have gained the admiration and appreciation so well deserved and earned by our 38th President. While our country has lost a distinguished leader and the Congress has lost a distinguished Member, Gerald Ford's life and public service will always remain a model for future generations.

In October of 1999, I had the pleasure to quietly sit and speak with President Ford at the conclusion of a Capitol Hill reception that was held after he was honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in the Capitol Rotunda. While I had met him before, what struck me on this special occasion was how such a great man receiving the highest honor from our Nation and Congress could be so humble, so gracious and so genuine.

How memorable it was for me to spend that special time with that gentle man and great American. How fitting it was that Gerald Ford returned this week to the Capitol and the Congress he loved. While this gentle man belongs to the ages, he will always share a special place in our hearts and fond memories.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ABIJAH DAVIS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark an important milestone in the life of one of my fellow Marylanders—John Abijah Davis—who today celebrates his 100th birthday.

John Abijah Davis was born January 4, 1907 in an upstairs bedroom of his parent's house on North Sherman Drive in Indianapolis, Indiana—a home built by his Uncle, Issac Davis. Named after another Uncle, John Davis, and his father, Abijah Alley Davis, John A. Davis grew up in that home, attending St. Phillip Neri school and parish, before moving on to Cathedral High School in 1920, graduating in 1924 with the first full four-year class in school history.

John Davis graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1928 with a BA in English. At school, he counted among his friends Walter "Red" Smith, later a Pulitzer Prize winning sports columnist for the New York Times, Miller Brewing Company heir Fred Miller and Howard Phelan, who later in life donated the famous "Touchdown Jesus" mural that adorns the facade of the school library overlooking the football stadium.

In 1934, John A. Davis married Virginia Lyon in Notre Dame's historic Log Chapel in a mass presided over by his cousin, Rev. John O'Hara, then president of Notre Dame.

In 1936, John and Virginia had a daughter, Mary Elizabeth Davis.

Moving from Indiana to New York, John Davis joined his brother Charles and opened the Browne-Davis Furniture Co. The business prospered and both became treasured members of the local community in Oswego. Selling their successful business after 40-plus years, the Davis brothers enjoyed a fulfilling retirement.

John briefly became a constituent of mine when he retired to Dameron, Maryland to live with his daughter Mary Elizabeth. Following her death in 2001, John moved to Cheverly, Maryland, residing with his grandson, John Davis Porcari, and his wife and five children. John Porcari served with great distinction as Maryland Secretary of Transportation under Governor Parris Glendening. He has recently been selected by Governor-elect Martin O'Malley to take on this position in his administration.

John Davis heads a family consisting of four grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. Dozens of nieces and nephews from four generations and scores of friends continue to look up to Mr. Davis, including his grand-nephew, Lt. Col. Harold VanOpdorp, USMC, who commands the First Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment in Anbar Province, Iraq.

According to his family, John Abijah Davis continues to teach life's most valuable lessons—humility, duty and hard work, devotion to one's God, family and friends. These lessons are reflected in all those he has touched. As he, his family and friends celebrate this milestone, they celebrate not the chronology of years, but the character of the man.

I join with his family and many friends in wishing him continued health and happiness on his 100th birthday.

RECOGNIZING CHAD BRENTON FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Chad Brenton, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 320, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Chad has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Chad has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Chad Brenton for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Chad in the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 211, THE
CALLING FOR 211 ACT OF 2007

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I'm very proud to introduce the Calling for 211 Act of 2007, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee to move this legislation through Committee and bring it to the House floor. I have cosponsored this bill in previous Congresses with former Rep. Mike Bilirakis, and I'm confident that we now have the momentum to pass this legislation and send it to the President.

Every hour of every day, someone in the United States needs essential services for themselves or someone close to them. These services can range from finding an after-school program for a child, to securing care for an aging parent, to finding drug or alcohol counseling. Faced with a myriad of agencies and help lines, many people end up going without services they need just because they don't know where to begin.

When someone calls 2-1-1, an information and referral specialist assesses the caller's needs and determines which service provider is best equipped to handle their problem or crisis. These specialists are also trained to determine whether a caller may be eligible for other programs. 2-1-1 service providers maintain comprehensive databases of resources, including federal, state, and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and private non-profits.

In 2000, the FCC designated 2-1-1 for community information and referral purposes. Today, 2-1-1 reaches 193 million Americans—about 69 percent of the U.S. population—with call centers operational in 41 states and the District of Columbia. However, inadequate funding prevents universal access to 2-1-1 service in every state. 2-1-1 service is currently available statewide in only 17 states. The goal of the Calling for 211 Act of 2007 is to ensure that all Americans have access to quality community information and referral services through 2-1-1 wherever they live.

The largest barriers for communities seeking to implement 2-1-1 are funding and awareness. In many states, limited resources have slowed the process of connecting communities with this vital service. Current funding where 2-1-1 is operational comes from diverse sources including non-profits, state governments, foundations, and businesses.

The Calling for 211 Act is strongly supported by the United Way and builds on existing efforts to make it easier to connect people with important community services and volunteer opportunities. The legislation provides federal matching grants to enable much-needed changes to the way people connect to community social services, including:

Providing the infrastructure to connect individuals with precise information and social services that address their needs;

Empowering the nation to better respond to large-scale emergencies and homeland security needs by relieving pressure on overwhelmed 9-1-1 call centers. During the Hurricane Katrina disaster, 2-1-1 served as a cru-

cial backup in areas where 9-1-1 centers went down;

Providing aggregated data from 2-1-1 systems nationwide to better assess the needs of our communities.

I believe the 2-1-1 system has great potential; this legislation will establish a federal partnership with states and local communities to give more Americans access to 2-1-1 services. By augmenting existing funding from state and local governments, nonprofits, and the business community, we can ensure that 2-1-1 can finally be a truly national system. A small investment at the national level would pay immediate dividends in terms of faster, more efficient responses to non-emergency but still critical situations.

In a crisis no one has time to flip through their phonebook. When an urgent medical or safety issue arises, we dial 9-1-1 knowing we can get help anywhere and at anytime. We should expect the same when it comes to tracking down important social services as well.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help to implement this critical safety net for all Americans.

CONGRESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND
PENSION FORFEITURE ACT, H.R. 14

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Congressional Integrity and Pension Forfeiture Act, H.R. 14, which would deny Members of Congress their pension should they be convicted of a felony. I feel strongly that taxpayers should not be responsible for funding the pension of one of us if we have broken the law, broken the public's trust, and been convicted of a felony.

I introduced the same bill in the 109th Congress and a portion of it was included in the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, H.R. 4975. Unfortunately, this bill was never considered by the Senate. So I am reintroducing it today.

I based my bill almost exclusively after Congressman Randy Tate's bill from the 104th Congress, H.R. 4011. This bill, with 74 cosponsors, passed the House of Representatives on September 26, 1996 by a vote of 391-32 and 1 Present. It was never considered by the Senate.

The very first version of this bill was introduced by my predecessor, Congressman John Edward Porter, in 1990 during the 101st Congress. Congressman Porter had successfully passed a similar bill in the Illinois General Assembly prior to coming to the U.S. Congress. In the mid-1970s, two Members of the Illinois General Assembly were convicted of felonies, resigned, but were still allowed to receive their state pension. State Representative John Porter did not think that was right. Luckily, his bill passed the Illinois General Assembly and reform began.

An elected official should not be permitted to draw a publicly funded pension after violating the very law he or she took an oath to uphold. We should be held to a higher standard than others. We swore to uphold the constitution and if we fail to do that, we should not

receive anything back from the public. A breach of law by a Member of Congress is a very serious offense that should have very serious consequences.

A TRIBUTE TO DALE DEMERS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dale E. Demers on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office at Togus, Maine after more than 30 years of dedicated service. Dale will be greatly missed, and I join his many friends, co-workers and the veterans he served in wishing him the best of luck in the next phase of his life.

Dale's service to our country began in 1968, when he joined the U.S. Air Force. He began his VA career at the Togus Regional office in 1972 as a GS-1 Clerk. Dale has held several positions at Togus including Adjudicator, Supervisory Adjudicator, Assistant Service Center Manager, Service Center Manager, Assistant Center Director for Regional Office Activities, and most recently as the Director for the Regional Office.

While working full time at Togus, Dale went back to school and in 1977 received a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Maine.

During Dale's career, he has been involved in many VBA initiatives. He was instrumental in Togus being chosen as a resource center site. The Togus Resource Center has been a huge success and has exceeded its goal every month since its inception. Dale was also extremely involved in the development of the current Claims Processing Improvement (CPI) Initiative, which has assisted VBA national in reducing both the duration of the response and backlog of claims processing.

Dale will be missed for his dedication and for his compassion by the veterans of Maine. I am pleased to join his colleagues, his family, and his friends in congratulating Dale on this milestone. I wish him a rewarding and enjoyable retirement.

REINTRODUCTION OF
LEGISLATION

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased on this first day of the 110th Congress to introduce several pieces of legislation that I have been pursuing over the years, and for which I will continue to advocate these next 2 years.

Ultrasound technology provides us with a fascinating "womb with a view," allowing doctors to better treat their pregnant patients. But many underprivileged pregnant women cannot afford this important option. These women desperately need access to these free services to safeguard their health and prenatal well-being. That's why I am reintroducing the "Informed Choice Act," which authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to

make grants to community-based, non-profit health clinics that do not charge for their services, for the purchase of ultrasound equipment. The centers that receive these grants will be better able to offer free examinations—under medical supervision—to women who might otherwise have no access to such critical care.

I respect our code of law and our society founded on religious freedom for all Americans. I believe the Ten Commandments are a concise set of values that represent the historic foundation of our nation's laws and our common view of what is right and wrong. Stories of murder, rape, drug abuse, and school violence dominate the media and reveal our society's need to be reminded of our moral compass. That is why I am reintroducing my legislation to have the Ten Commandments prominently posted in the Capitol building as a symbolic reminder of our heritage and the values we aspire to govern by.

I am reintroducing my Right to Carry Reciprocity bill that would allow for a person to carry in all 50 states if he possesses a valid permit in his home state. I believe that a person's right to self-defense should not be limited to within a state line. Today, 46 states have laws permitting concealed carry of firearms, and 38 states, accounting for two-thirds of the U.S. population, have Right to Carry laws, which dramatically reduces their incidence of violent crimes. In fact, the FBI statistics show 9 of the 10 states with the lowest violent crime rates are RTC states. It is important to note this bill would not create a federal licensing system, but merely requires states to recognize each others' carry permits, just as they recognize drivers' licenses and carry permits held by armored car guards. This bill has enjoyed bipartisan support in the past with 102 cosponsors, and I look forward to again working with my esteemed colleagues for its passage in the 110th Congress.

I am also reintroducing two bills pushing further reforms to the United Nations. On March 15, 2006, the U.N. replaced the discredited Human Rights Commission with a new Human Rights Council. Unfortunately, the new Council looks set to fail just as miserably as its predecessor. While making superficial structural changes, no reforms were implemented. The new elected membership includes such human rights violators as China, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, and Russia. My legislation would require the Secretary of State to withhold from the U.S. contribution to our U.N. dues an amount equal to the U.S. percentage of the cost of the Council (approximately \$500,000 a year). The U.S. should not support the U.N. Human Rights Council until it upholds the ideals of the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and its membership is made up of free and democratic nations.

My other U.N. reform legislation deals with financial accounting for the renovation of the United Nations building in New York. There have been numerous reports of wasteful spending in this project, and my legislation would prevent U.S. federal funds from being used for this endeavor unless the President submits a report to Congress affirming the United Nations is abiding by internationally recognized best practices in contracting and resource management.

I am excited to again introduce legislation to help all American savers. My legislation, the

Simple Savings Tax Relief Act of 2007, simply eliminates the taxation of interest earned in savings accounts, such as passbook savings accounts or bank certificates of deposit. I think at least some of this interest should be tax-free, as we have been working towards other forms of non-earned income. This legislation would end a punitive tax, especially assist low and middle-income earners, and ultimately contribute toward the goal of encouraging individual responsibility and taking charge of one's own financial destiny.

Because I believe that health care access for all begins with tax parity, I am pleased to again sponsor the Health Care Tax Deduction Act of 2007. This would allow deductions for amounts paid for health insurance premiums and unreimbursed prescription drugs. This would provide much needed relief to individuals struggling with the high cost of health insurance and prescription drugs through a tax deduction, and tax parity with those of us who have employer-provided tax-deductible health insurance. Expansively, this benefit extends to all IRS-defined health insurance premiums such as an HMO, PPO, a traditional indemnity plan, a new HSA, and also long-term care premiums. Right now, under the current tax code, in order to claim health care expenses individuals must file an itemized tax return. My bill would simplify and extend this tax preference for all filers.

