

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING CROSS COUNTRY NATIONAL CHAMPION MIKE FOUT OF LAPORTE, INDIANA

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I rise before you to offer a word of congratulations to Mike Fout of LaPorte, Indiana. Fout traveled to San Diego on December 13, 2007 as the number five seed for the Foot Locker Cross Country Championship. He returned home to LaPorte the national champion.

To win the race, Fout defeated the second place finisher by seven seconds, for a total time of only 14:50. It was a personal best for Fout, who was not deterred even by the cool, muddy conditions on the day of the race.

Fout was neither favored to win the race, nor even to come in the top five, but his coach, as well as his family and friends, knew that he would be able to accomplish whatever he set out to do. He has now ensured himself a place in the history of the National Cross Country Championships by achieving the ninth fastest time ever in an event that has been held for twenty-nine years.

On his way to becoming the first Indiana runner to win the national championship, Fout stayed with the lead pack for most of the 5K race, and then broke away after the two mile mark. He maintained this position for the rest of the race, with no challengers coming forward to disrupt his lead.

All of this took place after Fout was crowned state champion of Indiana in the 3200-meter race, led team Indiana to an all-star event, and won the Midwest Regional Championship.

Mike Fout's hard work was given him the well-deserved title of national champion. But in congratulating him, I would also offer my congratulations to his coach Tim Beres, LaPorte High School and the greater LaPorte community for their support of the cross country program.

HONORING STEVE BENEFIELD'S SERVICE WITH THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Steve Benefield for his service with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. Steve resigned from the Chamber on January 4 after serving a decade as its president.

Rutherford County has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, and the Chamber has been growing right along with it. The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce is

now the third largest in Tennessee, and Steve has been instrumental in spurring the county's economic development efforts.

He was a leader in efforts to bring a conference center to Murfreesboro, worked to acquire a new Chamber building and county visitor center, and furthered development at Smyrna's airport. His efforts have helped to ensure that Rutherford County will continue to be a desirable place to live and raise a family.

Steve has been a leader not only in business efforts, but also in the community. He is active in his church and with his sons' baseball teams, where he draws from his experience pitching for the Blue Raiders at our shared alma mater, Middle Tennessee State University.

The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce is losing a great asset, but I am happy Steve and his family are staying in Murfreesboro. I wish them all the best.

TRIBUTE TO CATHY TRAVIS

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, this month Capitol Hill saw the departure of constitutional aficionado and political guru Cathy Travis—who recently retired after serving the House for 25 years, the last 18 as my communications director and senior advisor.

Cathy's dedication to and interest in public service has led her from Jonesboro, AR, to the corridors of the Capitol. Politics always fascinated her, and after graduation from Arkansas State University she went to work for former Congressman Bill Alexander (D-AR) as a press assistant. She then served in various capacities for the House Floor staff. After serving in the Chief Deputy Majority Whip's office for 6 months, she came to work for me.

Words cannot begin to describe what Cathy has meant to me, my staff, and the people of the 27th district of Texas. For 18 years, I have relied on Cathy for her professionalism, work ethic, and friendship. She has been a wonderful and effective spokeswoman for the issues of south Texas, and reporters always expressed their gratitude for her guidance and assistance.

Whether through her infectious laugh or her candid advice, Cathy always left a resounding impression on those she met and worked with. Members, staff, and reporters always took time out of their busy schedules to catch up with her and share some friendly chisme. During her last few weeks in my office, numerous people stopped to wish her best of luck and congratulate her on her retirement.

Cathy will now dedicate her energy to writing and marketing her books. Her first book, *Constitution Translated for Kids*, has received numerous accolades and will soon be published in Spanish. In the book, the original text of the Constitution is paired side-by-side with

a kid-friendly interpretation to pique interest and stimulate further discussion of American liberties.

Though I bid Cathy a sad farewell from my office, it will certainly not be a goodbye. I look forward to seeing her around the Capitol when she comes up to catch up with old friends.

Cathy remains a trusted member of my family, and I will always seek her counsel on matters political and personal. I wish her the best of luck during the new phase of her life.

HONORING THE LA VERGNE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of the top marching bands in the nation: La Vergne High School's Wolverine Marching Band, which represented middle Tennessee on November 17 at the U.S. Scholastic Band Association Grand National Championships.

This was the Wolverine Marching Band's first time to compete in the USSBA championships. Only 68 marching bands throughout the Nation were invited to the competition held in Baltimore, Maryland. In addition to the LHS band placing eighth overall, the school's drum line placed fifth, and the color guard placed 11th.

The theme of La Vergne High School Music is "where perfection and hard work meet." It must be very gratifying to the students, staff, parents, and supporters to see the rewards of countless hours of practice. I congratulate the band on their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the future.

I commend the Wolverine Marching Band: Director of Bands Edward Freytag, Assistant Director of Band Chris Crumley, Visual Coordinator Tim White, Color Guard Instructor Megan Taylor and Kirby Cooper, Band Members: Sarah Baron, Melissa Barscz, Brad Beal, Allison Beck, Taylor Bentley, Casey Bidini, Katelyn Blair, Chelsea Boulanger, Joey Brewer, Leonard Brown, Tony Brown, William Bryant, Jacob Burton, Tyler Channell, Jordan Cooley, Porsha Cooper, Rachel Covert, Tyler Covert, James Day, Shanice Derrick, Catherine Drescher, Tara Dryden, Amber Dugger, William Duke Jr., Dylan Duke, Carl Dye, Shelby Erny, Aeron Falknor, Cheyanne Fletcher, Jessica Forbis, Loretta Fougeray, Courtney Frierson, Matthew Fusco, Endre Gereben, Andres Gonzalez, Matt Goodman, Katie Green, Alexandria Hahn, David Hardy, Ross Harvey, Elizabeth Henderson, Jessica Henderson, Brianna Herron, Matt Hickman, Curt Hills, Chassity Hoback, Zach Hodges, Andre Holt, Mary Huckleberry, Brooks Hunter, Wesley Hurless, Greg Jackson, Ethan Jerrell, Felicia Johnson, Elise Jones, Emily Jones, Will Kelley, Jeremiah Lang, John Leaver, Brittany Lee, Ginger Levinson, Kwesi Manuel, Jennifer

• 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.

Maroney, Melvin Mason, Myesha Mason, Tara Mathews, Cici McCormick, Brittney McDuffie, Emily McDuffie, Aaron McGowen, William McGowen, Shelby McIntosh, Michael Meacham, Josh Merbitz, David Miller, Tyler Mingle, Josh Moore, John Morris, Zach Murray, Kayla Nickel, Michael Pagan, Stephanie Parker, Aaron Parris, Ashley Patten, Shelby Perkins, Shamikia Perry, Charlie Prazak, Darrin Pugh, Zach Pugh, Briana Rainey, Josh Raymond, Lacey Reade, Shinead Riddle, Lucas Rigo, Rivera Rico, Brett Runge, Nick Sargent, Shannon Schmitz, Tyler Shapard, Jordan Shurmer, Ashley Sledge, Corey Smathers, Devon Smith, Logan Smith, Sammy Stack, Lauren Stanley, Mary Taylor, Lindsey Tedford, Alison Thatcher, Jesse Thurgood, Curtis Vandever, Latoya Wade, Lane Waddell, Marissa Waddell, Cory Waters, Lamar White, Tandra Wilson, and Jacob Wood.

HONORING MSGT. JASON BILLIOT

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to MSgt. Jason Billiot, as he retires from the United States Air Force. MSgt. Jason Billiot entered the Air Force in 1988. After completing Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX, AB Billiot went to Chanute AFB, IL to be trained as a Special Vehicle Mechanic. After completion of tech school he was assigned to the 363rd Transportation Squadron, Shaw AFB, SC. While at Shaw AFB he not only honed his skills on Firefighting and Refueling Equipment, but also attended Airmen Leadership School.

