TRIBUTE TO THE FREDONIA AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the accomplishments of the Fredonia American Legion Auxiliary. The members of this organization have loyally served the Fredonia area and its veteran community for many years and their good deeds deserve to be acknowledged.

All of the Legion's activities work toward its mission to improve the quality of life for Fredonia's veterans and their families.

To raise money for veteran family events, such as their annual Children's Christmas Party, the Legion has held various events throughout the year including a Chinese auction, craft show, bingo night and several basket raffles.

As part of their community service efforts, members collected donations to give to local needy families during the holiday season.

The Legion hosted an ''Americanism'' Essay Contest at local grade schools to promote patriotism among the country's youth. The winners included third-grader Olivea Wright from Oakview Elementary and sixth-grader Kelsey Greathouse from Commodore Perry Elementary.

On Veterans Day and Memorial Day, members held honorary services with special guest speakers to pay tribute to U.S. veterans in the Fredonia area.

From September 2006 to June 2007, the Fredonia American Legion donated an impressive $18,700 in coupons to 37 commissaries around the world.

The officers of the Legion include: Mary Ellen Flynn, President; Sandy Lurtz, 1st Vice President; Ruth Foust, 2nd Vice President; Dorthy Young, Secretary/Treasurer; Shirley Kirsch, Chaplain; Darlene Hoffman, Historian and Sergeant-at-Arms; Mary Jane Lockcock, Sergeant-at-Arms.

I hope my colleagues will join me at this time in recognizing the service of the Fredonia American Legion and in congratulating its efforts.

MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT ATLANTA VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today, almost last, but certainly not least, Congress takes action on a bill to authorize a major medical facility project that will create modern inpatient wards at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Atlanta, Georgia. This is an investment of $20.5 million to provide a standard of care our Nation guarantees for veterans across America. This is a relatively small bill but it is part of keeping a very big promise. We should always keep that promise.

This project will renovate 3 inpatient floors to meet ADA accessibility requirements. Our handicapped veterans should have bathrooms, showers and toilet facilities they can actually use. This project will also meet needs of a growing group of women veterans. It will provide patient privacy where it has been inadequate. And it will make the staff work more efficiently by simply making the layout of the building better for work. In addition, an enclosed connecting bridge will be built between the Medical Center and VA Regional Office buildings so there will be more fluid access between what goes on at the hospital and what goes on at the benefits administration.

The Atlanta VA Medical Center has an active affiliation with the University of Emory Medical School. This project will keep this relationship on sound footing. Hundreds of medical doctors and students with Emory make contributions at the hospital and see firsthand the result of sacrifices made from generation to generation. Unfortunately, with the number of our boys and girls coming home from war growing as we speak, these physicians are going to be caring for so many more people with so many more health problems.

I want to applaud the efforts of my colleague from Georgia, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON, for working to pass this bill through the Senate. I know on this issue, the issue of caring for our veterans, all of us from Georgia and on a bipartisan basis in the House and Senate can agree that no expense should be spared in order to ensure the best care modem medicine can provide.

We have more work to do on this and so many other issues. It is my hope we can come together on more bills in the coming year, much larger bills, which benefit those who wear the uniform, as well as kids and seniors who need better health care.

TRIBUTE TO HUGHSTON ORTHOPEDIC HOSPITAL

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, the city of Columbus in Georgia's 3rd Congressional District boasts a stellar health care community that enriches the well-being and quality of life for Muscogee and surrounding counties.

This year, Georgia Trend magazine singled out one of those health care facilities, Hughston Orthopedic Hospital, for its Honor Roll, naming it one of the 15 best places to work in the state.

Long known for its excellent patient care, Hughston's secret is now out: It also provides excellent employee care.

One of the founders of the hospital summed up the organization's ethos by saying, ''It's not bricks, mortar and equipment that makes a hospital—it's people.''

Employee input helps the hospital keep its edge in providing the best possible care. Every month, the President's Council convenes to allow employees to voice suggestions or concerns directly to the CEO, Don Avery.

Hughston employees receive 100 percent tuition reimbursement, flexible working schedules, day care discounts and a special HOPE fund to aid employees suffering hardships. Employees who go above and beyond the normal call of duty receive special recognition, such as the Spirit of Caring award for nurses dedicated to excellent care and the Frist Humanitarian Award for workers who engage in community service and extraordinary acts of kindness.