Because Members of Congress should put our money where our mouths are, I am pleased to reoffer my Deficit Accountability Act of 2007. It would prevent any automatic pay adjustment for Members of Congress in the year following a fiscal year in which there is a Federal budget deficit. It is needed to hold Members accountable for the Federal budget, and any resulting deficits.

My last piece of legislation is one of inspiration, the Museum of Ideas Act of 2007. It would create a commission to develop a plan for establishing a Museum of Ideas. In our Nation's Capital, we are enriched with museums exhibiting arts, natural sciences, modes of transportation, musical instruments, tools of industry and production, live plants and live animals, and other such tangible artifacts of our universe, we lack a museum of the conceptual, of thoughts, concepts, and philosophies throughout the history of the world.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on all these important pieces of business for the Nation.

IN CELEBRATION OF ERMA
CRAVEIRO TROWE'S 90TH BIRTH-
DAY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of Ms. Erma Craveiro Trowe, a wonderful friend and loving community member.

Erma's life story is quite fascinating. She was delivered by her grandmother on January 8, 1918 in Lanare, California. She was a graduate of Caruthers High School and California State University Fresno, formerly known as Fresno State College. Upon the completion of her studies, she pursued a successful career

as a teacher at Madison Grammar School, Ahwahnee Middle School and St. Anthony's School in Fresno, California.

On February 21, 1938 Erma married Joe Craveiro. Their home was in Fresno's Kearney Park neighborhood, where they raised their four children: Audrey, Jerry, Bob and Thomas. They also operated a dairy and grew alfalfa, cotton and sugar beets.

Aside from her commitments to her family, career and the ranch, Erma has a lifelong involvement in various community activities. She is a member of the Fig Garden Women's Club, served as a Cub Scout Mother, and volunteered on the Parent Teacher's Association (PTA). Erma was also instrumental in the development of the Houghton-Kearney Elementary School.

Further, Erma has been a very dear friend to the Costa family. She was my belated mother's best friend and actually drove her to the hospital at the time of my birth.

Erma's life has been an exceptional role model for all women. She attained a higher education degree, had a career in an important field, is a person who has demonstrated endless devotion to her family and has cared deeply about the welfare of her community. It is for these reasons that I join Erma Craveiro Trowe's family and friends in wishing her a blessed 90th birthday and continued health and happiness in the years to come.

PRESIDENT'S SURGE AND ACCELERATE POLICY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, President Bush's war in Iraq has now gone longer than America's involvement in World War II. Now we learn President Bush intends to escalate the number of American troops in Iraq. The great question across the land today is: is more of the same, the answer? Will more of the same stabilize Iraq, or for that matter the Middle East?

In all this long war in Iraq, we cannot help but wonder, what if?

What if we had not gone to war?

What if we had listened to that very important and vocal minority who stood against the war when the President lead us down that misbegotten road? Oh yes, I agree we are where we are today and we need to get out of this mess together. I have been patient since my "no" vote on this war four years ago and my "yes" vote almost 17 years ago for the first Gulf War.

Of course, there are others who are also asking what if. They are the family and friends of the young men and women who served their country. They are the loved ones of those who have not been lucky enough to make it home. They are those who sacrificed marriage, children, jobs, all in the name of a war many now casually say was a mistake.

They are those, like my son-in-law, who sacrificed seeing the birth of his and my daughter's first child.

These moments are painful for families across the country as we recently celebrated the holiday season. These moments make us want to dwell in the hope of the question, what if?

But we must not dwell, because in reflection we sometimes miss opportunity. The President is set to announce that he wants to see a "surge" force of approximately 20,000 extra soldiers to support the ongoing civil war in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, it does not take a rocket scientist to calculate the odds that more troops will mean more wounded, more fatalities, more losses to American families. Is the President ready for 20,000 more grieving families? Worse yet, has the President considered what this will do to the existing all volunteer force?

Retired Army Colonel Douglas McGregor has been quoted as saying, "It will break the force, which in my estimation is broken already. It will leave you with no strategic reserves." Retired Army Colonel David Hunt has said, "Everyone we met was on a second tour, at least, and many were on their fourth or fifth combat tour in either Iraq or Afghanistan. The soldiers are tired; the families are going nuts. It's not the solution."

But then, Madam Speaker, the President has not shown that this is truly about the sacrifice of our men and women. If it were, all of the options presented to the President would be open for consideration, not just the ones that already fit into his ideological philosophy. The report from the Iraq Study Group would not have been as casually tossed aside as were the advisements of the Presidents own military leaders—career servicemen and women who have given their entire professional lives to protecting America.

Over 3,000 have already lost their lives, and that's only the Americans. One journalist in particular, is asking what if on his own. Keith Olbermann, host of Countdown with Keith Olbermann has asked:

"What if he had already sacrificed 3,003 of them—and was then to announce his intention to sacrifice hundreds, maybe thousands, more?"

"This is where we stand tonight with the BBC report of President Bush's "new Iraq strategy," and his impending speech to the nation, which, according to a quoted senior American official, will be about troop increases and "sacrifice."

"The president has delayed, dawdled and deferred for the month since the release of the Iraq Study Group.

"He has seemingly heard out everybody, and listened to none of them.

"If the BBC is right—and we can only pray it is not—he has settled on the only solution all the true experts agree cannot possibly work: more American personnel in Iraq, not as trainers for Iraqi troops, but as part of some flabby plan for "sacrifice." (Countdown, MSNBC, 1/2/07)

Madam Speaker, the President's proposal reminds me of the ostrich who would rather stick his head in the sand, than face the reality that Americans want our soldiers home now. Not after another 20,000 have had to die for a strategy that is entirely wrong.

In Olbermann's words, "The additional men and women you have sentenced to go there, sir, will serve only as targets." Which is exactly what they will be, bodies to absorb the surge in the number of insurgents which this senseless war has created. This senseless, endless war, as Mr. Olbermann states has succeeded in two ways:

"It has succeeded, Mr. Bush, in enabling you to deaden the collective mind of this coun-

try to the pointlessness of endless war, against the wrong people, in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

It has gotten many of us used to the idea—the virtual "white noise"—of conflict far away, of the deaths of young Americans, of vague "sacrifice" for some fluid cause, too complicated to be interpreted except in terms of the very important-sounding but ultimately meaningless phrase "the war on terror."

And the war's second accomplishment—your second accomplishment, sir—is to have taken money out of the pockets of every American, even out of the pockets of the dead soldiers on the battlefield, and their families, and to have given that money to the war profiteers." (Countdown, MSNBC, 1/2/07)

Which, Madam Speaker, brings me back to the question of what if? In light of all of the evidence to the contrary, what if we, as Congress, allow the President to send tens of thousands of more men and women to keep a peace that does not exist?

Madam Speaker, it is my hope that four years from now, I will not have to look back on this question of what if with the same heavy heart that I do for the past four years.

RECOGNIZING BRADLEY JOHNS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Bradley Johns, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 393, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Bradley has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Bradley has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Bradley Johns for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Bradley in the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNI- VERSAL RIGHT TO VOTE BY MAIL ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2007—a bill to allow any eligible voter to vote by mail in a federal election if he or she chooses to do so.

In my home state of California, voters already have this right. California is one of the twenty-eight states that already provide this convenient alternative to voters.

While I love the ritual of going to the polls to vote, I know that getting to the polls on Election Day is often difficult. For some, it's impossible.

That is why I have introduced a bill that builds upon the growing trend of states to bring the polls to the voters. I believe we should try to meet our constituents halfway by increasing access to the electoral process.

What I am proposing is not new or even untested. States ranging from my home state of California, to Wisconsin, to North Carolina, to Maine have already adopted this voter-friendly policy.

With mail voting, citizens can vote from the convenience of their own homes. They will have more time to mull over their choices and make informed decisions, and they will be able to do so on their own terms.

Not surprisingly, studies have shown that some of the biggest supporters of voting by mail are parents, who must schedule time to go to the polls around so many other obligations.

Studies have also indicated that adding the option to vote by mail does not create a partisan advantage for one political party over the other.

Republicans and Democrats both benefit from similar increases in voter turnout when voters are given the choice to mail in their ballots.

In fact, overwhelming support for voting by mail is consistent across nearly every demographic—including age, income level, race, education, employment status and ideology. It is a win-win for all Americans.

After adopting a universal right to vote by mail system in 1978, California saw a thirty percent increase in the use of mail-in ballots.

In my district of San Diego, over 40 percent of voters opted to mail in their votes during the 2006 election.

Other States that have implemented this policy have seen the same degree of support from voters, which is why it is hardly surprising that States offering the option of mail-in ballots often experience greater voter participation.

There is also an extremely low incidence of fraud with voting by mail when compared to other methods of voting.

As the former President of the League of Women Voters of San Diego, I care deeply about the integrity of our electoral system.

Twenty-eight States have already proven this option works, and it is safe. It is time to give voters in the remaining States this convenient, secure and affordable alternative.

While I am proud to be from a State where citizens already have this right, I believe democracy works best when all citizens have an equal opportunity to have their voices heard.

Right now, an uneven playing field exists between States that already offer the option of mail-in ballots and States that do not.

When the same election is more accessible to voters in California than it is to voters in Michigan, the system is unfair.

States that fail to offer this choice stand to compromise their leverage in Federal elections by curbing the greatest level of voter participation.

We should follow the lead of over half of our Nation's States and ensure a uniformity of rights for all voters.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this effort to strengthen the democratic process and give American voters the choices they deserve.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PERSONAL HEALTH INVESTMENT TODAY ACT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as we move through the 21st Century, we are constantly facing new challenges to our public welfare that we had not previously seen.

A more recent challenge that has surfaced is the relative epidemic of obesity, and the onset of disease and health care difficulties resulting from lack of a healthy lifestyle.

I think that many agree with me that a key component of living a healthy productive life is found through regular exercise and the benefits that it brings.

The Department of Health and Human Services predicts that spending on healthcare will consume 20 percent of the nation's gross domestic product by 2015 if current trends hold true.

At this rate of growth, America is on track to spend roughly \$4 trillion on healthcare within the next ten years. This level of spending for medical treatment is unsustainable and can only be curbed through efforts to prevent disease before treatment is necessary.

Given the healthcare crisis we are facing in this country today, I strongly believe that creative solutions are necessary to improve the nation's fitness levels.

This need for creative solutions is why I am reintroducing the The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Bill, (RR. 5479 in the 109th Congress).

This bill allows for expenditures for exercise and physical activity, such as health club memberships, some exercise equipment, and sports programs, to be payable out of various tax-favored investment accounts: flexible spending accounts (FSAs), health savings accounts (HSAs), medical savings accounts (MSAs) and/or medical reimbursement arrangements, up to \$1,000.

If enacted, PHIT would give parents the opportunity to pay for their children's soccer league fees out of their HSAs. They could join a fitness center and pay for the membership fees with pretax dollars or they could purchase a home gym to help them fight the onset of obesity, a primary risk factor for developing anyone of several chronic diseases which are currently fueling the frightening increase in our national healthcare expenditure.

Depending upon a consumer's individual income tax bracket, the PHIT initiative could help Americans save 25–30 percent on their exercise costs.

Health experts agree that regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk and symptoms of numerous diseases and medical conditions and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physicians' visits, and medications, resulting in lower healthcare costs.

The PHIT tax incentive represents an important step to induce more people to get the levels of exercise they need to improve their level of fitness and help lower healthcare costs for all Americans, which is why I am proud to reintroduce this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll call no. 7; On adoption of Title 2 of the Resolution. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING MARTHA C. STONUM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Martha C. Stonum of Lawson, Missouri. Martha will celebrate her 100th birthday on January 31, 2007, and it is my privilege to offer her my warmest regards on achieving this important milestone.

Mrs. Stonum was born in Lathrop, Missouri where she began her education in a one-room school house, before ultimately attending William Jewell College. Mrs. Stonum is a loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother to two sons, one step son, four grandchildren, two step grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, three step great-grandchildren, and one step great-great-grandchild. Mrs. Stonum is still an active member of her community, visiting her beauty shop and church weekly.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Martha C. Stonum. It is an honor to represent her in the United States Congress, and I wish her all the best for many more birthdays in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL BOARD-CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the National Board-Certified Teachers in Low-Performing Schools Act of 2007.