In 1994, after five years at Shaw, SRA Billiot got his first assignment to the 345th Training Squadron at Lackland AFB. He completed ASE requirements for master medium/heavy truck technician and was also awarded his CCAF degree in vehicle maintenance. Two years later, as a result of BRAC realignment, the school house was moved to the Naval Construction Training Center in Port Hueneme, California.

While in California, Sgt Billiot performed duties as MTT instructor, world training instructor, special vehicle instructor, and aircraft refueling vehicle instructor supervisor. In 1999, Sgt Billiot and his wife, Jeanne, received the blessing of the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth. In 2000, Sgt Billiot received his orders for the 354th Transportation Squadron Eielson AFB, Alaska.

While in Alaska, Sgt Billiot was supervising and running shops such as NCOIC of customer service, NCOIC of special purpose vehicle element, and superintendent of the dispensing element. He also attended the NCO Academy at Elmendorf AFB. In 2003, MSgt. Billiot was again assigned to the school house in Port Hueneme, CA. As Master Sergeant, Billiot took leadership roles as diesel phase head, gas phase head, interservice mechanic curriculum developer and skills knowledge test author. MSgt. Billiot finishes out an outstanding and eventful career after 20 years of faithful service to his country as interservice mechanic school superintendent.

It is my pleasure to recognize the character and dedication of MSgt. Billiot upon his retirement.

KENYA ELECTION CRISIS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my deep concern regarding the current crisis in the nation of Kenya. Approximately 600 people were killed in violent clashes across Kenya, following disputed presidential elections that took place on December 27, 2007. Violence erupted in Kenya after President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the election and opposition leader Raila Odinga disputed the results. European Union observers have said the presidential poll was flawed and the Government of Kenya has acknowledged that voting irregularities took place.

Unfortunately, the effects of post-election violence in Kenya continue to echo throughout the country. An estimated 250,000 people have been forced from their homes and are in need of food, shelter and medicine. Human rights activists and aid workers are concerned that families displaced by the conflict will be unable to return to their homes—many of which were burned down—in the near future. Though the fighting has subsided from its peak immediately after the elections in late December, tension remains high between political opponents divided along ethnic lines. There continues to be incidences of violence, demonstrations, and looting in several neighborhoods of Nairobi and Mombasa and in large parts of the westernmost provinces.

The time has come for both the government and the opposition to enter into a good faith dialog for the benefit and welfare of the Kenyan people, who deserve a political process that reflects their dedication to transparency, democracy and progress. Therefore, it is vital for President Kibaki and Raila Odinga to come together without preconditions to discuss how to end the post-electoral crisis in a way that reflects the will of the Kenyan people. Additionally, both leaders must take steps to end the violence and ensure respect for the rule of law and respect for human rights. The full restoration of freedom of the press and freedom of peaceful assembly is an integral part of this goal.

Madam Speaker, our hearts go out to the people of Kenya who have suffered throughout the post-election ordeal and I urge the Kenyan Government and the opposition to resolve this crisis for the benefit of their people.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA DISTRICT AWARD OF MERIT

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor three constituents from South Texas: Heather Blakemore, Rene Hernandez, and Sue Stachowiak.

The three have been awarded the District Award of Merit from the Boy Scouts of America, and it is the highest award bestowed upon volunteers in a district that symbolizes their exceptional and noteworthy service to youth in the Boy Scouts of America.

Heather's involvement with scouting began as an assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 59 for her son, Jess. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, pack committee member, and assistant scoutmaster. She has also served as the Mistress of ceremonies for the District Recognition Dinner for 2 years and Mistress of ceremonies for the Council Banquet for 1 year.

Rene's scouting career began as a den leader for his son, Rene, in Pack 25. Since then he has served as Webelos den leader and cubmaster. In 4 years, Rene has served on Cub Scout Day Camp staff, Cub Adventure weekend staff, Pinewood Derby staff, Scoutingorama staff, and the district training team. He has also served as a unit commissioner and assistant district commissioner, the round-up staff, and participated in multiple Scoutreach recruitments initiatives the last 4 years.

Sue has been involved in scouting for 7 years, beginning with serving as assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 5 for her oldest son. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, Webelos den leader, assistant Webelos den leader, assistant cubmaster, assistant scoutmaster, and troop committee member.

The Boy Scouts of America continue their tradition of providing quality programs for boys and young men. I am proud of all three parents for taking an active role in lives of our youth. These parents serve as shining examples of love and duty in our communities.

HONORING THE FORREST HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Rocket Band of Blue of Forrest High School in Chapel Hill, TN, for winning the Division I State Championship. The Rocket Band of Blue's field commanders were also state champions, and the band took first place each for soloist baritone, high music, and high visual.

The Governor's Cup, the championship trophy they received, is one of many accolades the marching band has earned this year. The Rocket Band of Blue is the Grand Champion of the Montgomery Central Marching Contest, the Trousdale County Marching Band Yellow Jacket Invitational, and the Highland Rim Marching Contest. The band received a superior rating at the Middle Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association Marching Festival and third place at the Mid-South Marching Invitational.

I am sure it must be very gratifying to the students, staff, parents, and supporters to see the rewards of countless hours of practice. I congratulate the Rocket Band of Blue on their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the future.

I commend the 2007 Rocket Band of Blue: Madeline Bell, Kimber Luna, Taylor Blanchett, Crystal Cannon, Rachael Harris, Kim Meachem, Brooke Russell, Caleb Boone, Lauren Fatherly, Tyler Hargrove, Tyler Mierecki, Tyler Williams, Jared Blanchett, Paul Caraglio, Matt Kline, Jana Bunkall, Jed Hall,

Brittani Stewart, Bryan Hartley, Travis Ryder, Stacey Ryder, Stacey Byrd, Devin Barnes, Shawna Crafton, Brianna LaFleur, Sam Hartley, Sarah Stemple, Lindsay Gaskill, Jon Fleet, Josh Hall, Gunner Warlick, James Luna, Audra Mobley, Matt Cryer, Zach Brown, Megan Baker, Amber Scott, Katie Freeman, Chelsea Moore, Amber Barnes, Lauren French, Keisha Sherrill, Sara Lubieski, Reilly Rowland, Learyn Miller, Bethany Gamble, Taylor Herron and Jessie Baker.

HONORING ELEANOR WRIGHT

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the memory of Eleanor Wright; a distinguished member of the Santa Barbara community. Eleanor's life was marked by service to our society and love for her family.

Eleanor Wright, a native of Ohio and a longtime Santa Barbara resident, attended the Ethel Walker School and Bennington College where she earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology. Over 50 years ago, she married Clifford Ramsey Wright Jr., who served honorably in our Nation's armed services.

The Wrights moved to the Santa Barbara area in 1959. Immediately upon arrival, Eleanor proved herself to be a key leader in the community by advocating for social justice in a variety of fields. The Santa Barbara Mental Health Association, the Citizens Planning Association, the Family Service Agency, the Community Counseling Association, and the Santa Barbara Civil Service Commission benefited from Eleanor's tireless work on many of her committees. She also co-founded the Phoenix House of Santa Barbara, a facility designed to help mental health patients transition back into the community. In addition to her devotion through service, Eleanor supported a large number of community based action groups which work to make Santa Barbara a healthy and vital community.

Eleanor's legacy will be remembered by her husband, 4 sons, daughter, 12 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, and all of her extended family. As a woman who committed her life to serving others, Eleanor's passing has been deeply felt by the many that were touched by her life. The Santa Barbara community will miss an invaluable community leader and a friend. Please join me in honoring this exemplary American.

CONDEMNING ASSASSINATION OF FORMER PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO AND REAFFIRMING COMMITMENT OF UNITED STATES TO ASSIST PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I support H. Res. 912, a resolution condemning the assassination of former Pakistani

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and reaffirming the commitment of the United States to assist the people of Pakistan in combating terrorist activity and promoting a free and democratic Pakistan.