In 1984, Dr. Jack Hughston, known as the ''father of sports medicine,'' and Dr. Thomas Frist Sr. founded the hospital. Today, the hospital famed for its sports medicine is a 100-bed orthopedic facility performing spinal surgeries and joint replacements.

Madam Speaker, I want to call special attention to the special people providing visionary leadership and top-notch medical care to the patients in the Greater Columbus area. They embody the spirit of hard work and compassion that keep America great.

On behalf of the 3rd Congressional District of Georgia and this House, I congratulate Hughston Orthopedic Hospital on this well-deserved recognition.

SUPPORT FOR RECOGNITION OF PLUTO AS A PLANET

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the renewed recognition of Pluto as a planet.

The planet Pluto was discovered on January 23, 1930, by Clyde Tombaugh. Although just 24 years of age with no formal education beyond high school, Mr. Tombaugh discovered this new planet by painstakingly and systematically examining and comparing photographic plates he had made of the night skies over New Mexico. For this achievement, Mr. Tombaugh received a prestigious award from the Royal Astronomical Society along with a scholarship to the University of Kansas, which allowed him to continue his formal education.

Clyde Tombaugh went on to make a large number of additional contributions to our knowledge of the universe and to receive many more awards and honors before his death on January 17, 1997. I am proud to note that Mr. Tombaugh was born on February 4, 1906, on a farm near Streator, IL, in LaSalle County—a community which I am privileged to represent in the Congress of the United States.

Unfortunately, on August 26, 2006, the International Astronomical Union, IAU, meeting in Prague and relying on the votes of only a handful of its approximately 10,000 members, made the decision to downgrade the status of Pluto.

This decision was met with protests from eminent scientists and astronomers all over the world. Perhaps foremost among those in the international scientific community strongly disagreeing with the IAU decision was Dr. S. Alan Stern. Named earlier this year by Time magazine as one of the ''One Hundred Most Influential People in the World'', Dr. Stern is also one of the lead consultants for the New Horizons Mission.

The New Horizons Mission is an unmanned spacecraft launched in January of 2006, which is projected to reach Pluto and the outer edge of our solar system in the year 2015. This

spacecraft is carrying some of the ashes of Clyde Tombaugh.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to express their support for the reversal of the International Astronomical Union's decision and the official reinstatement of Pluto as the ninth and outermost planet in our solar system.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATORS ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 75th Anniversary of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. The AAMVA will be holding their 2008 annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

In 1932, growth in the motor vehicle population, increasing interstate travel, and an increase in death and injuries on the highways highlighted the need for a national organization for uniform interstate laws and programs.

In response, representatives of the States, recognizing this need for uniform and reciprocal administration of motor vehicle laws, formed the American Conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators. Subsequently in 1933 the group renamed itself the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, or AAMVA.

AAMVA has been the recognized North American authority for driver licensing and motor vehicle administration. AAMVA's U.S. and Canadian members have worked collaboratively to support and improve motor vehicle administration, safety, identification security and law enforcement.

AAMVA has served as a liaison with other levels of government and the private sector, and its development and research activities have provided guidelines for more effective public service.

AAMVA has fostered a tradition of service in the motor vehicle and law enforcement professions, providing outstanding service to the community through superb customer service initiatives, information technology, safety, and the best in public affairs and consumer educational programs throughout North America.

I would like to commend the many achievements of AAMVA and encourage AAMVA to continue its tradition of excellence in service to motorists through its advocacy of improving highway safety.

HONORING COMMUNITY BRIDGES OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Community Bridges of Santa Cruz County, which will gather to celebrate its 30th anniversary later this month. Community Bridges, a family of non-profit programs, provides otherwise unmet care to the citizens of Santa Cruz County and is a vital component of our community.

Since its inception on October 19, 1977, Community Bridges has worked to provide innovative human services to enhance our diverse community. Today the family of programs (Child and Adult Care Food Program; Child Development Programs; La Manzana Community Resources; Lift Line: Live Oak Family Resource Center. Meals on Wheels; and WIC Nutrition Program) serves nearly 30,000 Santa Cruz County community members each year.