I have been pro-active in promoting professional teaching standards throughout my public service and strongly believe certification is more important now than ever.

We know that schools in the United States are falling behind in the core subject areas of math and the sciences. Teacher certification is a step toward gaining ground against other nations as well as working to close the Achievement Gap here in our own nation.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards provides America's teachers with high-quality training and professional certification. Research shows the benefits of this advanced credential.

Students of certified teachers showed year-end testing improvements averaging 7 to 15 percent more than students learning from non-certified teachers.

Another study by the University of North Carolina found that the depth of learning for

students was greater in the classrooms of certified teachers. That is, these students show greater cognitive gains overall than students of non-certified teachers.

I am convinced we must do more to encourage our dedicated teachers who are already in the classrooms.

My legislation authorizes a pilot program to give teachers with certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards a \$5,000 annual stipend when they teach in a low-income school or a school that is underperforming.

Professional teaching certification would improve education in the United States and help make our nation competitive and I am pleased for the opportunity to promote this certification in Congress.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to introduce the legislation today.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMBAT MILITARY MEDICALLY RETIRED VETERANS ACT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, we owe our veterans a great debt of gratitude. Their sacrifices have protected the democratic ideals that are the foundation of our country, and their heroism continues to be an example for all Americans.

Perhaps now, more than any time in recent history, it is important to remember that our Nation has remained strong because of those who have fought and died for our country. By answering the call of duty and risking their lives to protect their fellow citizens, these patriots have inspired us with their courage, compassion, and dedication.

Many of these brave men and women become severely wounded due to combat related injuries, and are forced to retire as physically unfit to perform his or her duties. Once forced out of the service, many are unable to find gainful employment due to their injuries while at the same time being rated at less than their actual disability rate by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They have little to fall back on and deserve better for their sacrifice.

That is why I am reintroducing the Combat Military Medically Retired Veterans Act, (H.R. 995 in the 109th Congress), which allows combat military medically retired veterans who received the Purple Heart to collect their pro-rated military retirement pay.

This legislation differs from the current concurrent receipt benefit because it exempts combat military medically retired veterans from the current 20-year service requirement. The benefit will match their time of service.

The Congressional Budget Office scored my bill at \$496 million over ten years, certainly a small price to pay for those who have sacrificed so much for our great nation.

I am proud to state that my bill has been endorsed by the American G.I. Forum of the United States; American Legion, Department of Illinois; American Legion, National Office; Blinded Veterans Association; Gold Star Wives of America; and the Hispanic War Veterans of America.

All military combat veterans who are military medically retired from combat related disabilities and have been awarded the Purple Heart should be exempt from the requirement of 20 years of service in order to be entitled to their prorated military retirement pay.

America's disabled combat veterans gave their all for us and should not be penalized just because they are receiving compensation from the VA. While many disabled veterans go on to enjoy happy productive lives, many are unable to due to the severity of their wounds.

Under any doctrine of fairness it is our moral obligation to "care for him who shall have borne the battle." This bill is a good step in correcting the inequity of retirement and disability benefit to our combat disabled veterans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll call No. 6; on adoption of Title I of the Resolution, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER D. ROBERTS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher D. Roberts, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Christopher has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher D. Roberts for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Christopher in the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL MENTORING ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution recognizing and honoring those who make a difference in the lives of our young people across the United States.

This January marks National Mentoring Month as proclaimed by the President of the

United States. It is a month-long celebration honoring those who are mentors and drawing attention to the great need for more mentors.

Mentors make a tremendous difference in the lives of our children. When a responsible and reliable adult becomes a mentor, the benefits to the mentee can last a lifetime. Countless stories show the great benefits of a good role model.

Chris Moran became a mentor to Joshua Becerra in my hometown of San Diego through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program when he was just 9 years old in 1999. Chris and Joshua have gotten together on a weekly basis ever since for horseback riding, chess, and other activities. The relationship has been meaningful for both.

Spending time with a young person gave Chris a healthier perspective on what is important in life—helping others, he said. Joshua, now a student at San Diego's High Tech High, is looking forward to attending college and has already visited UCLA, San Diego State University, and other campuses trying to decide where to apply. Joshua attributes his academic success in large part to his mentor.

Joshua plans to study music when he goes on to college and would like to become a professional musician. Chris is helping him locate a college with an excellent music program.

These types of relationships between reliable adults and our young people are invaluable. Millions of adults nationwide are acting as excellent role models while providing guidance and advice to our young people—many of whom face problems at home or difficulties at school. Without a good, solid role model, our kids are more likely to drop out of high school or to become involved with drugs or alcohol.

Madam Speaker, this resolution honors and recognizes the adults across the United States who are mentors to our young people. This resolution also calls on more adults to become mentors to those in need.

Unfortunately, research shows that about 15 million children across the United States are in need of a mentor and a good role model. It is crucial that we begin to reach these children.

Finally, this resolution highlights the need to support programs that teach our young people about mentoring and the need to become involved. There are programs, for example, that encourage high school students to become mentors to younger children. These types of programs will teach the great benefits of mentoring at a young age and result in adults becoming mentors later—creating a "cycle" of mentoring.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to offer a resolution honoring America's mentors on the occasion of National Mentoring Month 2007.

INTRODUCTION OF KIDSAVE

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, commentators on the political left and right agree about one thing: There are too many political disagreements in Washington, D.C. Of course, the best way to change that would be for those of us who are lawmakers to find

common ground and begin passing legislation that virtually everyone can agree on.

Where to begin? How about with a program that has the support of moderates, liberals, and even the conservative Heritage Foundation? That program is KidSave.

This common-sense program would allow every American child—regardless of parental income—to save up tens of thousands of dollars for retirement.

KidSave is fairly simple. If it was in effect today, at birth every child would receive a loan of \$2,000 from the Social Security Administration. The initial amount would be linked to inflation, so it would increase slightly year to year. The money would be deposited into an account that couldn't be opened until the owner retires or dies.

This account would be managed by the Thrift Savings Plan, the same plan that federal employees—including those of us in Congress—use to manage our retirement funds. Right now there are three low risk, low-cost options offered through the TSP: A government-bond fund, a corporate-bond fund and a stock index fund.

The child's parents would decide which fund to deposit the initial investment in, and it would grow untapped for decades and decades. According to a study by the Heritage Foundation, the opportunity for growth is so great that, even if no money was ever added to the initial investment, that loan could still grow to \$50,000 by the time the child reached retirement age.

Parents and grandparents also could contribute additional money tax-free. They could add as much as \$500 per year every year until the child turned 19, and that money could be diverted from their own retirement plans. That's an additional \$9,500, all of it being compounded year after year until retirement.

This is one of those rare Washington programs with the power to change everyone's outlook for the better.

Wealthy people have long taken advantage of long-term investments—indeed, families such as the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts have lived for decades off the money earned by their forefathers. Today, thousands of middle-class grandparents are opening education accounts for their newborn grandchildren.

But KidSave would allow all children to enjoy the benefits of compound interest. Imagine an entire generation of working-class senior citizens with tens of thousands of dollars to spend as they wish. They'd be virtually guaranteed a secure retirement and could spend their newfound wealth on themselves or share it with their children and grandchildren.

A portion of this money would be passed from generation to generation, either as gifts to grandchildren or through donations to churches or community groups. That would help build a more secure future for generations to come.

Best of all, KidSave is a loan from Social Security, not a gift or a new government entitlement. That's one reason it enjoys such broad support. And it doesn't end up costing taxpayers anything. When the account owner reaches age 30—an age at which most people are well along in their working lives—the original loan would be repaid in five annual installments. The repayment amount would be linked to inflation, so an initial \$2,000 loan would be returned to the government as, say, \$3,500.

Lawmakers today are deadlocked over how to reform Social Security, how to improve welfare and how to close military bases, to name just three difficult issues.

But we could get started on solving those if we'd first implement common-sense programs that enjoy wide support. KidSave seems like a good place to start building a better future for all Americans. That is why I am reintroducing for the 110th Congress, this important bill.

RECOGNIZING EVAN S. KNOLL FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Evan S. Knoll, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Evan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Evan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Evan S. Knoll for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Evan in the United States House of Representatives.

SECOND OPINION COVERAGE ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Second Opinion Coverage Act—legislation that will ensure the accessibility and coverage of medical second opinions.

Imagine that your doctor tells you that you must undergo radical surgery that may threaten the use of a limb or leave you with a serious chronic condition. Understandably, you would request a second opinion from another physician. Most health care groups see the value in such requests and provide patients with a second opinion. Besides giving patients much needed peace of mind, second opinions can benefit health plans by reducing the number of invasive procedures and result in better patient care through increased dialogue about treatment options.

However, when I was a member of the California State Assembly, I heard from a number of patients who experienced a glitch in their health care coverage. They noticed the absence of a clear process for obtaining medical second opinions. These patients, many struggling with challenging health conditions, had difficulties obtaining second opinions through their health plans.

After meeting with patients, physicians and health groups, I authored a law in California

that guarantees coverage of second opinions. Patients, meeting any one of several qualifying conditions, are entitled to a timely second opinion by a “qualified health care professional,” within 72 hours in cases of serious or imminent health threat. When another expert is not available within the provider group or network, the organization will pay for an appropriately qualified doctor outside of the plan. Patients are responsible for the costs of applicable co-payments.

The law in California was a good first step. Unfortunately, this legislation does not cover individuals enrolled in self-insured, federally regulated health plans. Nationwide, this translates into 67 million persons without guaranteed access to second opinions. I believe the time has come to make access to second opinions a national standard.

I urge you, Madam Speaker, and all of my colleagues to pass this critical legislation into law.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TECH-
NOLOGY RETRAINING AND IN-
VESTMENT NOW ACT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as we move further into the 21st Century, I continue to have deep concerns over the need to maintain America's competitive edge as we continue to grow our Nation's economy.

As the U.S. economy becomes more dynamic, the types of growing industries are also changing. Increasingly new jobs in many fields require the application of technology skills. These include workers across all industry sectors, not just in the IT industry sector.

In order to keep up with the rapid rate of technological changes, expanded information technology (IT) skills education and training in many industries is essential to create a more effective and productive workforce and remain both domestically and globally competitive.

In recognition of the growing importance of information technology skills to the competitiveness of the U.S. workforce there needs to be greater awareness on the importance of increased investment in worker IT education and training

That's why I am introducing the Technology Retraining And Investment Now Act (TRAIN Act), a bill that will improve opportunities for America's workforce in an ever-changing world.

The TRAIN Act would provide a tax credit for an amount equal to 50% of information and communications technology training (ICT) program expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer for the benefit of: an employee of the taxpayer; or, an individual who is not employed on up to \$10,000 per year. Expenses may include payments in connection with: course work, certification testing and other expenses that are essential to assessing skill acquisition.

This tax credit is necessary because technology skills are increasingly important to workers in more and more industries. It is no longer just the software programmers who create the technology, but increasingly engineers, machinists, architects, call center workers and

many others who must continuously upgrade their skills in the use of the ever-changing tools of technology if they are to remain competitive in an increasingly global and service-oriented workforce market.

Just as the research and development tax credit helps companies make continuous investments in new product development, today a complimentary human resources technology development tax credit is now equally necessary to assure that there is a continuous investment in the technology skills of the U.S. workforce so it is competitive in the new worldwide economy.

RECOGNIZING DAVID I. HON FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize David I. Hon, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

David has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years David has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending David I. Hon for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent David in the United States House of Representatives.

THE WOMEN'S OBSTETRICIAN AND
GYNECOLOGIST MEDICAL AC-
CESS NOW ACT (THE WOMAN
ACT)

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Women's Obstetrician and Gynecologist Medical Access Now Act, the WOMAN Act. This bill will ensure that every woman has direct access to her OB-GYN.

I believe women should not need a permission slip to receive OB-GYN care. Unfortunately, that is the reality faced by many women when they need to see their doctor. Numerous managed care plans require women to visit their primary care physicians before seeking the health care services they need from the providers they want. Denying direct access or forcing women to jump through numerous bureaucratic hoops to see their OB-GYN is not acceptable treatment.

The WOMAN Act recognizes women have different medical needs than men and the significant role OB-GYNs play in women's health. Women who see an OB-GYN on a regular

basis are more likely to receive important screening services, such as pelvic exams, as well as counseling on critical reproductive health issues. My legislation removes the barriers complicating women's access to their doctors. Women will no longer have to contend with the gatekeeper system that can prevent or delay appropriate care.

