drinking water. In order to claim this important tax credit, companies will be forced to search a bit harder for a new solution to water treatment. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and join in the fight to protect our national treasure.

RECOGNIZING CARL BLESSER OF BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Carl Blesser of Hernando County, Florida. Carl has done something that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate his 102nd birthday.

Carl Blesser was born June 1, 1906, in New York City, New York. Attending school in Albany with a degree in accounting, Carl went on to be a successful CPA. Marrying his sweetheart Nadine, the two spent many happy years together traveling. One of his fondest memories, in fact, is of a trip he took with his parents and wife to see the Empire State Building, as well as several trips to the American West.

Carl moved to Hernando County when his wife was ill, and remained here following her death. Truly devoted to Nadine, Carl states that his happiest moment was when he married his wife. If he could live his life over, Carl would travel more and would like to have met President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A lover of books, Carl loves to go outside and read, and also enjoys going to the Golden Corral for his favorite shrimp dinner. Today he spends much of his time with his friends and loves to sit outside under the trees enjoying the beauty that Brooksville has to offer. His advice to young people today is to not smoke or drink so that they can live longer and better lives.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Carl Blesser for reaching his 102nd birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as him.

HONORING MAXWELL EMORY LANHAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Maxwell Emory Lanham of Kansas City, Missouri. Maxwell is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

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

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

HONORING MASSACHUSETTS STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN A. LEPPER

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of John A. Lepper who is retiring after serving 14 years in the Massachusetts Legislature as State Representative for the city of Attleboro. I am proud to know and to have worked with Representative Lepper and I salute his many contributions to the citizens of Attleboro and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Representative Lepper began his career of public service in the 1980s as a member of the city of Attleboro Planning Board. He was elected to the Attleboro City Council in 1987 where he served for 6 years.

In 1995 he began his tenure as a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature and distinguished himself as a champion for children, families, and persons with disabilities. He is highly regarded for his work on a commission that championed the rights of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. This issue is especially important to Mr. Lepper as he and his wife have devoted many years of their lives raising two of their grandchildren.

In his retirement, Representative Lepper is looking forward to staying involved with local politics but plans to take some time to relax at first and do some fishing.

Madam Speaker, I am certain that the entire House of Representatives joins me in congratulating State Representative John A. Lepper for all that he has accomplished and in wishing him the best in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, the American automobile industry faces almost certain extinction if this body fails to act at this time. I cannot in good conscience allow that to happen. I will therefore vote for this legislation today, December 10, 2008, but I do so with some reservations.

Admittedly, the industry has made many missteps over the years. Moreover, the many flaws in this bill were probably pre-ordained by the expedited legislative procedures—adopted under the guise of an ''emergency''—by which the congressional leadership chose to craft this bill. However, to reject this imperfect solution for an imperfect industry solely because it could have been better makes little sense.

Like my constituents, I am also astonished by the actions of overpaid, out of touch executives at these companies. We need to pursue further reforms in their compensation. But if we focus today on only the few individuals at the top of the companies, we will lose sight of the larger reality: Failure to act will cost the jobs of hundreds of thousands of average, hardworking Americans. It would also deprive our Nation of an industrial sector vital for us to remain an innovative global leader and manufacturer in the twenty-first century.

America needs its own automotive industry. I have always owned American cars. I believe in the American workforce, the thousands of men and women who make the automobiles on which we rely. They do not fly on corporate jets. They certainly do not make millions of dollars. We need to help them in their time of need.

Experts estimate that if the Congress does not provide this initial bridge loan and the automakers do fail, 2.5 million jobs will be lost. The Big Three employ 240,000 workers, suppliers and dealerships provide 800,000 jobs, and some 1.4 million jobs are dependent on the auto manufacturers. In my congressional district, some 500 workers at Rieter Automotive in Bloomsburg produce carpets for General Motors, and these workers and their families would experience undue hardship if we allow the American automotive industry to fail.

Moreover, unemployment numbers released for November indicate this country lost 533,000 jobs in that month alone. The current unemployment rate sits at 6.7 percent. We simply cannot allow those already devastating numbers to swell further.

In addition, the loss of the industry would result in a sizable drop in government revenue, just when annual deficits have run away and our national debt soars. Unemployment assistance will skyrocket and thousands of American breadwinners will lose their homes and even the ability to feed their children. The costs of inaction will therefore be catastrophic.

Surely we all agree that the industry teeters on the precipice of disaster. Additionally, most agree that the global economic crisis bears a good deal of blame for the automakers' collective misfortune. Importantly, the industry has appropriately conceded that they deserve a large share of blame. They were reluctant to diversify their fleets of cars to suit demand and to inoculate themselves against market volatility in the price of oil.

Earlier this year, consumers quickly lost their taste for large sport utility vehicles in favor of small, fuel-efficient cars as automakers for too long ignored this shift. The automakers failed to trim costs appropriately. They retained too many unnecessary white collar jobs. As we all now know, they infamously provided private jets to transport executives across the country, all the while paying those very executives $20 million-plus pay packages.

Over the last few years, the automakers have come to recognize the urgency of their plight by engaging in substantive changes in their corporate structures. They have now presented long-term viability plans to the Congress, and they seem intent on getting the job done. This bill—if its oversight provisions are dutifully carried out by the Executive Branch—attempts to ensure that the necessary transformations occur. As a start, the automakers have expressed that wide-scale restructuring has already begun, and at considerable cost.

This bill contains many thoughtful conditions. Executive compensation limits, taxpayer