Through its services, the group nurtures the entire life from beginning to end. Starting childhood, Community Bridges fosters a better life by providing childcare, after-school programs, and teen mentoring to ensure that children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and life. For those later in life Community Bridges helps residents maintain their dignity and independence by providing meal delivery, transportation, and literacy and language education.

With an eye on healthy living, Community Bridges combats childhood obesity and promotes community wellbeing by providing nutrition education programs, breastfeeding support for new mothers, and food reimbursements. Moreover, Community Bridges helps reduce the risk of child abuse and keeps families strong by providing parenting classes, fostering educational attainment, and connecting families to health insurance programs and other important resources.

They not only seek to address unmet human service needs in our county, but also focus on supporting existing efforts to serve the community by working with other local care providers. Community Bridges promotes civic engagement by actively seeking community input and providing leadership training opportunities for local residents. By building partnerships with local organizations they ensure the greatest efficiency and accessibility of services for Santa Cruz County residents. The broad reach and integrated structure of Community Bridges affords the agency the unique ability to swiftly identify and address community needs as they emerge.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor to express appreciation for the critical role Community Bridges serves in providing a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community and helping to improve the quality of life for the children, families, and seniors in Santa Cruz County.

COURT RULINGS ON YUKOS MANAGEMENT

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. WICKER. Madam Speaker, I would like to share information with my House colleagues about the application of the rule of law and free market economics in Russia. While economic growth has been positive since the 1998 financial crisis, Russia's legal and political system has regressed, threatening the development of a diverse economy based on market principles and the rule of law. The Russian government's 2003 expropriation of the YUKOS Oil Company raises concern about the stability of the economy and continues to remind us that investing in Russia is still very risky.

As Co-Chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Russia Working Group, I would point out that the same legal system that has undermined the civil and human rights of former YUKOS head Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his business partner Platon Lebedev, also caused the company's downfall. In the YUKOS case, the Russian courts failed to adhere to basic principles such as private property rights protection, independent judges, due process and equal application of the law.

YUKOS, once Russia's largest oil company, was forced to declare bankruptcy in August 2006, when it could not pay claimed back taxes. After a series of auctions, YUKOS' remaining assets fell into the hands of the state-owned company, Rosneft. On November 22, 2007, Russia's Federal Tax Service announced it had completed YUKOS' bankruptcy procedure and that the company had ceased to exist as a legal entity.

In contrast to their experience in the Russian judicial system, Khodorkovsky and Lebedev have won several court rulings in other countries. The first favorable decision came in August 2006, when a Dutch court refused to give the Russian receiver of YUKOS, Eduard Rebgun, full control of its Dutch unit.

In August 2007, the Supreme Court of Switzerland ruled that the case against Khodorkovsky and Lebedev was politically motivated and refused to release bank documents to Russia in connection with the case.

Shortly afterwards, in October 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia had violated the rights of Lebedev during his arrest and pretrial detention, and the Russian government was ordered to pay him compensation.

However, in the most recent and significant ruling on October 31, 2007, a Dutch court ruled the YUKOS receiver did not have the right to sell off the firm's foreign assets in a bankruptcy auction in August. The court nullified all actions taken in that auction. The court also ruled that YUKOS was denied a fair trial to establish how much back taxes it owed to the Russian government.

The Dutch court ruling is important because it highlights three vitally important issues: First, the ability of Russian officials to appoint their own managers to run YUKOS; second, the bankruptcy of YUKOS and the process used to achieve it; and third, the validity of the original tax claim against YUKOS.

This decision, like many others before it, raises concerns about the legitimacy of the Russian court rulings in the YUKOS case. When the European Court of Human Rights along with courts in Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and other jurisdictions all reach the same conclusion, it strongly indicates that there is something very wrong in the application of the rule of law in Russia.

I want to share details of the October 31st Dutch court judgment relating to this case, and would like to submit for the RECORD the ''Decision'' section of that ruling.

JUDGMENT

District Court of Amsterdam, civil law division, case number/docket number: 355622/HA ZA 06–3612.

Judgement dated 31 October 2007 in the case of 1. David Andrew Godfrey, resident in London (United Kingdom); 2. Bruce Kelvern Misamore, resident in Houston, Texas (United States of America); 3. the private company with limited liability YUKOS Finance B.V., with registered seat in Amsterdam; claimants, procurator litis: Mr. R.J.