It is easy to understand what a difference direct OB-GYN access makes in women's health care. Imagine, for a moment, a woman in San Diego who works 45 hours a week and has limited sick and vacation time. Now, imagine she has an urgent medical problem requiring an OB-GYN visit. On Monday, she calls from work to make an appointment with her primary care physician. If she is lucky, she gets an appointment for the following morning. She takes time off Tuesday to go see her doctor. Her primary care doctor agrees she should be seen by her OB-GYN and gives her a referral. Tuesday afternoon, she returns to work and calls her OB-GYN for an appointment. The doctor is in surgery on Wednesday, but they offer her an appointment on Friday morning. On Friday she takes another morning off from work, and finally, after almost a week, gets the care she needs. The unnecessary referral process resulted in her taking an extra morning off work and delayed her proper medical care by five days. The patient, employer, primary care physician, and health plan provider would have saved money and time if the patient had been able to go directly to her OB-GYN.

The public overwhelmingly supports direct access to OB-GYN care. A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University found that 82 percent support direct access legislation and 63 percent would support it even if their health insurance costs increased.

While serving in the California State Assembly, I heard from many women who experienced the same problems I have outlined today. After meeting with women, obstetricians and gynecologists, health plan representatives, and providers in the State of California, I wrote the State law allowing women direct access to their OB-GYN. That law was a good first step; however, it still does not cover women enrolled in self-insured, federally regulated health plans. This means that even if a woman lives in a State with direct access protections, like California, she may not be able to see her OB-GYN without a referral if she is covered by a federally regulated ERISA health plan. In addition, there are almost a dozen states which still do not provide women with direct access to OB-GYNs.

Women save time and money with better access to OB-GYN care. I believe the time has come to make direct access to an OB-GYN a national standard.

I urge you, Madam Speaker, and all of my colleagues to pass this critical legislation into law.

3,000 REASONS TO WITHDRAW
TROOPS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, New Year's Eve marked another grave milestone in

Iraq, as the United States lost its 3,000th soldier since the war began. Attacks on our troops are increasing as civil war spreads. America lost more troops in Iraq in December than in any other month during the previous two years.

As we honor the fallen, we must remember the daily life and death consequences of President Bush's policies. The time to begin withdrawing our troops from Iraq has long since passed. The longer we have stayed the course, the worse conditions in Iraq have become.

November's elections were a mandate for change in Iraq. As more and more members of the President's own party deem the Administration's policy a failure, an overwhelming majority of Americans are calling on President Bush to draw down our troops from Iraq. It has become resoundingly clear that a military solution is not possible. Our troops were not trained for or sent to Iraq to referee a civil war. An extended American military presence will just continue to fuel the insurgency.

The Republican co-chair of the Iraq Study Group, James Baker, warned that "We no longer can afford to stay the course," and Lee Hamilton, the Democratic co-chair, agreed. "The current approach is not working and the ability of the United States to influence events is diminishing. Our ship of state has hit rough waters. It must now chart a new way forward." Instead of continuing to stubbornly defend his administration's failed war strategies, the President must now work with Congress and foreign leaders to chart a diplomatic strategy that reduces the violence in Iraq.

The President left the U.S. with no good options, but increasing the number of American servicemen and women in Iraq is an unacceptable course. The new Congress must use its authority to ensure that the calls of the American people do not fall on deaf ears.

It will take many years for the U.S. to move beyond the setbacks we have suffered in Iraq. Our military is overstretched. Our diplomatic authority has been severely diminished. We have shifted our focus away from Afghanistan, and a resurgent Taliban is increasing its attacks on American troops.

For those families whose sons and daughters died in the war, the wounds will never heal. Illinois is one of eight states that lost more than 100 troops in Iraq. From Rock Island to Champaign, from Skokie to Carbondale, more than 100 families have suffered the ultimate loss. It is time to change course.

RECOGNIZING KENNETH G.
SAMPSELL FOR ACHIEVING THE
RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Kenneth G. Sampsell, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Kenneth has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the

many years Kenneth has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Kenneth G. Sampsell for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Kenneth in the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES BEACH, III

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional Kentuckian, Mayor Charles "Charlie" Beach III. After serving 32 years as mayor of the City of Beattyville, Kentucky, Mayor Beach is leaving office. I want to express my deepest gratitude for his many contributions and years of public service.

Throughout his tenure, Mayor Beach has led a number of initiatives to improve the lives of Lee County residents, build hope in our Appalachian region, and serve as an economic and community development leader for the entire Commonwealth. Southern and Eastern Kentucky has been plagued with inadequate water and sewer infrastructure and poor housing opportunities. Mayor Beach has been the driving force behind construction of two water plants, a sewage treatment plant, and installation of necessary piping to serve and reach the rural residents of Beattyville and Lee County. In addition, Mayor Beach is well-regarded throughout the Commonwealth for his vision of providing quality, affordable housing.

Since 2002, Mayor Beach has been a critical partner in our regional anti-drug initiative "Operation UNITE." Beach was a key early supporter and critical ally in getting drugs off our streets and cleaning up our communities. He has consistently backed efforts to educate our children on the dangers of drug use and our program to help drug users find treatment options.

In addition to his duties as mayor, Charles Beach is also the Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Exchange Bank where he provides business development and public relations leadership. He is the former President of the Kentucky League of Cities and has served as the Chairman of the Kentucky River Area Development District. These organizations promote the welfare and economic growth of Kentucky's rural and urban areas.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mayor Beach for his selfless sacrifice and service on behalf of the people of the City of Beattyville, Lee County, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. His dedication and integrity are an inspiration to us all and I know his contributions will live on for many years to come.

A NEW DAY FOR AMERICA

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, now begins a new day for America. During the first "100 Hours" of the 110th Congress, Democrats will answer the voters' call for change. We will restore honesty, openness, and civility to Congress, require Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices, lower the cost of higher education, raise the minimum wage, invest in "saving embryonic stem cell research and alternative energy, and strengthen our homeland security.

The election of NANCY PELOSI as Speaker of the House is a historic moment—a testament to Nancy's able, dedicated, and unifying leadership. I am confident that Speaker NANCY PELOSI (D-CA), Majority Leader STENY HOYER (D-MD), Majority Whip JAMES CLYBURN (D-SC), Caucus Chairman RAHM EMANUEL (D-IL), and Caucus Vice Chairman JOHN LARSON (D-CT) will lead us in a new direction that makes our country stronger and more just. While we will make great strides during the first "100 Hours," it's just a downpayment. Even greater change is on the horizon.

On November 7th, Americans demonstrated that they will not wait for change in Iraq. Three thousand of our troops have lost their lives and civil war is spreading. Even the Republican co-chair of the Iraq Study Group, James Baker, warned 'We can no longer afford to stay the course.' I will work with members of both parties to pressure the Bush Administration to begin to draw down troops as quickly as possible so that a diplomatic course may be pursued.

While corporations and the few at the top have profited from tax breaks and giveaways, the majority of workers and families in our country have been left behind. My fight to provide opportunity and economic security for the majority of Americans continues. I will work provide good jobs with strong benefits, to end waste and abuse in the government contracting process, and to protect consumers from corporate wrongdoing.

The challenges facing our great nation are many. With a focus on our most urgent priorities, Democrats will lead the United States to thrive again, as a force for good that provides opportunity for all.

RECOGNIZING NICHOLAS J. MOORE
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Nicholas J. Moore, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 900, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Nicholas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. When Nicholas achieved the rank of Eagle

Scout this summer at Bartle Camp, he became the first Eagle Scout in Boy Scout Troop 900. Over the many years Nicholas has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Nicholas J. Moore for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BREAST
CANCER AWARENESS

HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among American women and more than 40,000 women will die from breast cancer this year alone. Three of four women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known risk—no family history.

While the diagnosis rate of this cancer continues to increase, I am thankful the breast cancer death rate is steadily decreasing, which is in large part due to advancing medical treatments and an increase in early detection. By continuing to support breast cancer research and early diagnosis, we can help bring an end to this disease that takes a new life once every fourteen minutes.

In recognition of last year's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Karen Stevenson, a resident of New Canaan, Connecticut, gave an address at the launch of the "Paint the Town Pink" program at New Canaan Town Hall. I submit the text of Ms. Stevenson's remarks to be entered into the RECORD.

Good morning. Active and healthy—definitely much more fit than I am now—with no history of the disease in the family, I was completely blindsided by a breast cancer diagnosis 5 years ago based on an unusual mammogram result. I had a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery followed by 5 months of chemotherapy. My daughters were 7 and 10 at the time.

With the warm generosity of family, friends and colleagues who supplied moral support, hugs, and many a meal to help maintain normalcy in the girls' routine at home, we navigated through that difficult period and came out the other side.

The kids were troopers. To this day they still find such humor in telling the story of Mom having melted her wig on Thanksgiving Day with a sudden blast of heat from the oven while basting.

My situation is not unique, but rather, representative of what so many women in our community have faced.

I shared the first few weeks of chemo with a group of spectacular women and we quickly banded together to help carry one another through the various rounds of surgeries, chemo, radiation, genetic testing, additional surgeries, and follow-on treatments in all the years since.

Licia, a young professional diagnosed only 4 months after being married,

Kerry, an exceptionally talented marketing director, artist and mom, diagnosed only 1 week before giving birth to her second child,

Debbie, a teacher and beautiful mother of three young school children,

Julia, a NYC actress and mother of two teenagers,

Chris, an attorney and mother of two preschool daughters.

Of note, while we were a randomly assembled group of six, four of us were under 35 years old and all of us were under age 43.

Breast cancer is everywhere and I'm sure you can each add several names of patients and loved ones to the growing list. While the topic doesn't typically surface in casual conversation it always amazes me how often we discover this common sisterhood.

While the diagnosis itself is daunting, we are the fortunate beneficiaries of the drug trials and experiences of the many who have gone before us over the past 20 years, and as a result, there are many more treatment options available, as well as access to solid information about their efficacy and managing side effects. In my case and for many others, early detection and the rapidly evolving treatment have ensured we can continue to attend the soccer games and school plays, host family holidays and be here to enjoy our families.

The harsh reality is that even the treatments available today are not successful for all of us and the implication of later diagnosis is significantly added risk. It is just heartbreaking to watch so many vibrant women in our community struggle and suffer for years, exhausting treatment options that will hold back their cancer and pain while trying to continue care for their families.

We are so fortunate to live in an area with such excellent access to quality care locally—for regular check-ups, for mobile mammograms, and should it be necessary, for both proven and innovative cancer treatments. But we must take advantage of that access!

Ask yourself tonight as you are tucking your children into bed . . . or talking to your college student via phone this weekend . . . or watching your grandson's football game . . . Are you willing to put this in jeopardy unnecessarily when it takes only an hour of your time to make and keep a screening appointment? As you walk past the waves of pink on Elm and Main Streets, won't you take a pledge today to ensure all the important women in your life make this a priority?

On behalf of all of those who have been touched personally by Breast Cancer—and I'm sure there are many here today—we offer our profound thanks to the merchants of New Canaan and to Janet Blaylock and the team of volunteers she has mobilized. Your efforts to Paint the Town Pink for a weeks in October as a collective call to action will most certainly be a positive turning point in the lives of many families in our community.

HONORING DAVID OGG ON HIS
PROMOTION TO BRIGADIER GENERAL

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor David Ogg on earning the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army. Today, BG Ogg is being honored in a ceremony to commemorate this great achievement.

During the course of his 28 years of distinguished service, BG Ogg has served in Germany, where he was on the front line of the

cold war in Europe. Later, his career transitioned to project management, and he worked with some of the military's most important and most sophisticated new hardware, such as the M113 and Stryker combat vehicles.

While his military service has led him around the globe, BG Ogg has never forgotten where he comes from. Although he is currently stationed in Michigan, BG Ogg still calls Murfreesboro, Tennessee, home. In fact, he returned to his alma mater, Middle Tennessee State University, to teach ROTC for 4 years. And his two sons now are continuing the family tradition and seeking their degrees at MTSU.

As a fellow MTSU alumnus and former student of MTSU's ROTC program, I thank BG Ogg for his service to his country, and I commend him for his hard work and dedication. I also commend his wife, Pam, and their sons, Jason and Stuart, for the sacrifices they have made as BG Ogg has proudly worn the uniform of this Nation. I wish David Ogg and the entire Ogg family continued success and happiness.