The 27th of December will be remembered as a mournful day for all of the people of Pakistan and people of goodwill the world over. My deepest sympathies and condolences are with them. As a member of the United States Congress' Congressional Pakistan Caucus, I am deeply saddened by this dastardly effort to circumvent the democratic process which has claimed the life of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The assassination of former Prime Minister Bhutto is viewed by many as an attempt to thwart Pakistan's efforts to help restore stability and democracy. Regrettably, since 2001, the security situation in Pakistan has grown increasingly unstable. There have been at least six assassination attempts against President Pervez Musharraf over the past several years.

Additionally, former Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto was the target of numerous threats and a previous assassination attempt. In route to a rally in Karachi on October 18, 2007, two explosions occurred shortly after Bhutto left Jinnah International Airport. She was not injured, but the explosions, later found to be a suicide-bomb attack, killed 136 people and injured at least 450. The dead included at least 50 of the security guards from her Pakistan Peoples Party.

Mrs. Bhutto represented the hopes and aspirations of numerous Pakistanis who wished to turn the page on instability and extremism. Mrs. Bhutto sought to change Pakistan with a determination that should have been challenged with ballots, not bullets and bombs.

The Pakistani government's decision to request that the United Kingdom's Scotland Yard Counter Terrorism Command provide support and assistance in the investigation into the murder of Benazir Bhutto will not be enough if the Pakistani people want more. It is exceedingly important that the people of Pakistan believe that a credible transparent investigation is conducted and that all lawful efforts are pursued to bring the perpetrators of the atrocious crime to justice. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to establish a "Truth Commission" of a capable, competent, and credible cross section of Pakistanis. Additionally, it is of the greatest importance that elections be conducted in a fair, transparent and democratic manner after considered input about the process from political parties.

The future of Pakistan will effect our global security. Pro-Taliban militants and their al-Qaeda allies must not find refuge. Homicidal extremists pose a threat to Pakistan and its neighbors and must not be allowed to offset the winds of democratic change. We in the United States can offer support to Pakistan conditioned on free and fair elections along with a credible transparent investigation.

The noble cause of perfecting the democratization of Pakistan is in the hands of the people of Pakistan. Although international partners can assist in this effort, the future of Pakistan must be hammered out by the people of Pakistan.

Although, this tragic event may call into question the future of democracy in Pakistan, people of goodwill in Pakistan, regardless of political persuasion, must continue the movement to enhance democratic institutions

across their nation knowing that freedom, justice, and democracy are difficult to achieve.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF RAY ALEXANDER

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ray Alexander on his retirement from KRGV television station in Weslaco, TX. His dedication to providing and bringing the news to the Rio Grande Valley has been an invaluable service.

Mr. Alexander has served as general manager for KRGV for 26 years. During his time at the television station, KRGV has become a leader in both national and local news, covering the most important stories and issues of the Valley community. The station has been honored with several regional Edward R. Murrow awards, one National Edward R. Murrow award and an Emmy award. The station has also received the Texas Association of Broadcasters Bonner McClain Award.

The tremendous responsibility of managing a TV station has not stopped Mr. Alexander from serving in civic affairs. He has served in leadership positions for both the National Association of Broadcasters and Texas Association of Broadcasters. He won two of the Texas Association of Broadcasters' most prestigious awards—"Broadcaster of the Year" in 1988 and the "Pioneer of the Year" in 2002.

Mr. Alexander has also gained prominence for his community and charitable work. He has dedicated much of his time to the South Texas Chapter of the United Way; the McAllen, TX chapter of the Boys and Girls Club; and won the Easter Seals Society Rio Grande Valley Chapter "Humanitarian of the Year" in 2001.

As the area continues to grow and face new challenges, it is important to always have dedicated journalists to better inform our citizens. I have had a great working relationship with Mr. Alexander and KRGV throughout my congressional career. As Mr. Alexander moves on, I look forward to working with KRGV in the future in keeping our community abreast of the important issues.

There is no doubt that Mr. Alexander will continue to be an inspirational leader in south Texas. I wish him and his family the best as he moves on to another fulfilling chapter in his life.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION EXPANDING SECTION 179 SMALL BUSINESS EXPENSING

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, in Congress's rush to enact some manner of short-term economic stimulus, we should not lose sight of the bigger picture, that is, that the long-run prosperity of the American worker and his or her family depends on sustained and not one-time economic growth. In general, while economic growth is dependent on many

factors, one of its chief determinants is certainty and predictability. It is for this reason that I believe we must act now to extend the critical tax relief of the last 6 years. Industry is already making operational decisions today based on the business environment of tomorrow, and it is troubling to think that, absent any signals from Washington to the contrary, they are expecting tax increases. It is also time to focus our attention on other elements of our long-term economic prosperity, and that includes America's competitive position relative to our largest global competitors. I am concerned that we have some of the highest business taxes among the top economies in the world. This is something that we must work to change if we hope to compete in the 21st century.

One of our country's most valuable assets is our workforce, and fostering the continued competitiveness of this asset is a growing challenge. This is one of the reasons I support small business expensing, both as a short-term and long-term tax policy. Workers grow and learn on the job, underscoring the critical importance of businesses keeping their doors open and expanding. Nearly two-thirds of all new job creation in the U.S. comes from small businesses. In the context of an economic stimulus, increasing small business expensing limits would help keep workers employed and even create new jobs as our country weathers an uncertain economic time.

How does small business expensing help? Second, when facing slower economic growth, and the potential for job loss, expensing frees up potentially affected businesses from spending so much of their cash flow on overhead, therefore enabling them to retain existing workers, hire new workers, and focus on expansion rather than just staying afloat. Expensing makes this possible by allowing companies to write-off 100 percent of new, otherwise depreciable assets immediately.

While my legislation would grant a short-term increase in the current law expensing limits, expensing makes for good long-term investment-focused tax policy as well. I look forward to working with others in the House and Senate to approve this measure, and continue the debate over long-term tax policies that really get at the bedrock of America's economic growth.

COMMEMORATING "MR. MENDOCINO" JOHN A. PARDUCCI FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE MENDOCINO COUNTY WINE INDUSTRY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a legendary grape grower, winemaker and friend on the occasion of his 90th birthday. John Angelo Parducci has been in the wine business in Mendocino County for more than seven decades.

His contributions to the wine industry in Mendocino County, as well as to all of northern California, have helped one of the region's most important agricultural products grow to international acclaim. His lifelong commitment began at an early age.

The grandson of an Italian immigrant, John Parducci is a third generation winemaker. He was born on January 22, 1918, to Adolph Parducci and Isabella Katherine Lucchetti Parducci in the same house where his mother had been born, just south of the Mendocino County line. Adolph moved his family to Ukiah, and at about the same time Prohibition began, built Parducci Winery, the oldest in Mendocino County.

In 1933, 14-year-old John accompanied 40 train carloads of grapes his family was shipping to the east coast. When he returned to Ukiah, he took part in the first of a lifetime of grape harvests. He filled jugs from magnificent 50-gallon redwood tanks, some of which still exist at the old winery. Parducci was the first to bottle and label varietal wines in Mendocino County, the first to use Anderson Valley on a label and the first to promote Mendocino winemaking around the country.

In 1937, John Parducci married the love of his life Margaret Louise Romer. They had two sons. In 1960 he took over the winery from his father and continued with his passionate and opinionated quest to make great wine at an affordable price. The original Parducci Winery was recently purchased by the Mendocino Wine Company, which continues the label.

Not one to retire, however, in 1999, John Parducci and his grandson Rich, started McNab Ridge Winery in the pristine McNab Valley, where John hunted deer, turkey, and wild pigs in his younger years. His winemaking legacy continues under the McNab Ridge and John A. Parducci Signature Heritage Series labels.

