

Over the years, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has provided assistance and support to numerous Latinos and other minority small businesses in business education, economic assistance, international business, entrepreneurship, education, community development, loan program development, and procurement assistance, to name a few. The Hispanic Chamber has helped over 5,000 clients in the past 50 years and has helped businesses procure loans totaling over \$3 million.

The Hispanic Chamber is a recognized leader and influential player in the development of the social, political and economic landscape of this region, and was recognized as the best Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in the United States by an independent auditing firm in 1999.

I am proud of the leadership, volunteers and network of supporters whose dedication has built Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Silicon Valley into an integral part of the fabric of our local community. And, in so doing, the Hispanic Chamber is contributing to making Silicon Valley a place that recognizes the vital role Hispanic businesses play in the economic development of our nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 27, 2005, I missed the following votes: rollcall number 322, H. Res. 199, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the massacre at Srebrenica in July 1995; and rollcall number 323, H. Con. Res. 155, urging the Government of the Republic of Albania to ensure that the parliamentary elections to be held on July 3, 2005, are conducted in accordance with international standards for free and fair elections. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both Rollcall number 322 and rollcall number 323.

DELAWARE RIVER PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 27, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1412, the Delaware River Protection Act, which institutes a variety of measures to protect the Delaware and other American rivers from future oil spills and environmental disasters and which I am pleased to have voted for. As the longest un-dammed river east of the Mississippi, the Delaware is a crucial part of America's infrastructure, serving as a key route for commercial shipping, a popular area for recreational activity, and a vital water source for hundreds of counties and municipalities on or near its path.

In late November 2004, the tanker *Athos I*, accidentally hit an unmarked, submerged

piece of iron pipe on the shore of the Delaware River near Paulsboro, NJ. The metal tore a hole in the ship's single hull, releasing roughly 265,000 gallons of crude oil into the river and soiling over 200 miles of coastline. Hundreds of birds became oil-covered and died; countless fish—including many endangered short-nose sturgeon—were sickened or killed. The Coast Guard estimated the cost of cleanup to be in excess of \$200 million—that in addition to revenues lost when shipping routes along the river were forced to close and power plants along the river were forced to shut down. But under current law, the tanker's owners are responsible for less than \$50 million of that cost; American taxpayers are forced to foot the bill for the rest.

For almost 15 million people—including much of the New York metropolitan area—the Delaware is a primary source of drinking water. Polluting such a valuable resource should be far costlier than it currently is, in order to encourage companies to practice the safest shipping possible. The Delaware River Protection Act would have just that effect.

First, the bill increases responsible parties' cleanup liability by nearly ninety percent for single-hulled vessels like the *Athos I*, and by over forty percent for double-hulled vessels, which are safer and more resistant to hull damage. The bill also requires any person with knowledge of submerged objects in U.S. waters to report those objects to the Coast Guard or be subject to civil and criminal penalties; prior Coast Guard notification of the iron pipe submerged in the Delaware's banks could have prevented the *Athos* incident entirely.

Finally, the bill proposes two programs. The first, established jointly within the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, would be devoted to determining the environmental effects of submerged oil, and to developing methods to locate and remove it. The second, the Delaware River and Bay Oil Spill Advisory Committee, would be devoted solely to recommending ways to improve prevention of—and reaction to—oil spills on the Delaware.

In all, this bill makes important strides toward the environmental protection that our planet, our region, and the fifteen million Americans who rely on the Delaware for drinking water need. Preventing future oil spills and related disasters on the Delaware River is a vital and necessary goal. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Delaware River Protection Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed votes on June 24th, 2005. Had I been present I would have voted "aye" on rollcall Nos. 309, 310, 311, 312, 314, 316, 318, 319 and 320. I would have voted "no" on rollcall Nos. 308, 313, 315, 317 and 321.

TRIBUTE TO ARMY SPECIALIST NICK IDALSKI

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and respect that I wish to commend United States Army Specialist Nick Idalski for the service and sacrifice he paid to this country. Specialist Idalski was tragically killed in the field of battle, while bravely conducting combat operations in Ramadi, Iraq, on June 21, 2005, just over a week shy of his 24th birthday. Specialist Idalski served our country with great honor, valor, and courage.

Specialist Idalski was assigned to the Army's 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and 2nd Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colorado. His sacrifice will be remembered at funeral services on Wednesday, June 29, 2005, by a community that has been devastated by the loss of one of its own.

A native of Crown Point, Indiana, Specialist Idalski graduated from Crown Point High School in 2001. After graduation he went on to work for a local construction company and then to train as an emergency medical technician, where he finished at the top of his class. Instead of taking a more conventional route, Specialist Idalski bravely decided to enlist in the army to make a difference and to make his family proud.

Many of his friends and his family recall him as a free spirited teenager, so it came as a surprise when Specialist Idalski decided to join the Army. However, as his time in the army progressed and he finished basic training in 2003 at Fort Benning, Georgia, he made his friends and family proud. After spending time in Korea, he was sent to Iraq in August of 2004, where he courageously served his country. Specialist Idalski had chosen to make a career out of his service in the Army.

He loved his country and the members of his unit; however, Specialist Idalski treasured his family above all else. He is survived by his Mother, Kim Greenberg; Step-Father, Rick Greenberg, a retired Marine; Step-Brother, Army Sergeant Kevin Greenberg; and girlfriend, Lisa Wheeler. His community mourns with his family, and he is missed tremendously. The city of Crown Point, Indiana will honor Specialist Idalski with a moment of silence at the beginning of their Fourth of July parade.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring a fallen hero, United States Army Specialist Nick Idalski. Specialist Idalski sacrificed his life during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and his passing comes as setback to a community already shaken by the realities of war. Specialist Idalski will forever remain a hero in the eyes of his family, his community, and his country; thus, let us never forget the brave sacrifice he made in order to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.