RECOGNIZING SEAN T. COWDEN
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Sean T. Cowden, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Sean has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Sean has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Sean T. Cowden for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Sean in the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GERALD
FORD, 38TH PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

HON. ARTUR DAVIS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, we overlooked Gerald Ford's significance when he served as President. His tenure was only slightly longer than a congressional term, a cruel irony for a politician whose political career was so grounded in the by-ways of the House. He was hardly a master politician, if

the term refers to the winning of elections or the swift dispatch of opposition: Ford came within an inch of not being re-nominated, and he lost in the general election to the most obscure winner of our times.

This week, as we mourn Ford's passing, his legacy is much clearer: first, he gracefully presided over the aftermath of Richard Nixon's forced removal, and over the culmination of our debacle in Vietnam. Had he gotten either moment wrong, the country might have been ripped into two, bitter competing halves. As we contemplate the mistakes subsequent presidents have made, it is a virtue that Gerald Ford made not a single major error in judgment: he did not blunder into any ill-chosen wars, and as much as an opposition dominated Congress thwarted him, he never resorted to subterfuge in an effort to tip the scales.

Then there is the graceful way Ford practiced politics. The challenge from Ronald Reagan was perilous because even in 1976, Ford was not of a philosophic kin with most Republican primary voters. A less principled president would have demagogued on issues like busing or affirmative action; certainly, he might have abandoned the détente that was a major contributor to taming the Soviet Union. A modern, win-at all cost politician would have savaged an unknown like Jimmy Carter. The fact is that the 1976 election season was at once breathtakingly close and remarkably civil.

Imagine if Gerald Ford's major value, the cultivation of common ground, had dominated the last two fractious decades. Our two major political philosophies would not have been at irreconcilable odds, with both tending to treat each battle as if it were the ultimate one or as if we weren't bound to share a future together. We mourn Gerald Ford's decency and we also mourn the loss of the political character that left the stage when we retired him.

HONORING DENNIS KAMPER

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in acknowledging the retirement of Mr. Dennis Kamper and his 38 years of public service to the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District.

Mr. Kamper began his career as a student earning both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Engineering at the University of Louisville. With the Corps, Mr. Kamper has served in the Louisville, Philadelphia, and Memphis Districts. At each assignment Mr. Kamper has received praise for his dedication to providing quality products and services to the Corps of Engineers and their customers.

Dennis has been a shining example of the Corps of Engineers' mission through his visionary leadership and exemplary managerial style. These contributions include the design and construction of numerous civil works projects, mentoring and recognition of his employees, his "open door" policy, and implementing and institutionalizing the Army Performance Improvement Criteria (APIC).

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Dennis Kamper has built a legacy as a model citizen and community leader. He is an active member in his church and the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), a strong supporter of Memphis District's Adopt-a-School program, and a speaker at numerous Career Day programs promoting the engineering profession.

Please join me in honoring Dennis Kamper and wishing him the best in a well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING RYAN E. MOSE FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ryan E. Mose, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ryan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ryan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Ryan E. Mose for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Ryan in the United States House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING HEROISM

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate this chance to recognize a true hero, someone who put aside the natural reaction to remain safe and instead risked his life to save another.

Wesley Autrey recently demonstrated heroism at the subway station at 137th Street and Broadway. Mr. Autrey was waiting with his two children on the subway platform when he saw a young man suffer a seizure and fall onto the tracks.

Realizing that a train was approaching and with no chance of helping the young man off of the track, Mr. Autrey jumped down onto the tracks and placed his body on top of the victim to protect him from the train. The train missed Mr. Autrey by mere inches and both emerged unscathed.

In a world plagued by terrorism, indifference, and selfishness, Mr. Autrey's action demonstrated a commitment to preserving life and showed that we still have heroes among us. I commend a real American hero, Wesley Autrey.

INTRODUCTION OF THE URBAN
AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE IM-
PROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, national security is our highest priority. Congress has created risk-based grants to direct limited federal funds toward areas facing higher threats, in order to ensure that our country is protected against and prepared for any future terrorist attack.

Over the past year, however, my attempts—along with the efforts of a bipartisan coalition of my colleagues—to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to address concerns about one of those risk-based grants, the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), have been fruitless. This experience has led me to question whether we are successfully directing funds as this grant was intended.

For this reason, I am introducing the Urban Area Security Initiative Improvement Act of 2007. Using the information I have gleaned over the past year, this legislation will ensure the grant functions as it was proposed. It will also make certain that instead of making arbitrary decisions, DHS uses conclusive data to inform its policy.

The questions surrounding the UASI grant arose last January, when DHS released a list of 35 urban areas considered eligible to apply for UASI funding through the FY 2006 process. Eleven additional areas, including Sacramento, the Congressional District I represent, were placed in a second group and notified that their UASI funding may be terminated in future years if they did not meet the new risk assessment standards.

When DHS announced that Sacramento's UASI funds may be in jeopardy, the decision seemed unwarranted. Sacramento has a population of almost two million people, and is the capital of California—the most populous state in the nation and the sixth largest economy in the world. The city is also home to dozens of critical federal and state government buildings and much of the state's water, electricity, and telecommunication systems are managed from Sacramento. To suffer an attack would have repercussions beyond our region.

Immediately after learning about the changes to the UASI program, I requested meetings with DHS officials to understand their new risk assessment guidelines. After unsatisfactory responses from DHS, I led a coalition of my colleagues to demand information regarding DHS's revised guidelines for eligibility in an effort to urge them to change their policy.

The Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, colleagues from San Diego and Sacramento, both of California's United States Senators and I requested a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation into the UASI grant process. The preliminary findings of that investigation were completed in mid-December. GAO analyzed the risk methodology and the effectiveness of the assessment, in addition to reviewing planned

changes to both in the upcoming year. The report confirmed that DHS had made many arbitrary decisions during their UASI determination that skewed the outcomes of the risk-scenarios and grant awards.

Of particular concern is that DHS arbitrarily cut the number of eligible cities to 35 and created a second group of 11 of which were only able to apply for "sustainment" funding. Additionally, DHS assigned arbitrary values to assets and population without running a study of how the variation in the output of models (numerical or otherwise) used for such awards can be manipulated—a process commonly referred to as a "sensitivity" analysis. This analysis would have ensured that any changes to these values have little or no impact on the ranking of each urban area.

Both 9–11 and Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the role our first responders play in any incident, whether an act of terrorism or mother nature. And the Urban Area Security Initiative is a critical component to ensuring the preparedness of those brave men and women and, ultimately, our nation's preparedness. We all recognize that we need to direct our limited resources towards the most at-risk locations. However, and DHS has acknowledged this, they have overlooked critical infrastructure. These arbitrary decisions may have influenced the outcome of the UASI grant. This is poor national security policy and in an era when national security is a priority, it is unacceptable.

DHS will shortly be announcing those urban areas that will be eligible to apply for funding. However, Sacramento and all heavily populated urban areas will have to worry each year about whether DHS will arbitrarily change the number of eligible cities and thus, if they will even be able to apply for funding. This places significant and undue burdens on our regional homeland security efforts, as first responders attempt to prepare for and protect against any future threat, without knowing from year to year whether they can even apply for funding.

That is why I am introducing this legislation today. The UASI Improvement Act will allow the 100 most populous urban areas, as determined by the census and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to apply for UASI funds. While each urban area does not have to apply, this will guarantee that those urban areas who believe they need the funding or who find that they meet the eligibility guidelines as determined by DHS will be able to at least apply for these vital funds.

The bill also mandates that DHS conduct a sensitivity analysis. The GAO found DHS's decision to arbitrarily assign values during the risk-assignment without conducting a sensitivity analysis to be a significant flaw in the UASI grant determination process. By conducting such an analysis, DHS will have conclusive data rather than uninformed decisions to guide their decision-making.

Our local law enforcement and first responders continue to do an incredible job understanding the threats facing our country and are working hard to prevent and prepare for an attack. And while these heroes are doing their jobs, the federal government needs to do its job. Part of that is providing leadership by setting standards and the other is to provide resources. My concern is that the federal government has been shirking its responsibility,

and so I am introducing legislation to make sure that Sacramento and all at-risk urban areas have the funding they need.

Madam Speaker, the Urban Area Security Initiative Improvement Act will guarantee that our most at-risk urban areas will have access to necessary federal funds, which our first responders and law enforcement need in order to protect our citizens. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill in the newly-elected 110th Congress.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY KING

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a true giant in the transportation community and a dedicated servant of the citizens of Pennsylvania, Larry King. After more than 30 years of service, Mr. King will be retiring from Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot) later this month. While Larry's retirement is certainly well deserved and will provide him with more time to spend with his wife Betty and their family, all of Pennsylvania will feel the impact of his departure.

Larry joined PennDot in 1969 and has served in a variety of positions with a special focus on planning and programming. In 1991, Mr. King was appointed to serve as Deputy Secretary of Planning. In that role, he was responsible for overseeing the statewide planning process, maintaining the Commonwealth's 12 year plan and the management the state's highway and bridge program which consist of a yearly budget of roughly \$1.25 billion. Additionally, Larry was charged with the difficult task of ensuring that projects moved forward in a timely and cost efficient manner.

In his time at PennDot, Larry has been a tremendous resource for members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation. He never hesitated to share his expertise with Members or our staff. When Congress took up the historic Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), it was Larry's counsel that Members sought in their effort to ensure that Pennsylvania received its fair share of highway and transit funding. I think we all can agree that Pennsylvania certainly benefitted from his counsel. Larry not only possesses an intimate knowledge of the federal process, he also holds a true passion for improving transportation within the Commonwealth. Indeed, I remain convinced that there is not a road in Pennsylvania on which Larry King has not traveled.

For more than 30 years, Larry has remained dedicated to serving the citizens of Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth has benefitted exponentially from his service. The numerous projects that have moved forward under his watchful eye will greatly benefit not only Pennsylvanians, but all who travel through the Commonwealth. While we all wish Larry all the best in his retirement, we must also let him know how much he will be missed. Thank you, Larry, for your many years of service and your friendship.

THERE'S A NEW LAWMAN IN TOWN: CHRISTOPHER JAMES MCCAIN

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, earlier this week, as the sun set in South East Texas, on January 3, 2007, 35 highly-trained, well-disciplined, dedicated disciples of the law were sworn in as new Houston Police Officers. One of those officers was Christopher McCain.

McCain comes from a law enforcement family. His stepfather, Eddie, an HPD Officer for over 25 years, pinned the new police badge on McCain at the Police Academy Graduation. Present at the graduation were his proud mother, Janet, who has spent most of her career helping people of the Houston community, and his brother Ryne.

Madam Speaker, peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between good and evil. They are what separate us from the anarchy of the lawless. By wearing the badge, they swear to protect, defend, and serve the citizens.

McCain, 28 (born 1978), is a single parent of 2 small children. His youthful wife met an untimely death in 2005. When this occurred, McCain accepted the duty to raise his children alone.

Although becoming an HPD officer is the beginning of a new career, McCain has spent his life in public service. After receiving his GED, McCain volunteered and joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He served 4 years on active duty as a non-commissioned officer in Special Operations, assigned to the desert sands of the Middle East and he also served in Japan. After being discharged, he was recalled to active duty in 2003. McCain's dramatic enthusiasm for serving our Nation as a Marine was another trait of our Nation's great warriors.

Here's what President Ronald Reagan said about the Marines:

Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem.

Christopher McCain was one of those Marines.

When his tour of duty was over with the Marine Corps, McCain went to work for the Harris County (Houston), Texas Juvenile Probation Department. He was a Master Sergeant in the training division of the boot camp. Boot camp teaches youthful offenders discipline, hard work, and self worth. He spent 5 years (2001–2006) helping the troubled youth of the streets of Houston.

But all of his life, Christopher McCain wanted to be a peace officer. Now that dream has been accomplished. Christopher McCain is a Texas Lawman!

Peace officers, who wear the badge, are the best we have to offer to our towns and cities. Serving the people, protecting the citizens, capturing outlaws and bringing them to justice, is what these peace officers do for the rest of us.

In Houston, we call our peace officers "Houston's Finest." Officer Christopher McCain is now one of those who wear the badge and the blue uniform of "Houston's Finest." He, like his fellow peace officers, is a cut above the rest of us—and that's just the way it is.

INTRODUCING THE FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, as part of this first 100 hours of the 110th Congress, I am proud to introduce the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. The introduction of this bill provides Congress with a long-overdue opportunity to stand up for the dignity of those 5.6 million workers in the United States making minimum wage, or near minimum wage.