Accolades and honors have poured in over the years. In 2003 he was awarded the California State Fair Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been America's Ambassador of Wine, recognized by the Wine Institute, and named winemaker of the year by the Los Angeles County Fair, the North Coast Knights of the Vine, the City of Los Angeles, and the Texas Knights of the Vine.

Over the years John has found time to give service to the community through his membership in the Masons, Rotary and Shriners in Ukiah. In 1999 he received the prestigious Norman Lippman Award in Nashville for his community service as well as his winemaking.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, John Parducci has earned the admiration and respect of his peers and left a positive legacy for the future of winemaking not only in Mendocino County, but all across our country. For these reasons, it is appropriate that we honor Mr. Mendocino—John Parducci.

SUPPLEMENTAL MINE IMPROVEMENT AND NEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. DAN BOREN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2768) to establish improved mandatory standards to protect miners during emergencies, and for other purposes:

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Chairman, I would first like to thank Chairman MILLER and the members

of his committee for their hard work and dedication to improving the safety of our Nation's mines and bringing this important issue to the forefront. As we all know, the tragic mining accidents of the last few years have made this a serious topic of national and public debate.

I am a strong supporter of increasing safety at our Nation's mines. This is why I strongly supported and voted for the MINER Act of 2006. Since its enactment, I have continued to support its complete implementation and I look forward to the mining industry reaching full compliance with its provisions.

While Chairman MILLER's bill, the S-MINER Act, aims to further strengthen mining industry safety and health standards, I have serious concerns about how this bill will affect local mining operations in my congressional district and the State of Oklahoma.

This new mining safety legislation will impose a one-size-fits-all set of safety standards and regulations upon the mining industry, regardless of a mining operation's differing characteristics or risk factors. Therefore, numerous surface mines in my district would be forced to comply with expensive Government regulations that do not enhance safety for their workers.

Fine increases and the process laid out in the S-MINER Act for evaluating and judging regulatory infractions are also matters of great concern to me. Requiring increased fines to be made in escrow, while a citation is investigated, may be reasonable for large mining companies. However, for the small mining operations in my district, this requirement would be financially crippling and is likely to precipitate the loss of valued jobs.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it is my firm belief this new mine safety legislation comes far too soon after the enactment of the MINER Act of 2006. Currently the mining operations in my congressional district and the State of Oklahoma are working diligently to achieve full compliance with the new law. I am concerned the additional regulations and standards set forth in the S-MINER Act of 2008 will be financially overwhelming to an industry that is a vital supplier of jobs for my constituents. I believe it very well could reduce progress on implementing the achievements of the MINER Act.

It is for these reasons listed above, Mr. Chairman, I voted against the S-MINER Act when it came before the House floor for a vote. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure the future sustainability and safety of our Nation's mines, which are integral to the vitality of our Nation's energy supply and strength of the American economy.

RECOGNIZING JOHN BRENNAN FROM NEW YORK

HON. MICHAEL A. ARCURI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of John Brennan, a resident of my congressional district in upstate New York, and his extraordinary record of service for World War II veterans.

In the spring of 2004, John formed a committee with the goal of giving World War II veterans from Herkimer County, New York, a historic once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the

World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. The first 3-day, 2-night trip was in September 2004, and two more followed in May and September 2005. In total, approximately 190 Herkimer veterans traveled to D.C. These all-expense paid trips, financed entirely by private donations, are believed to be the first of their kind in the Nation. Because all of their expenses were covered, every veteran who wanted to, and was physically able, made the trip.

In 2007, he was approached about duplicating the Herkimer project for the World War II veterans from Oneida County, New York. In the course of four trips, more than 400 Oneida veterans made the journey to Washington. After the Hamilton County, New York, legislature contacted John, 17 World War II veterans from Hamilton joined the last Oneida trip.

The son of James and Grace Brennan, John was born and raised in Cohoes, New York. He graduated cum laude from Siena College and Albany Law School. Currently, he is employed as the principal law clerk for Michael E. Daley, the State Supreme Court Justice for Herkimer County.

In addition to his work for veterans, John's service to the community includes organizing the Oneida and Herkimer Counties Bar Associations' participation in the Herkimer County Marine Corps League's Holly Days Toy Drive and serving as an assistant coach in the Herkimer Youth Basketball Program. He is also active in many community associations, including serving as the vice-chair of the Valley Health Services board of directors and on the advisory boards of the Herkimer County Salvation Army and the Herkimer County Child Advocacy Center. In addition, he is on the district council of the Boy Scouts of America, Revolutionary Trails Council and the Herkimer County Law Library Board.

John has been the recipient of numerous awards for his commitment to the community. He has received the Oneida County Bar Association Director's Award, the Mohawk Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross's Volunteer Leadership and Faithful Service Awards and the New York State Unified Court System's Merit Performance Award for Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits. Veterans' organizations, including the Herkimer Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4915, the Herkimer County Veterans Council and the Iliion Marine Corps League, have also recognized his work with awards.

John's exceptional dedication to veterans is to be commended. Thank you, John, for all you have done.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE v. WADE

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES
OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. Since 1973, women in this country have exercised choice over their health and the future of their lives. Celebration of this landmark decision is a celebration of America's commitment to uphold freedom and liberty for all.

According to the National Abortion Federation, abortion was actually legal, common, and

publicly advertised until the mid 1880s. When abortions became illegal, many women died or suffered serious medical problems after attempting to self-induce their abortions or by going to untrained practitioners who performed abortions with primitive methods or in unsanitary conditions. Prior to this 1973 decision, women with economic means were able to access medical assistance, (however illegal) while poor women in desperation were forced to subject themselves to back-alley abortions and the subsequent consequences to health, dignity, and privacy. According to the advocacy group Human Rights Watch, approximately 13 percent of maternal deaths worldwide today are attributable to unsafe abortion—between 68,000 and 78,000 deaths annually.

Equitable access to safe abortion services is first and foremost a human right. It has been accurately stated, "Where abortion is safe and legal, no one is forced to have one"—Human Rights Watch. Having a choice and access to a safe abortion is an enormous concern, estimated to affect one in three American women by the age of 45—National Abortion Federation.

In many countries, the denial of reproductive choices makes women succumb to second rate citizenship, further perpetuating the feminization of poverty. Where women are able to exercise choice, they are in control of their opportunities without intrusion by their government. Any restriction on such a choice offends fundamental liberties.

The social, economic and physical consequences of denying women choice are devastating. Because of our global position as a model of democracy and freedom, it is imperative that we stand to acknowledge this decision of the Supreme Court that affirms women's jurisdiction over their bodies and extends the message that the United States is a country which affirms reproductive choice. May we forever remain a Nation that does not corner its citizens, but rather respects their capacity to make decisions over their health and future pursuits.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT
GENERAL JAMES L. CAMPBELL

HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity today to honor LTG James L. Campbell for his long and distinguished service in the United States Army. I have had the privilege to know General Campbell since 1999 when he commanded the Army's famed 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) at Fort Drum in my 23d Congressional District.

LTG James L. Campbell will officially retire from the United States Army on March 1, 2008, after more than 36 years of dedicated service to our Nation, culminating in his assignment as the 13th Director of the Army Staff. Throughout his career, General Campbell has personified the Army values of duty, integrity, and selfless service across the many missions the Army provides in defense of our Nation. Many of us on Capitol Hill have enjoyed the opportunity to work with General Campbell on a wide variety of Army issues

and programs, and it is my privilege to recognize his many accomplishments.

Upon graduating from the University of Missouri in 1971 and completing the Reserve Officer's Training Corps program, General Campbell was commissioned as a second lieutenant of infantry. Since that time, he received two advanced degrees and served in a variety of command and staff assignments, leading men and women in peace and war in places like Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As the leader of a joint task force in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, General Campbell helped account for America's missing service personnel from the Vietnam war. For the past 3 years, General Campbell has served as Director of the Army Staff, responsible for synchronizing the day-to-day operations of America's 1.2 million-person Army. He has proven himself a tremendous wartime leader who has demonstrated unselfish devotion to our Nation and the soldiers he leads.

General Campbell has led the Army Staff during one of the most challenging periods in the Army's history. He directed the Army's efforts to transform and modernize the force and implement the largest Base Realignment and Closure in history all during a time of war. His efforts were instrumental in leading the staff through monumental change in the way the Army sustains, transforms, grows, and modernizes. This complex effort established standard organizational designs more relevant to current operational requirements and significantly increased the Army's capability to support Combatant Commanders.

Among his many awards and decorations are the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star, and Meritorious Service Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Indeed, through these varying assignments, Lieutenant General Campbell has provided outstanding leadership, advice, and sound professional judgment on numerous critical issues of enduring importance to the Army and our Nation. His actions and counsel were invaluable to Army leaders as they considered the impact of critically important issues.

Madam Speaker, it is with sincere admiration and appreciation that I pay tribute to General Campbell, his wife, Carol, and their two children, Scott and Casey, for the commitment, sacrifices, and contributions that they have made throughout his honorable military career. I thank General Campbell for his more than 36 years of dedicated and exceptional service and wish him many years of continued success and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO JOANIE HELGESEN

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Joanie Helgesen for winning the title of Ms. Florida Senior America 2007. A constituent of mine from Boynton Beach, Ms. Helgesen proudly represents the entire senior community of Florida, and I am honored that she resides within my congressional district.

The Ms. Senior America Pageant first began in 1971 and has since been expressing the

many wonderful qualities of aging. As a prime representation of senior activism in America, the Ms. Senior America Pageant's philosophy is based upon the belief that seniors are the foundation of America, and that it is upon their knowledge, experience and resources that the younger generation has the opportunity to build a better society. As a representative of one of the largest senior communities in America, I share this philosophy and acknowledge the importance of seniors in the development of our youth and our communities as a whole.

Joanie Helgesen moved to Florida 4 years ago, and in that short time has been very active in the community. She is a tap dancer, showgirl and harpist with the Original Florida Follies, a non-profit organization of 50 performers, ages 60 to 90, who present spectacular stage extravaganzas each winter season with proceeds going to children in need and at risk in south Florida. She also does commercial modeling and is an animal lover who rescues homeless and neglected animals. A mother of two daughters and five grandchildren, Joanie believes life begins at 60, and she is making the most of her golden years.

I am proud to recognize Joanie Helgesen for being named Ms. Florida Senior America 2007; she is well deserving of this title and is a great representative of the senior community in south Florida.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES E. HAAS

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor a patriot and public servant, Charles E. Haas of Hurricane, WV for 39 outstanding years of service.

Charles retired this month from the Office of Personnel Management Federal Investigative Services Division. His span of 39 years includes working for the United States Air Force with the Office of Special Investigations, the Defense Investigative Services, and finally the Federal Investigative Services in Charleston, WV.

Charles is a true patriot who served with the West Virginia National Guard for 20 years, where he retired as Chief Master Sergeant in 2001. His commitment to serve our Nation and the personnel security mission as well as his high standards of character and professionalism are to be commended.

I wish Charles E. Haas congratulations on his retirement and thank him for his service to our country and all his contributions to our great State.

TRIBUTE TO KELVA NELSON

HON. GEOFF DAVIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to honor 27-year teaching veteran Kelva Nelson, who is a second grade teacher at Crabbe Elementary School in Ashland, KY.

Kelva was chosen by the U.S. Department of Education to receive the prestigious 2007 American Star of Teaching Award from Kentucky. Across the Nation, one teacher was chosen from each State to receive the American Star of Teaching Award, which recognizes dedication and innovation in the classroom.

As a teacher at Crabbe Elementary, Kelva believes that all of her students can achieve. Each day, she enters the classroom with enthusiasm to teach. Her innovative teaching style and imagination have brought learning to life for the many students that have entered her classroom. I applaud her commitment to educating the next generation of Kentuckians. I am extremely proud of Kelva and her tremendous professional accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING DAN BEARD, "GREENING OF THE CAPITOL"

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, Members of the House, I rise today to recognize the great efforts by House Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard to make the Capitol a more environmentally sustainable workplace. Mr. Beard has spearheaded the "Greening of the Capitol" initiative, a mission to make the millions of square feet of Capitol infrastructure a model of sustainability.

From recyclable paper and energy-efficient light bulbs to cafeteria composting and sustainable seafood, Mr. Beard has re-imagined the Capitol complex as a new, greener place to work. I would like to convey my gratitude for his hard work and dedication and vow to continue as a partner toward this very worthwhile goal.

I would like to submit for the RECORD an article appearing in the Washington Post on January 16, 2008. The article, written by Jane Black, reviews many of the excellent improvements Mr. Beard has brought about in our cafeterias.

ON CAPITOL HILL, A VOTE FOR EDIBILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Congress is back in session this week, soon to tackle such solemn matters as the destruction of CIA videotapes and the credit crunch. But in the halls of the Longworth House Office Building, much of the chatter is about another weighty matter: the new cafeteria food.

As staffers briskly walk the long corridors, they stop to poke into Goodies, the renamed and renovated Longworth Convenience Store, which now features organic chocolate along with the old Cup O' Noodles. Or they peep into the rehabbed Creamery, formerly Scoops ice cream parlor. The whole place has an aura of curious excitement, like a college during orientation week. (Then again, that may be because many of the staffers look as if they could still be in school themselves.)

Since members departed for the winter recess, the House cafeterias, which turn out 2.5 million meals a year, have undergone extreme makeovers. Longworth Cafe, the largest in the complex, was transformed first. Over the weekend of Dec. 15, the old salad bar was swapped for one made of sustainable materials, "green" signs were installed and entrees such as mystery meatloaf and mashed potatoes disappeared, replaced by

crispy chicken with goat cheese and spinach and a "panzanella" station, where staffers can build a salad of marinated figs, prosciutto and feta cheese.

As of Monday, Restaurant Associates—the new contractor, which also supplies food to the Kennedy Center and the National Gallery—had also reopened the cafeterias in the Rayburn and Cannon buildings and the Members' Dining Room.

If only more congressional work were done as swiftly. The changes are part of the larger Green the Capitol project, an initiative of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) that aims to make the House carbon neutral by the end of the session. The dining service was a prime target, and not only because of the 1950s-era food. Cafeteria waste accounted for half of the estimated 250 metric tons of trash the House sends to landfills annually. Now the plates, cutlery, cups—everything except the soup and coffee lids—is compostable and turned to pulp on-site. In addition, the cafeteria offers fair-trade coffee, certified sustainable seafood and as much organic, locally grown food as it can deliver.

"I don't know much about the greening, but the food is a lot better," said Caitlin Lenihan, press secretary for Rep. Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.), standing in line at the panzanella station. "I'd stopped coming a while back, but I've already had the pizza and the barbecue. It's all improved."

Other staffers agreed, giving high marks to the quality and variety of food. (And this reporter can vouch for their good taste. The panzanella salad, while a far cry from the Italian bread salad for which it is named, was fresh, and the Asian shrimp wrap was nicely balanced by crunchy Napa cabbage and carrot slaw in ginger dressing.)

But the embrace of change, so touted on the campaign trail, clearly has not quite filtered down to the aides who keep the Capitol wheels in motion. Along with the praise came the inevitable griping—off the record, of course.

The No. 1 topic of complaint: that biodegradable cutlery. "Funky," "wacky" and "weird texture" were common descriptions. Put too much pressure on the fork, several staffers noted, and it snaps in half. "I even hear the spoons melt in hot drinks because they're made of cornstarch," said one staffer. (A test of that claim proved it was untrue: the first cafeteria urban legend.)