The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 would increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour in three steps over two years. Under this bill, sixty days after enactment, the wage would rise from the current \$5.15 per hour to \$5.85 per hour. One year later, it would rise to \$6.55. And a year after that, it would finally rise to \$7.25 per hour. The bill also extends federal minimum wage coverage, under a separate timetable, to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For almost a decade, the federal minimum wage has remained at just \$5.15 an hour. The nation's poorest workers have suffered through the longest period in the history of the law without a pay raise. As a result of congressional inaction, the real value of the minimum wage has hit a 51-year low. If the rate remains unchanged in 2007, a minimum wage employee working full-time will earn only \$10,712, which is \$5,888 less than the \$16,600 needed to lift a family of three out of poverty. This is unconscionable. These Americans have suffered at poverty wages for far too long. It is time for Congress to demonstrate that it values hard work.

Nearly 13 million American workers will see their pay rise as a result of the Fair Minimum Wage Act—5.6 million workers directly and 7.4 million workers indirectly. This number includes 7.7 million women, 3.4 million parents, and 4.7 million people of color. 79 percent of these workers are adults, and the majority of these workers work full-time.

Families with affected workers rely on those workers for more than half of their family's income. 46 percent of child-rearing families with affected workers rely solely on the earnings from those workers. If this bill becomes law, over 6.3 million children would see their parents' income rise. For a family of three this means an additional \$4,400 a year, equaling 15 months worth of groceries or two years worth of health care for these families. It will mean greater dignity on the job.

Congress has a moral duty to raise the minimum wage. Churches, synagogues, and other faith groups are calling on Congress to support the Fair Minimum Wage Act. In this country, an average CEO earns more before lunchtime in one day than a minimum wage worker earns all year. This is a moral outrage in the richest country on earth. With the costs of health insurance, gasoline, and college tuition increasing, it is important, now more than ever, that we raise the minimum wage so that these hard working Americans are able to meet basic human needs.

Raising the minimum wage is not only the right thing to do, it is also economically prudent. Increasing the minimum wage will help

boost the economy as a whole, putting more money into the hands of those people who need it and will spend it—indeed, spend it on basic necessities. Last year, some 665 economists, including several Nobel Laureates, signed a statement in support of raising the minimum wage. As they explained, the "minimum wage helps to equalize the imbalance in bargaining power that low-wage workers face in the labor market. The minimum wage is also an important tool in fighting poverty."

Raising the minimum wage is critical to fighting the middle class squeeze in this country. America's middle class is this country's economic backbone. It is what makes us strong. Yet the middle class is shrinking. Since 2001, the number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 5.4 million, to 37 million. More than one in six American children now lives in poverty. The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 is an important first step for this new Congress in its efforts to stand up for the middle class and to stem the squeeze.

INTRODUCING WE THE PEOPLE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the We the People Act. The We the People Act forbids federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from adjudicating cases concerning state laws and policies relating to religious liberties or "privacy," including cases involving sexual practices, sexual orientation or reproduction. The We the People Act also protects the traditional definition of marriage from judicial activism by ensuring the Supreme Court cannot abuse the equal protection clause to redefine marriage. In order to hold federal judges accountable for abusing their powers, the act also provides that a judge who violates the act's limitations on judicial power shall either be impeached by Congress or removed by the president, according to rules established by the Congress.

The United States Constitution gives Congress the authority to establish and limit the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts and limit the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The Founders intended Congress to use this authority to correct abuses of power by the federal judiciary.

Some may claim that an activist judiciary that strikes down state laws at will expands individual liberty. Proponents of this claim overlook the fact that the best guarantor of true liberty is decentralized political institutions, while the greatest threat to liberty is concentrated power. This is why the Constitution carefully limits the power of the federal government over the states.

In recent years, we have seen numerous abuses of power by Federal courts. Federal judges regularly strike down state and local laws on subjects such as religious liberty, sexual orientation, family relations, education, and abortion. This government by Federal judiciary causes a virtual nullification of the Tenth Amendment's limitations on federal power. Furthermore, when federal judges impose their preferred policies on state and local governments, instead of respecting the policies adopted by those elected by, and thus accountable

to, the people, republican government is threatened. Article IV, section 4 of the United States Constitution guarantees each state a republican form of government. Thus, Congress must act when the executive or judicial branch threatens the republican governments of the individual states. Therefore, Congress has a responsibility to stop Federal judges from running roughshod over state and local laws. The Founders would certainly have supported congressional action to reign in Federal judges who tell citizens where they can and can't place manger scenes at Christmas.

Madam Speaker, even some supporters of liberalized abortion laws have admitted that the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which overturned the abortion laws of all fifty states, is flawed. The Supreme Court's Establishment Clause jurisdiction has also drawn criticism from across the political spectrum. Perhaps more importantly, attempts to resolve, by judicial fiat, important issues like abortion and the expression of religious belief in the public square increase social strife and conflict. The only way to resolve controversial social issues like abortion and school prayer is to restore respect for the right of state and local governments to adopt policies that reflect the beliefs of the citizens of those jurisdictions. I would remind my colleagues and the federal judiciary that, under our Constitutional system, there is no reason why the people of New York and the people of Texas should have the same policies regarding issues such as marriage and school prayer.

Unless Congress acts, a state's authority to define and regulate marriage may be the next victim of activist judges. After all, such a decision would simply take the Supreme Court's decision in the *Lawrence* case, which overturned all state sodomy laws, to its logical conclusion. Congress must launch a preemptive strike against any further federal usurpation of the states' authority to regulate marriage by removing issues concerning the definition of marriage from the jurisdiction of federal courts.

Although marriage is licensed and otherwise regulated by the states, government did not create the institution of marriage. Government regulation of marriage is based on state recognition of the practices and customs formulated by private individuals interacting in civil institutions, such as churches and synagogues. Having federal officials, whether judges, bureaucrats, or congressmen, impose a new definition of marriage on the people is an act of social engineering profoundly hostile to liberty.

It is long past time that Congress exercises its authority to protect the republican government of the states from out-of-control federal judges. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor the *We the People Act*.

MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION LEGISLATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a package of four bills aimed at improving our nation's math and science education at the pre-school through university levels.

Too often, our young students lack the academic background necessary to learn math and science skills in elementary school. The Math and Science School Readiness Act (H.R.) promotes pre-mathematics and pre-science school readiness in preschool-aged children enrolled in the federal Head Start program. The bill updates the current law provision that requires that Head Start programs develop preschoolers' "numeracy skills" by requiring that such programs instead ensure that children develop and demonstrate basic pre-math and pre-science skills, such as counting, grouping similar objects together, and deciphering whether items have been added or subtracted. I included a similar provision in the major Head Start reauthorization bills that passed the House in 2003 and 2005, but unfortunately these bills did not become law.

Now more than ever, our nation's future economic competitiveness and national security will depend upon a workforce equipped with necessary math and science skills. Our students lag behind their international peers on several key indicators, and our states and schools are not held accountable for K-12 science education. The Science Accountability Act (H.R.) holds states and schools accountable for ensuring that our K-12 students are learning science. It amends the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to require that the science assessments, which begin in the 2007-2008 school year, be included in the state's accountability system beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. It also gradually phases in annual assessments in science in grades 3-8, matching the existing requirements for reading and math assessments.

This package of math and science bills also provides resources for improving math and science education. A tandem of bills provides incentives for teachers and businesses to enhance math and science education.

A key component of high-quality math and science education is a qualified teaching workforce. The National Science Education Tax Incentive for Teachers Act (H.R.) helps bring qualified math and science teachers to our K-12 schools and helps retain them. Eligible teachers may receive a tax credit of up to \$1,500 per year.

A former science educator, I understand that students should learn math and science primarily by doing math and science. Schools lack the necessary equipment and some teachers lack training in how to use the equipment. The National Science Education Tax Incentive for Businesses Act (H.R.) encourages businesses to donate new and needed math and science-related equipment to schools or donate teacher training services. Businesses may receive a tax credit equal to 100 percent of the value of their donations.

I am hopeful that the House and Senate can quickly act on this legislative package and that President Bush will sign the bills so that our nation's math and science education may be improved on all levels.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ANTHONY
L'ESPERANCE

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Anthony L'Esperance, a fellow Southern Californian.

Mr. L'Esperance has lived a long and distinguished life. During World War II, he honorably served as a Lieutenant Commander in the Merchant Marines. His duty and commitment to this great nation have helped build the pillars of hope, peace and freedom that so many in the world still look up to.

Mr. L'Esperance was also featured in the pages of *Life* magazine for his work as a master magician and is credited for inventing a precise slide-calendar that incorporates the days lost due to the switch from Julian to Gregorian calendars.

But his greatest accomplishment and passion in life is his family. For more than 62 years, Mr. L'Esperance has been married to his wife Mary. They have been blessed with a son, Paul, a daughter-in-law, Jan, and granddaughter, Morgan.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask that this 110th Congress join me in saluting Mr. L'Esperance for his service to our country and community.

RENEWABLE ENERGY COULD TRANSFORM HAITI

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues the following op-ed that appeared last week in the *Orlando Sentinel*. This article discusses how a U.S.-backed biomass policy for Haiti could move our Caribbean neighbor away from the trajectory of state failure. As the article notes: "Support for bioenergy as part of the solution to Haiti's economic dilemma—unemployment and lack of energy—could advance the development of Haiti, and reinforce the governance and security reforms that Haitians so desperately deserve." I hope all of my colleagues keep this article in mind as we enter the 110th Congress.

[From the *Orlando Sentinel*, Dec. 26, 2006]

HOPE AFTER H.O.P.E. FOR HAITI?

(By Johanna Mendelson-Forman)

In its final hours, the 109th Congress gave new life to Haiti's manufacturing sector, passing a trade bill that included the H.O.P.E. legislation that would create up to 7,000 new jobs by allowing Haitian assembly plants to import, duty-free, textiles that would be made into clothing for the U.S. market. While not a long-term solution to Haiti's ills, the symbolism of this action went further to bolster the morale of the Haitian private sector than anything in recent years.

Haiti suffers from many problems, not the least of which is lack of jobs. Violence and kidnappings continue to undermine security in Port au Prince. Even with the presence of a robust U.N. Peace Mission, a country of 8

million people without jobs spells insecurity. The rigorous effort by the international community to reinvent the Haitian National Police is only part of the solution to a complex country where law enforcement is franchised to many different groups rather than controlled by the state. What vexes those who want Haiti to succeed is just how to create a viable and sustainable development program.

While H.O.P.E may represent a small victory, other positive signs may auger for a different approach. A donor's meeting at the end of November in Madrid yielded almost \$80 million to support good governance. And the World Bank decision to offer Haiti debt reduction also will help alleviate the drain on Haiti's limited revenue. Successful municipal elections held this month marked the first time since 1995 that Haitians democratically elected leaders of local government. And even a new effort to create a non-corrupt civil service is under way.

But the most promising signs that may make the difference in the coming years will be centered on a push to help Haiti become energy independent through the use of biomass energy.

Renewable energy could transform Haiti. A World Bank study reported that growing energy crops creates jobs in addition to fuel. In a country totally dependent on foreign oil for its energy needs, such independence could prove revolutionary.

This is not science fiction. Haiti is a perfect candidate for growing oil-seed crops. In rural areas, where 70 percent of the population remains engaged in subsistence agriculture, developing an indigenous biofuels market could transform the countryside and prevent the urban migration that continues to swell the slums of Port au Prince.

The environment could also be saved. And the proven anti-erosion qualities of seed crops like *Jatropha* and Castor bean could also revitalize the soil in a country that is 96 percent deforested and where every rainfall puts thousands of people at risk for natural disasters. And with crops such as *Jatropha*, the bush is a natural fence since its leaves are poisonous to animals.

Unfortunately, helping Haiti to become energy self-sufficient is not a priority for donors despite the potential it represents. It never came up at the Madrid meeting. And U.S. development assistance has yet to see this type of sustainable agriculture in Haiti as a means of long-term poverty alleviation.

If real hope is to be restored in Haiti, it must go beyond the trade incentives embodied in the H.O.P.E legislation. Urgent action is needed so that a U.S. biomass policy for the Caribbean addresses not only the regional dilemma of foreign oil dependency, but also moves Haiti away from the trajectory of state failure, a threat that U.S. policymakers consider a grave danger to U.S. interests.

With Brazil as the lead nation in the U.N. peace operation in Haiti, the technical means for bio-energy transformation could get underway within the next year. The combined power of U.S. economic support, coupled with Brazil's biomass expertise, could certainly be applied to a place such as Haiti. It could also demonstrate that ending addiction to fossil fuels, a goal President Bush endorses, can also be applied to one of the great development challenges in our hemisphere.