Complaint No. 2: the prices. Under particular scrutiny by caffeine-fueled aides were the bottles of Starbucks Frappuccino. One staffer was so incensed that he e-mailed his friends a chart illustrating how the new \$3.30 price is 47 percent higher than the \$2.25 the bottles sold for in the old cafeteria and 4.8 percent higher than the approximately \$3.15 they sell for in Starbucks stores. "The wraps are more expensive," said a Republican aide. "The main entrees are a little more. I'm not sure about the pizza, because I never would have eaten the pizza before."

A reasonable complaint—if it were true. With the exception of those Frappuccinos, the price hike is in their heads, says Aidan Murphy, Restaurant Associates' vice president of operations. All like items cost the same, he said; only new dishes, such as those from the twice-weekly sushi station, are more expensive than items on the old menus.

And predictably, there was a resistance to change itself. "This is an improvement, but there are little quirks you have to get used to," said one senior Democratic staffer who visits the cafeteria every day. "I used to get this yogurt in the morning. They don't have it anymore. They have organic yogurt, which I don't want."

The green efforts are "generally a good thing, and we support it," the aide said. "But

I'm still a little focused on what happened to my Dannon."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed Rollcall vote 18. Had been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 18.

"RETRO PAY" FOR DISABLED RETIREE VETERANS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I wish to submit to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article dated December 19, 2007 summarizing the plight of many of our Nation's veterans as they wait for their benefits.

[From the Plain Dealer, Dec. 19, 2007]

DFAS SAYS HIRING TO CLEAR BACKLOG OF DISABLED VETS' BENEFITS CLAIMS

(By Sabrina Eaton)

WASHINGTON.—The federal agency that processes pay for military retirees pledged Tuesday that its contractor will hire an extra 61 workers in Cleveland to clear a backlog of more than 48,000 benefit claims from veterans who are disabled by combat injuries.

The director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service promised Cleveland Democratic Rep. Dennis Kucinich that the backlog of claims—some of which date to 2003—will be eliminated by April with the extra push from contractor Lockheed Martin.

"Federal benefits are meaningless if the intended beneficiaries do not receive them," said Kucinich, who called it a "tragedy" that so many veterans have waited for years to get money they're entitled to under a pair of programs for disabled veterans.

The payments stem from a law enacted in 2003 that ended a ban on veterans simultaneously receiving military retirement pay and disability compensation for health problems traceable to military service. Before 2003, veterans had to choose.

Disabled veterans have to apply for the simultaneous payments under the "Combat-Related Special Compensation" and "Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay" programs. After they are approved, veterans can get back pay to the date their eligibility began.

DFAS and the Department of Veterans Affairs have already processed more than 130,000 of the cases and paid out more than \$220 million, says DFAS spokesman Thomas LaRock. Average payments to veterans under the program have been \$1,700, he said.

LaRock said the easiest claims were handled first. The more-complex cases were delayed because they require manual computations. He said many of them are affected by special circumstances, like changes in the veterans' disability level.

"These are complicated cases that are left, and we are processing them as soon as we can," agreed Lockheed Martin spokeswoman Emily Simone.

One of the many veterans who has been lobbying DFAS, retired Army pilot Wavie Sharp of San Antonio, Texas, says payments have been handled in a "painfully slow manner," and he noted that some older veterans have died waiting for their money. He blames the problems on DFAS for failing to demand progress from Lockheed Martin until Kucinich intervened.

"I'm angry," said Sharp, who figures he is personally owed between \$10,000 and \$31,000. "They've been dragging their feet for four years. This is a long time to ask for patience. Thank God for Mr. Kucinich. Everyone else gave us lip service."

NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, the critical national security challenges the U.S. faces throughout the Western Hemisphere demand our support of strong allies, like Colombia, in the region. The historic ties between the U.S. and Colombia have only deepened in recent years as our cooperative efforts to surmount security, economic and social concerns have intensified.

With this in mind, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to Captain Hernando Wills on the occasion of his promotion to Rear Admiral of the Colombian National Navy.

The following excerpts from Colombian Ambassador Carolina Barco's remarks highlight the significance that Rear Admiral Wills' promotion holds for the U.S.-Colombia relationship.

The relations between the United States and Colombia are not only their oldest in this continent, they also reflect a great understanding between our nations. Our relations encompass important historical events, such as the deployment in 1951 of the frigate *Almirante Padilla* and the Batallón Colombia to fight for democracy in Korea alongside U.S. Forces. Colombia was the only Latin American country to deploy troops in that multinational force, which cost the lives of 146 countrymen, with 69 missing and 448 wounded in combat. The participation of our soldiers in the peace keeping forces at the Suez Canal in 1956, the deployment of the Batallón Colombia since 1982 with the peace forces in the Sinai Peninsula, and innumerable episodes, give faith to the integration of our peoples under the flags of democracy and respect for human dignity.

I want to highlight this year as particularly fruitful for the joint work of the Navies of Colombia and the United States: their participation in important exercises such as UNITAS and PANAMAX, the first focused on standardizing procedures among the navies of the hemisphere and to maintain a level of training that will permit a joint defense of this continent, and the second with the purpose of organizing a defense of the Panama Canal.

Because of the nature of our peoples, military action goes beyond defense, successfully engaging in humanitarian endeavors, such as the deployment of the U.S. Navy's hospital

ship *Comfort* to the Colombian coast providing medical attention to thousands of beneficiaries, and the joint participation of Colombia in the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South in Key West, and the engagement of Colombian river operations' experts training U.S. Navy personnel for their future responsibilities in Afghanistan.

For all the aforementioned, the decision of the Colombian Government to promote Captain Hernando Wills to the rank of Rear Admiral is not an isolated event: it compliments the experiences of an inured sailor with the doctrine of National Defense University to defeat narco-terrorism, strengthen democracy, and return to Colombians the possibilities of development in peace, under the mandate of profound respect for human dignity clearly stated in the National Constitution.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the chairman and ranking member and my colleagues for their efforts on behalf of H.R. 4040. This hard work and dedicated service has produced a strong, bipartisan Consumer Product Safety Modernization Act. Congress and the American people can be proud of this significant and needed accomplishment.

While this legislation includes many important reforms of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and I strongly support its passage, the bill does not address one important issue that I think deserves further attention in any House-Senate Conference Committee deliberations. That issue involved the labeling or packaging of a product which may reference a product safety standard. It is important we address this issue for the well-being and safety of our citizens.

In some cases a product may bear a label or packaging material referencing a safety standard, when the product was not tested or certified to meet the standard listed on the label or packaging. This deceptive labeling can be a grave threat to the safety of many consumer products on the market, and must be addressed as part of this comprehensive legislation.

I hope that as this important piece of legislation moves its way through the Conference Committee process we will further examine and address this labeling and packaging issue.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, on January 16, 2008, on Rollcall vote No. 8, during consideration of H.R. 2768, Supplemental Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2007, I incorrectly voted "aye," when I intended to vote "no."

HONORING DR. NANCY J. NIELSEN

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to the newly elected President of the American Medical Association, Dr. Nancy J. Nielsen, who hails from the Mountain State.

Dr. Nancy J. Nielsen is the first West Virginia native and second female to hold the prestigious post. She is originally a native of Elkins, WV, located in Randolph County and completed her undergraduate education in pre-medicine at West Virginia University.

She has a doctorate in microbiology from Catholic University of America and received her medical degree from University of Buffalo where she currently serves as senior associate dean for medical education for the school of medicine.

Dr. Nielsen is always proud to mention her West Virginia roots to her friends and colleagues. She maintains her ties to the State by serving on the Board of Advisers to the WVU School of Medicine.

She always makes time for family despite her busy teaching and travel schedule. Her mother, Anne Harshbarger, lives in Elkins and her children, Kristen Bartnik, Robin, David, Kevin Nielsen live in New York and her son, Mark Nielsen, lives in Washington, DC. She is the proud grandmother of 7 grandchildren.

It is an honor to recognize Dr. Nancy J. Nielsen as a trailblazer among women for her accomplished career and leadership roles in the medical profession. West Virginia is proud to call her one of our own.

A TRIBUTE TO THE NEWLY RETIRED ARTHUR BARNES, A PROUD SON OF HARLEM

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today, as we approach his retirement, to recognize the exemplary career of Arthur Barnes, who culminates a career marked by glowing accomplishment and triumph. He, this year, ends an illustrious 15-year stint as the Health Insurance Plan of New York's senior vice president for external affairs and corporate contributions—there, successfully pursuing with great energy and imagination the promoting of the health and well-being of the diverse New York community. Under his direction, the HIP generously doled out aid—in the form of grants, scholarships, contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind services—to those nonprofit organizations actively working to improve the quality of life for New York City residents. Through his efforts, Arthur Barnes empowered community organizations to make a substantive contribution to the education of people who were previously unaware of how they could positively affect their well-being through preventative behavior. This working partnership stands as Arthur's perhaps greatest legacy. It is that legacy of selfless service to the greater good that Arthur leaves behind for all to emulate.

He ably served in an array of influential posts before arriving at HIP: presiding over the New York Urban Coalition as its leader and CEO for 20 years, becoming a vice president at the Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution, and rising from file clerk to vice president of administration over a 21-year period at Consolidated Mutual Insurance Companies. His commitment to philanthropy remains a pillar of his public work, serving on the volunteer boards of Black Agency Executives, Associated Black Charities, and New York City Partnership, which he helped found.

A native son of Harlem, he has remained loyal and true to his home. But the benefits of his efforts are far-reaching and innumerable.

HONORING THOR HESLA

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, America has lost a great public servant. Thor Hesla died in Kabul, Afghanistan last night, a victim of the Taliban.

That Thor should pass at the hands of religious extremists is perhaps one of the great ironies of life because he was such a strong proponent of the humane, human virtues in life. He worked in tough places, tough jobs in America, in Kosovo, in Afghanistan, always promoting peace, democracy, and the general public welfare. He worked so many hard, dangerous jobs, and he was such a colorful person that he was larger than life. And I guess there are some of us who came to believe that the bullets would always go around him, and in his own particularly human way, Thor had become a touch immortal.

I owe him a deep debt of friendship and gratitude. He was my 1998 campaign manager, and we won a hard-fought campaign under his leadership. But that was the least of it. It was what he did afterwards. His friendship, his support, and his wise advice, which I was sometimes wise enough to accept, that was what for me set him apart and built our deep relationship. And I believe that there are hundreds of people across this country and perhaps thousands of people around the world who similarly feel this bond of friendship and this debt of gratitude to Thor. America and the world are better for his life and his work.

Earlier, I used the word "victim" in connection with Thor: and I misspoke, because Thor was no one's victim. He chose his life, he chose his work, and he chose Kabul.

Because of events earlier during the recess, I had an opportunity to speak with my son about life and its end. And while there are many ways to live well, to live a good life, there are few, if any, good ways to pass on. But if there are any, it is to pass on in the company of friends and family or to pass on for a cause. Now, Thor wasn't with his family in Atlanta or here in Washington, his sister, his brother-in-law, his niece and nephew, or his father; but he was with a family and a circle of friends, the family of those who care, the friends of those who care for others and who care to risk for others. He died in the cause of ringing some small measure of peace, prosperity, and democracy to those who are in dire need of those things.

So tonight we mourn, we remember, we celebrate the life of Thor Hesla. America has lost a fine public servant, but he is now a public servant for all those in all the ages who care to remember those who care and sacrifice for others.

HONORING SANDY DUNN

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker. I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Sandy Dunn, who was recently named the 2008 president of the National Association of Home Builders; making her the first West Virginian and the second female to serve as president of the association.

A native of Mason County, West Virginia, Sandy followed in her father's footsteps by pursuing an interest in public service and taking over their family business, B.J. Builders founded by her father in 1947. In 1974, she additionally opened her own small business, Homestead Realty that grew into the county's largest realty agency.

While remaining dedicated to her community, Sandy emerged in the homebuilding industry as an affective leader with a reputation as a consensus builder. She owes her success to open communication and listening to the concerns of the industry within her state and across the nation.

Her previous experience within the homebuilding industry led her to her current post as president of the National Association of Home Builders. She has been active with the organization for 30 years, where she began on the local level gaining leadership positions, later served as president of the West Virginia Association of Home Builders for 2 years, and also served twice as vice president of the national association. She has received numerous honors including the 1997 Henry E. King Award, the highest statewide honor and was named National Representative of the Year in 1998.

It is an honor to represent such an accomplished, female leader who serves the needs of the homebuilding industry on the national front, while always maintaining her dedication to her community of Mason County. I am proud to call Sandy Dunn, a friend and a fellow West Virginian.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 5087

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, earlier today my colleague Dr. RON PAUL and I introduced H.R. 5087, the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act of 2008, to block the automatic pay raise Members of Congress are scheduled to receive next year.

As you may recall, I introduced a similar bill last year seeking to prevent an automatic pay raise for Members of Congress from taking effect this year.

Unfortunately, despite the support of 29 co-sponsors, last year's bill failed to reach the

floor, As a result, every Member is now receiving \$169,300 this year, a \$4,100 increase from last year.

Madam Speaker, the American people didn't get a \$4,100 pay raise this year. I do not know how in good conscience we, as their Representatives in Congress, can accept one.

Our Nation is at war, we have a national debt of more than \$9 trillion, and fears of a recession have sent the stock market into a tailspin. Unemployment is up, home sales are down, and markets around the world are on shaky ground.

In December, the unemployment rate rose in 46 States as well as the District of Columbia.

In my home State of Arizona, unemployment rose 42 percent between September and December alone, leaving 143,800 unemployed.

Compounding the situation, nationwide inflation shot up 6 percent in 2007, the largest jump in 26 years. The same gallon of gas that cost \$2.20 a year ago now costs more than \$3—and new home construction dropped 25 percent, the largest decrease in 27 years.

When Members of Congress accept this pay raise, we send the wrong message.

Americans are suffering and instead of feeling that pain, Congress is approving pay raises to further insulate us from it. If you want to know why people hate Washington and feel that it is out of touch, it is precisely because of moves like this.

I will be donating my 2008 pay raise to charity and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I also encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5087 to stop next year's pay raise for Members of Congress.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. DANIEL BRINSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished young man from my district, Mr. Daniel Brinson.

Daniel, a Montgomery native, is currently a sophomore at Auburn University and a member of the Nu Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order. In late September of 2007, Daniel was traveling with a friend, Terrell Webb, when the pair came upon an accident. Both cars involved were in flames off the side of the roadway. Daniel and his companion approached the vehicles and heard cries for help. In an act of selfless courage Brinson and Webb forced their way into one of the cars and pulled one of the occupants, a young woman, away from danger. The young woman has since overcome serious injuries to make a full recovery.

Mr. Brinson's unflinching willingness to risk his safety to help others is an example for all Alabamians. I salute Daniel for his service to his neighbors, and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, during Rollcall vote No. 18 on Final Passage of Hope VI Reauthorization, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye".

HOPELESS IN AFRICA? DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT

HON. PAUL C. BROUN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, like millions of Americans, when reminded of the facts and photographs of the millions of souls in Africa that are malnourished and lack even the basic necessities of life, I wring my hands at the enormity of the problem.

I recently read an article by Wes Vernon regarding the sad plight of those in Kenya, but what lifted my spirits was what the author said was being accomplished to help these people. Rather than do nothing because of the enormity of the problem, or simply demand that the U.S. Government provide ever increasing amounts of foreign aid, American citizens with a vision and a burden to help those less fortunate have decided to take action.

People from as far as East Africa all the way to Marietta, Georgia have joined hands to create the United Orphanage and Academy. They are doing great work, and I commend them for their efforts, their initiative, and their selfless compassion.