In a country just a two-hour flight from the U.S. mainland, the risk of state failure looms large. Support for bioenergy as part of the solution to Haiti's economic dilemma—unemployment and lack of energy—could advance the development of Haiti, and reinforce the governance and security reforms that Haitians so desperately deserve.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR HARRY
KESSLER

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, late in the night of January 2, 2007, our community lost a giant. Our beloved "once and ways" Mayor Harry Kessler, who symbolized honest and dedicated leadership in the public realm, has passed from this life.

He set a community standard that endures. His tenure as Mayor from 1971 through 1977 brought growth and vitality to a struggling city, and his imprimatur is everywhere. He followed his Mayoral leadership by holding other elected offices for two decades after he decided to retire as Mayor. Few have defined the Mayor of Toledo as did Mayor Harry Kessler. A beloved father for our City, he lived and breathed his life to better our city and region. His kind and gentlemanly manner, his eternal smile, and his deep commitment to integrity, learning and libraries, community service, and athletics have left permanent legacies to future generations.

Mayor Kessler was a builder, a healer, a leader who knew how to bring our community together not just for today but for tomorrow. We can each learn much from him as we emulate his life of service to us, in the private sector, in public office, and so many other community ventures. His deep love for our City that he always called home inspired us all. He did all he could to make our place on earth a finer and more humane place in which to live.

We extend deepest sympathy and gratitude to his soulmate and partner for over half a century, Mary Lou, his children and extended family. We wish them strength and peace as, together, we adjust to his passing from life with us. May God rest his soul and place him in a leading role in the City beyond stars to watch over our earthly pursuits.

IT'S TIME TO STOP THE SLAUGHTER
OF A LIVING SYMBOL OF
THE AMERICAN WEST

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation that I first authored in the 109th Congress to restore the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros. I am again joined in this effort by my good friend and colleague from Kentucky, Ed WHITFIELD.

In both 2005 and 2006 the House adopted amendments I offered to the Interior and Environment Appropriations bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the sale or slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros. While we were successful in the House, neither amendment made it into law. In any event, these amendments would have only been a temporary one-year fix. What is needed is a permanent solution to this problem. That is why I am offering my legislation today.

It was just a little over two years ago that 36 lines were hidden away in a 1,641 page ap-

propriations bill that overturned more than 30 years of national policy on the protection and management of wild free-roaming horses and burros, allowing these "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West" to literally be slaughtered through the use of a backdoor legislative maneuver enacted without public notice or input.

The public reaction to this change in law was swift and deafening. There was a good reason why it had been illegal for more than 30 years to sell or transfer wild free-roaming wild horses and burros for processing into commercial products. Americans were aghast to learn that these animals could be slaughtered for their meat to be served on dinner tables in such foreign countries as France, Belgium, and Japan.

Horses are an integral part of the tapestry of this country—a symbol, a promise of possibility, a companion, and a treasured childhood memory. Americans have always championed their survival, and expect that that these creatures will be protected. To allow them to be sacrificed and slaughtered represents great disrespect to the will of the American people and is an affront to our nation's history.

Instead of addressing long-term and widespread management problems the Bureau of Land Management, which administers the wild horse and burro program, has been forced to scurry to try to stop wild horses and burros from being sent to slaughter. Unfortunately for several dozen of these animals their attempts came too late and slaughter occurred.

Slaughter is all the more senseless since humane alternatives exist and federal agencies have the authority to carry out such humane measures as adoption, sterilization, relocation, and placement with qualified individuals and organizations.

The time has long since passed to restore the prohibition on the sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros. I urge my colleague to heed the will of the American public and respond to common decency by supporting my legislation. We owe no less to these living symbols of the American West.

A TRIBUTE TO MR. LARRY N.
DANTZLER

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the exceptional service of Mr. Larry N. Dantzler on behalf of Bay County military installations.

Mr. Dantzler is stepping down as the president of the Bay Defense Alliance, which is a group of volunteers committed to enhancing and preserving the missions of Tyndall Air Force Base and the Naval Support Activity Panama City.

Larry has served as its leader since the groups formation in 1993, and has spent countless hours in his role to defend these installations as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) loomed. Under his leadership, the Bay Defense Alliance helped defend our installations in Bay County against two rounds of BRAC. Members of the Bay Defense Alliance have logged more than 15,000 volunteer hours in their efforts supporting the bases.

Mr. Dantzler has served as an advocate for the more than 11,000 men and women who serve our nation in support of Tyndall AFB, the Naval Support Activity Panama City and the Coast Guard Station Panama City. His hard work has helped build military and Congressional support for important missions in Bay County. He has served tirelessly as a liaison between Bay County, State, and Federal leadership in defense of our local bases.

This has been a job requiring great dedication—which he has done splendidly—despite his additional obligations as a business owner and his many other volunteer efforts. His additional volunteer efforts include work with the Bay County Chamber of Commerce, of which he is a past chairman, Rotary, United Way, Optimist Club, Bay Medical Center Foundation, Gulf Coast Community College Foundation, Panama City-Bay County International Airport Authority, Gulf Coast Community College Board of Trustees, Coastal Operations Institute, Girls Inc., Panama City Music Association, Bay Arts Alliance and others.

I invite my distinguished colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Larry N. Dantzler for his invaluable service to Bay County, Florida. Through his leadership, he has laid the groundwork for preservation of our military installations for years to come and I would like to personally wish Larry, and his wife Nancy, the very best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE ON THE PASSING OF
DAVID HERMANCÉ—THE FATHER
OF THE AMERICAN PRIUS

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to David Hermance, who was killed in a plane crash in Southern California on November 25th. David was the North American Executive Engineer for Advanced Technology Vehicles at Toyota, whose headquarters is located in my congressional district.

Although most Americans may not know his name, David Hermance was one of the most influential engineers and environmentalists in the country. He was only 59 years-old when the experimental aircraft he was piloting crashed into the Pacific Ocean, and his tragic death is a stunning loss not only for his family, but for the larger community he served.

Equally respected in the environmental community and the automotive industry, David was known as the "Father of the American Prius"—and for good reason. He had a knack for translating complex systems and technologies into easy-to-understand concepts, and he worked tirelessly to help lay-people understand the workings and benefits of hybrid and other advanced-technology vehicles.

It was David's passionate approach and commitment to the environment that helped persuade a skeptical industry and auto-buying public to appreciate the enormous potential of his work. In fact, Madam Speaker, my family drives two hybrid vehicles—one in California and the other in Washington, DC.

David will be sorely missed—as an outstanding individual and beloved colleague. Our

thoughts and prayers are with his family: his wife Mary, his children Keith and Kathy, his grandson Colin and sister Bonnie.

INTRODUCTION OF THE IMPACT
AID SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BILL

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to help schools educating the children of U.S. service members and schools serving Native American children on federal lands.

My legislation will improve the distribution of school construction grants under the Impact Aid program. Impact Aid compensates schools affected by a federal presence such as military installations or Native American reservations. Because federal lands are exempt from local property taxes, school districts located on or near federal lands lose a major source of revenue without the federal Impact Aid program.

Currently, school construction grants under Impact Aid allow unequal funding between military school districts and Native American school districts. For example, although 36 percent of the one million federal students are from military impacted schools, the majority of school construction dollars are spent on the 12 percent of Native American students.

In 2005 and 2004, \$27 million in Impact Aid competitive construction grants were awarded. In 2005, only 1 of 8 competitive grants was awarded to a military impacted school district. In 2004, only three of 15 recipients were military school districts, and only one of 17 recipients in 2003 was a military school. In contrast, the formula grants under the Impact Aid School Construction program are equally distributed between military and Native American schools.

Considering that Impact Aid has historically been underfunded in meeting the needs of local school districts serving military and Native American families, this legislation is critical to ensure the most equitable use of available dollars.

Instead of sending 60% of funding toward 12 percent of federal students, the legislation I am introducing today would ensure 80% of school construction funding will be equally distributed between military and Native American schools. This approach will help ensure a high-quality education for the children of our military members selflessly serving our Nation. Priority would also be given to Native American districts in qualifying for emergency construction grants in recognition of the poor condition of too many Native American schools.

This legislation will also help schools affected by Global Rebasings at the Department of Defense (DoD). Over the next four years, DoD estimates that 38,000 military children will be returning to U.S. schools from closing overseas military bases. Under this legislation, schools that experience a 10% increase in the number of military students would be allowed to apply for emergency Impact Aid construction grants.

I am confident this excellent legislation will improve the Impact Aid program to better serve American families. I am proud that both Native American school districts and military-

impacted school districts support the common-sense approach of this bill. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the reauthorization of Impact Aid later this year, and urge every Member of Congress to review and co-sponsor this legislation.

HONORING MICHAEL LOFTON AND
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN
AND BOYS CONFERENCE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Lofton, an inspirational leader who is working each day to make a difference in the lives of young people in his community. This past summer Mr. Lofton implemented an idea to bring together 200 boys, men and parents in the first African American Men and Boys Conference. His goal was to counteract the trends where African American boys were lagging academically, disrupting classes, disrespecting themselves, and often ending up incarcerated.

His passion for helping children led him to the Austin School District, where he contacted parents, school principals, health specialists, professors, sociologists, judges, law-enforcement, businesses, community leaders and clergy, in order to create a concentrated effort to support young black men and boys in the Austin community.

The monthly African American Men and Boys Conference has continued to increase in participation since its inception this past June. It has also expanded from focusing on boys and their academic needs to working with the entire family to make a difference. Each month these boys and their families focus good decision making, managing anger, taking and passing standardized tests, completing high school, attending college, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and knowing how and when to seek assistance with school work.

It is people like Michael Lofton that are the cornerstone of our communities making a difference each and every day. He was brave enough and passionate enough to go out into the community and establish his vision for change, and he has inspired others to work with him to better our society. I commend Michael Lofton for all the work that he has done, and know that this is merely the first step of many great things to come.

HONORING SISTER MABLE
WILLIAMS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of Sister Mable Williams, a longtime resident of Oakland, California. Sister Mable is a role model to us all, and has demonstrated her leadership through her commitment to members of her church as well as the community at large. On Sunday, December 31, 2006, Sister Mable's friends, family and congregation will come together to celebrate her many contributions.

Sister Mable was born on January 25, 1931 in Picayune, Mississippi. She lived there until the age of 13, when she and her family moved to Alameda, California. She attended Alameda High School and Merritt Business School.

In 1953, Sister Mable married Thomas Williams, and in 1955 they moved to Oakland, California. Mable and her family have lived in Brookfield Village in East Oakland since that time, providing spiritual support to family, friends and neighbors. She also served as an employee of the United States Post Office for over 30 outstanding years, retiring in 1989.

Sister Mable joined Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in 1944 and immediately committed herself to serving in many aspects. For example, she served as a Charter Member of the church, and also as a secretary for the pastor, Reverend Herbert Guice. Furthermore, she served as a Charter Member of the Bethel Bible Class, and as a Sunday School Teacher of the Young Adult class.

One of Sister Mable's most outstanding accomplishments is having served as the Director of the Junior Church of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church for 50 years. Under her leadership, countless young people have had opportunities to serve and to brighten their communities. Her dedication has earned her the nickname "Able Mable," because she is never too busy or too tired to give of herself.

On Sunday, December 31, 2006, the friends, family and colleagues of Sister Mable Williams will come together to celebrate her tireless work and commitment to our community. On this very special day, I join all of them in thanking and saluting Sister Mable for her invaluable service, and for the profoundly positive impact her work has had on countless lives here in California's 9th U.S. Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
RICHARD A PLATT

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. REYNOLDS. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor a respected military officer and great fighter pilot upon the occasion of his retirement from the United States Air Force and Air National Guard after 36 years of honorable and dedicated service.

Born in Silver Creek, New York, growing up in Suffern, New York, Major General Richard A. Platt began his military career June 1971 when he received his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Newark College of Engineering. After earning his pilot wings in June 1972, he flew F-4 Phantom fighter aircraft and was assigned to front line combat units in Southeast Asia, Europe and the United States.

Madam Speaker, from his early days as a fighter pilot in Vietnam to his role as a fighter weapons instructor General Platt has shown impressive leadership and combat flying skills. His flying experience includes two combat tours of duty, one in Vietnam and the other over the skies of Bosnia.

In 1981, Major General Platt left the active duty air force and continued his service flying the A-10 Warthog as a member of the 104th

Fighter Wing of the Massachusetts Air National Guard. General Platt time and time again demonstrated his unparalleled vision and leadership. As a commander, he led the transformation of the 104th Fighter Wing into one of the premier fighting units in the entire American military.