I commend this article to your reading and submit it to the RECORD for posterity. Thank you.

[From RenewAmerica, Jan. 12, 2008]

HOPELESS IN AFRICA? DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT

(By Wes Vernon)

Herewith, the classic example of a humanitarian and selfless effort linked in a very meaningful way to our strategic interests in a far-off part of the world, and incidentally the effectiveness of volunteer effort as opposed to taxpayer-funded giveaways.

KENYA'S FUTURE AND AMERICA'S SECURITY

In the War on Islamofascism, the United States has a very firm ally in Kenya—one of our best friends on the African continent. That assumes Kenya remains stable. President Mwai Kibaki was recently re-elected. His opponents don't like the outcome and their protests have at times become violent and bloody. Under Kibaki's government, Kenya has—since 9/11—provided us with military bases, and shared intelligence to head off at Qaeda's inroads in Africa. That has been backed up by communications networks.

Retired Lt. Gen. Michael DeLong recently told the Washington Times that Kenya is "strategically located," and that a failed state in Kenya would erase "one of the top friendly militaries to the United States in Africa."

FROM THE HEART, RATHER THAN THE TAXMAN'S SHAKEDOWN

During the holidays, Americans were served up a steady stream of TV ads urging

them to prod the presidential candidates to promise to feed the world's starving.

There is a premise there that deserves a fair amount of dissection.

In the first place, the assumption the problem of the world's needy can most effectively be remedied by an entanglement in the morass of presidential politics. I have yet to hear a candidate for any office declare on the stump, "And furthermore, if elected, I promise that I will dish out more of your tax money for foreign aid."

Not that the American electorate is cold-hearted or indifferent to the hunger problem in third-world countries. Every study that this column has seen on the subject confirms that Americans are the most generous people in the world. But over the years, they have heard some horror stories about how aid we have sent to the far corners of the earth has failed to reach the poor people for whom it was intended after corrupt politicians there got their hands on it. For U.N. aid—also funded by you and me—the results of aid projects have been even worse. That is why even the most compassionate among us are cynical about government-run "foreign aid."

I once approached a congressman just off the House floor to interview him on a foreign aid bill that only seconds before he had eloquently urged his colleagues to pass. I thought the man would have a stroke. "Foreign aid? That's not a popular issue! You know that!" he reproached me while emphatically declining the interview.

NOW SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO KENYA

In a land overwhelmed by poverty, persistence, corruption, and perpetual war, there is an instinct to throw up your hands and give up. For those not willing to walk away from digging out of that appearance (at first blush) of a relentless quicksand in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is—as a shining example of hope—the United Orphanage and Academy.

STARTING SOMEWHERE

In that part of the world, there are heart-rending examples of despair wherever you look. No one capable of human feelings can ignore a hungry and/or sick child. Shelters have been known to run out of food in trying to alleviate starvation.

Also in that part of the world—a place not normally on everyone's radar—the difficulty in dealing with the "impossible" is all the more acute. Many life-threatening birth defects can be treated in the Western world. Not necessarily so in Africa.

Much the same applies to blindness. If there is an effective preventive measure, we will find it here in America. The odds are longer in much of Africa.

And then there are the kids who have been orphaned—often through the ravages of war. Twelve million kids in the region have been orphaned by parents who died of the HIV-Aids pandemic. Add famine and unsafe drinking water to the mix, and you can see that many of God's children are in desperate straits.

THE HISTORY

The United Orphanage and Academy is the brainchild of the Rev. Stephen N. Chege, Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church of East Africa (the orphanage's director) and Washington attorney Henri (pronounced Henry) Rush of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, VA. They founded the orphanage in 2001. The facility opened its doors in 2004 as a home for six orphaned children. It now houses the 48 kids (31 girls and 17 boys, ages 4 to 15 years old).

Since its founding, the orphanage has been supported by Westminster; Old Presbyterian Meeting House (Alexandria); Lewinsville Presbyterian Church (McLean, Virginia);

Mary Queen of Peace (a Catholic church outside of New Orleans), and the First Presbyterian church of Marietta, GA. Members from Westminster, the meeting House, and St. Leo's Catholic Church in northern Virginia shared in the celebration of the second anniversary of its opening.

THE LOCATION AND FACILITIES

The orphanage is in a rural area in north-west Kenya near the border with Uganda. The area is known as Moi's Bridge. Boys' and girls' dormitories are included, as are a dining room and kitchen, along with office space and a classroom. Fresh water is provided by a rain water cistern and deep water well. There is a generator for electric power, and in 2007 the facility was connected to the national electric power network.

The current needs include \$50,000 to purchase a bus as the academy grows serving more children, drawn from Moi's Bridge—population 5000.

STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS, BUT STEADILY GROWING

The academy part of the orphanage operation opened in 2006, and now hosts classes from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, staffed with a teacher for each of the six classes. That is a significant advancement.

Most children in the area attend five different public schools which are distant and overcrowded. (Can you imagine 90 to 110 students per teacher? The norm for even the worst inner-city schools in the Western nations usually manages to avoid that impossible-to-teach ratio). The academy will maintain a ratio of no more than 35 students per teacher.

In addition to the younger children of the orphanage who are enrolled in the academy, students from the surrounding community are also included.

The academy is in the process of building a \$70,000 permanent stone three-story building to house twelve classes. The plan is to

add one additional class each year up through twelfth grade.

THE CHILDREN

The children at the United Orphanage and Academy come from five distinct ethnic backgrounds among the different tribes that inhabit the areas in the neighborhood. In fact, co-mingling and reconciliation of kids from various ethnic backgrounds stood out as a founding principle. The word "United" in the facility's name was picked as an expression of efforts toward the kind of understanding from which not only Africa, but the entire world, would benefit.

The point was made in our interviews (by phone and e-mail) with Henri Rush. Set children on that path, and the prospects for the future become more positive. And he added, "This has become important in the face of the recently electorally-spawned ethnic violence."

That unrest does not threaten the academy itself, however, as Rush adds, "Although there have been killings and house burnings as close as one kilometer from UO&A, the regional authorities have assured Director Chege that the children and the staff and the facility will be protected by them." Classes were scheduled to re-open for 2008 on January 14, offering curriculum up to the fifth grade, a significant advance. Furthermore, the infrastructure of the school is being upgraded—from multiple wood frame classroom blocks to single permanent stone buildings.

Ultimately, Rush says the academy intends also to provide vocational education for children not suited to pursuing post high school education.

"This will insure that all of our children will be able to lead useful productive lives and contribute to the well-being of the community," he adds, "For those that show academic promise, we plan to raise sufficient funds to enable them to attend college in Kenya with a view to their becoming leaders

of the community, region, or even, God willing, the Nation." Make no mistake: These kids will be around to serve as payback to their community, the nation, and—we dare say—the world.

THE BIG PICTURE

We are at a point in history when the world appears poised for a clash of cultures with the possibility of the "mother of all showdowns." Governments and international organizations—by and large—have made a mess of things. We are going to have to pitch in and do the rebuilding. That starts with the basics, offering help to those in need.

There are many ways of doing that, and the United Orphanage and Academy bears a striking resemblance to one of what the first President Bush referred to as "a thousand points of light," a means by which we roll up our sleeves and do it ourselves.

OVERHEAD? NOT HERE

Every charity has to have at least a little bit of overhead, I said to Henri Rush in an interview.

"Absolutely not," he replied, "I am the overhead," with donations of time (and though he didn't specify it, no doubt a fair amount of money). He added a church bookkeeper is "overhead, but she also donates her time."

WHERE YOU COME IN

You can play a part in the success of this shining "point of light."

Tax deductible checks can be sent to Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA 22301, or Old Presbyterian Meeting House, Alexandria, VA 22314. Note United Orphanage on the memo line.

Again—no overhead, no U.N. or government bureaucracy. Your money goes straight to the kids. You can't beat that for the "up and up."