Madam Speaker, following his flying career, General Platt served with distinction as he continued to provide vision and leadership to the Air National Guard. His assignments included commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard and Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander of both Air Combat Command as well as United States Air Forces Europe. His last post brought him to Washington, D.C. where he was Assistant to the Director of the Air National Guard. In this role, General Platt was instrumental in beginning important changes to ensure the relevance and viability of the Air National Guard and United States Air Force, in this most challenging period of our country's history.

Madam Speaker, General Platt's dedication to the military has been evident from the day he joined his ROTC unit to his last tour of duty at the Pentagon; but perhaps more than any other assignment, nothing was more special to him than his role as commander of the 104th Fighter Wing. Even today, several years after General Platt's tenure, the wing is still recognized as an elite unit—his core values of integrity, dedication to duty, and patriotism remain strong. General Platt recognized that the fighter wing and our entire military are only as strong as the lowest ranking member—and no one member was more important than any other. For him the 104th Fighter Wing was more than just officers and airmen, they were, and still remain his family.

Madam Speaker, each and every American is safer and freer due to the service of Major General Platt and the men and women like him serving across all of our armed services.

Madam Speaker, in recognition of and in gratitude for his service, leadership and patriotism, I ask that this honorable body join me in honoring Major General Richard A. Platt upon the occasion of his retirement; and wish him great health and happiness in the days and years ahead as a father, husband and grandfather.

THE 110TH CONGRESS

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, yesterday, January 4, 2007, marked a historic day for progress in the United States of America for two reasons. The House of Representatives grew by taking further steps to represent the full fabric of the American People. The American people have selected their first woman speaker, Nancy Pelosi, and their first Muslim member of Congress, Keith Ellison. I am proud that Americans have rejected the statements from some who alleged Americans of all faiths are not welcome in Congress. This is also the first time the American people are represented by a speaker with a clear goal to move the United States towards energy independence. These advances represent steps forward in America's continuing experiment in

democracy in which Congress represents America's stripes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE JOURNEY
THROUGH HALLOWED GROUND
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to create The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. Senator WARNER will be introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

We remember the words of Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address:

We cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it far above our poor power to add or detract.

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground winds its way along U.S. Route 15 from Jefferson's home of Monticello, in Charlottesville, Virginia to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Starting as a trail used by the Susquehannock and Iroquois, America's early history can literally be traced along this corridor. Jefferson's Monticello, Madison's Montpelier, Monroe's Oak Hill and Ashlawn Highland, Zachary Taylor's homes, Eisenhower's cottage, Teddy Roosevelt's cabin, John Marshall's home, General George Marshall's home, and Camp David are situated along this route also dotted with numerous Civil War battlefields and sites from the underground railroad.

Designation of this historic route as a National Heritage Area will create a partnership between the federal, state, and local governments as well as local civic organizations to commemorate, conserve and promote the history and resources along the Route 15 corridor between Gettysburg and Monticello. It will help link national parks to historical sites, package tourism opportunities, and provide financial and technical support for sites in the corridor.

This historic corridor includes a significant part of the 10th District of Virginia, which I am proud to represent. I echo the sentiments of author and historian David McCullough when he said that "[t]his is the ground of our Founding Fathers. These are the landscapes that speak volumes—small towns, churches, fields, mountains, creeks and rivers with names such as Bull Run and Rappahannock. They are the real thing, and what shame we will bring upon ourselves if we destroy them."

This bill is modeled after the legislation Senator WARNER and I introduced which created the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in the Shenandoah Valley in 1996. Through that legislation, the Civil War battlefield sites in the Valley are being preserved. As with that bill, local, state and federal officials, working along with landowners and business leaders will be able to better promote the history of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground attracting tourism and an appreciation for the unique history of this area.

I would like to thank the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership which has been working to forge partnerships that span the four states that fall within the proposed boundaries of the heritage area. This group has laid

the groundwork in identifying the significant historical properties within such a concentrated area along U.S. Route 15. Dozens of towns and counties along the corridor have offered letters of support as have local civic groups. The Virginia General Assembly also has approved a resolution of support.

This legislation has been painstakingly drafted to ensure that the rights of private property owners within the district will not be usurped. In fact, designation as a heritage area increases the rights of property owners giving them an opportunity to learn more about the significance of their own property and allowing them to market their property as historically significant. Landowners should have the right to choose preservation and protection along with the right to choose to build town homes, malls and highways.

The legislation clearly states: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to modify the authority of Federal, State, or local governments to regulate land use." Additionally, the only new federal funds accessible to The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership will be for the management of the heritage area.

The bill also specifically prohibits the use of eminent domain and the ability of the management entity to regulate land use. The Government Accountability Office, the nonpartisan research service for the legislative branch, has investigated the effect of a heritage area designation on land use decisions. Its 2004 report states: "Heritage area officials, Park Service headquarters and regional staff, and representatives of national property rights groups that we contacted were unable to provide us with any examples of a heritage area directly affecting—positively or negatively—private property values or use."

This legislation is a local effort to recognize the history and beauty of this region. The organizers are local landowners who have the vision to appreciate that they live among the nation's most precious resources and history. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership conducted a poll of the residents in the heritage area and found that 81 percent of those polled expressed support for the initiative.

To understand the importance of this initiative, I refer to the words of Thomas Jefferson in his Notes on the State of Virginia:

You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain a hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction, they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filed the whole valley; that continuing to rise they have at length broken over this spot, and have torn the mountains down from its summit to its base. The piles of rocks on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disrapture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing, which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremen-

dous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth, blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate in the calm below.

The landscape Jefferson depicts has been inspirational to American leaders for hundreds of years. From Susquehannock Indian trading routes and to Revolutionary War battles; from the homes of the founding fathers to the first brave pioneers to make a home beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains; from the Civil War battles which threatened to divide the union to the underground railroad, our nation was forged along this route. From Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and the fertile Piedmont to the east of the corridor the route in many ways exhibits the birth and development of our nation's economy, social movements and political landscape. Perhaps even more significant than the battlefields that cluster along the route are the documents penned in the homes along the corridor. The Declaration of Independence, the Monroe Doctrine and the Marshall Plan have influenced not only this nation, but the entire world.

Every American citizen should take a trip along this route so that they know not only from where our nation has come, but also to where we are going. We cannot stand as a nation unless we know what this nation stands for.

As we come upon the 400th anniversary this year of America's birthplace at Jamestown, I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this legislation.

IMPLEMENTING THE 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ACT OF 2007

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, the 9/11 Commission produced an unprecedented, bipartisan evaluation of how terrorists were able to exploit our nation's security on September 11, 2001. The Commissioners made 41 valuable recommendations on how to prevent such an attack from occurring again. Unfortunately, not all of those recommendations were fulfilled by Congress and the Bush Administration. As a result, the American people remain at-risk, and our nation remains unprepared for a major emergency. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita slammed into the Gulf Coast, we were reminded again of how unprepared we still are to deal with national disasters—whether caused by nature or a terrorist attack.

The "Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007," which I am introducing today, will make the United States more secure by closing many of the security gaps that continue to expose our nation to the risk of a terrorist attack.

Enactment of this legislation will make it more difficult for terrorists to obtain nuclear materials, ensure that first responders finally have the equipment they need to respond to a disaster, airplanes will be more secure, our borders will be harder for terrorists to penetrate, our police and other local law enforce-

ment will finally get the information they need about terrorist threats, and ports and other critical infrastructure will be made more secure. Perhaps most importantly, this bill makes these improvements in security without endangering our American way of life because it puts in place strong new privacy and civil liberties protections.

Specifically, this bill provides much-needed support to the first responders at the State, local, and tribal levels who bear the brunt of the emergency response and preparedness burden. The 9-11 Commission recommended that homeland security funds designed to improve emergency preparedness be allocated based on risk, and that steps be taken to provide first responders with communications systems that are fully interoperable in an emergency. This bill fulfills these recommendations by providing for risk-based evaluation and prioritization of homeland security grants and enhanced accountability for grant distribution and use, so that federal aid will go where it is most needed. Moreover, it creates a stand-alone grant program to help States, local and tribal governments erect the interoperable communications systems that are so vital to effective emergency response. It also encourages the use of a unified command during an emergency, so that Federal officials work more closely with State, local, and tribal governments in preparation and response efforts.

The 9/11 Commission found that many Federal agencies had information that could have led to the arrest and capture of the September 11th hijackers, but that this information did not reach the Federal, State, and local officials who could have acted on it. This bill acts on the 9/11 Commission's recommendation to improve intelligence and information sharing between Federal authorities and their State and local counterparts. First, it establishes the Fusion and Law Enforcement Education and Training (FLEET) Grant Program to strengthen the capabilities of local fusion centers and to foster cooperation among State and local law enforcement officers. It also establishes the Border Intelligence Fusion Center Program, which will put experienced Federal border security personnel to fusion centers in border States to enhance collaboration. Additionally, it provides more State and local law enforcement officers with the opportunity to gain valuable experience working in Washington with Department of Homeland Security officials. Finally, it ensures the Department itself has the technology and organization needed to facilitate intelligence and information sharing.

Our nation's aviation system, which was easily exploited by the September 11th hijackers, will also be made more secure through this bill. The 9/11 Commission found that more steps need to be taken to secure air cargo and checked baggage and to ensure airport checkpoints have the equipment necessary to detect explosives. This bill meets those concerns. First, it requires TSA to develop a system so that 100 percent of air cargo carried on passenger aircraft is inspected by 2009. Second, it provides for an additional billion dollars to be made available over the next four years to put modern baggage screening systems in place. It also creates an innovative new \$250 million trust fund to address the risk of suicide bombers at the checkpoint by strengthening explosive detection at the checkpoint. The Department will also have to explain how it plans to undertake efforts to prescreen passenger

names against terrorist watch lists, a task the airlines are still charged with doing over five years after 9/11. At the same time, a new, streamlined system will be put in place for innocent people to establish their identities and prevent them from being misidentified against “No Fly” or “Selectee” lists.

One of the most frightening aspects of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 is that the planes all took off from domestic airports, meaning that each of the hijackers was already in the United States. In response to these disconcerting facts, this bill strengthens accountability for plans to implement biometric verification of foreign nationals entering and exiting the United States, as well as improved integration of the Visa Security and Terrorist Travel Programs. Moreover, this measure authorizes badly needed support and personnel for the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, in order to enhance its ability to combat human smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorist travel.

In addition to addressing domestic homeland security gaps, this bill also contains multiple provisions that deal with security concerns outside the United States. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we have become increasingly aware of the growing threat posed by terrorists with access to nuclear materials and other weapons of mass destruction. This bill takes up those concerns

by providing some of the building blocks needed to mitigate the international aspects of terrorism. This bill complements existing laws and provides resources to encourage international cooperation to stem proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It also addresses the terrorism implications of the nuclear black market, and mandates that U.S. foreign assistance and arms sales be withdrawn from countries that condone or engage in nuclear proliferation networks.

Another way that this bill protects against the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction is to strengthen security procedures for cargo entering the United States from foreign ports. Building upon the recently enacted SAFE Ports Act, this bill requires all cargo containers to be scanned before they reach U.S. ports within five years, and requires port security personnel to use the best technology available in scanning containers for radiation and density.

While it addresses a number of security concerns, this bill would also strengthen protection of privacy rights and civil liberties. Although it was created in 2004 on the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board has been little more than a shell that has failed to live up to its promise and protect the basic freedoms of Americans. This bill would take three key steps toward making the Board a legitimate force of accountability and trans-

parency in the federal government. First, it would remove the Board from the Executive Office of the President, making it an independent and autonomous body. Second, this bill would require all Board members to be confirmed by the Senate, which will minimize political influence by the President and other executive officials whose actions it oversees. Finally, this bill would empower the Board as the Chief Privacy Officer with the authority to subpoena witnesses and evidence, a key investigative tool that would greatly strengthen the Board's ability to uncover questionable or unlawful action.

The best way to honor those who lost their lives because of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 is to make sure that kind of attack never happens again. Similarly, there must be a stronger commitment to giving first responders and communities the resources they need to respond quickly and vigorously to terrorist attacks and significant natural disasters. The 9/11 Commission did an exemplary job of locating weaknesses and making recommendations for strengthening homeland security. Now it falls to us, the U.S. Congress, to follow through on those recommendations. The 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007 is a critical step in fulfilling that mission, and I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in supporting it.