

IN HONOR OF MIKE HURST

**HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 28, 2006*

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of this session of Congress, I see the end of the loyal service of my legislative director and counsel, Mike Hurst. He leaves my office in October to become an Assistant United States Attorney in Mississippi. Today I make these remarks to honor Mike's service and to recognize the challenges we faced together as he now embarks on this new opportunity.

It was August 2003 when Mike Hurst first joined my team. After graduating from Newton County Academy as the valedictorian in 1993, he attended East Central Community College on a basketball scholarship where he earned an Associates of Arts degree. He was the student body association president and "Mr. ECCC." He went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science at Millsaps College in 1997 here he was recognized for his academic achievements and earned a law degree from George Washington University Law School in 2000. After working in the private sector for a few years at Troutman Sanders, Mike turned to public service as majority staff counsel for the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on the Constitution.

Mike joined my staff as legislative director and counsel and led my staff and committee work on telecommunications, transportation, and energy issues including the House-passed Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006 and Mississippi specific language in the Satellite Home Viewer Extension and Reauthorization Act of 2004. He served as my representative on the conference committees for the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. Following Hurricane Katrina, he assisted me in drafting and passing into law—in less than a month—the Local Community Recovery Act of 2006. He also played an integral part in drafting the Housing Opportunities and Mitigating Emergencies Act of 2005, which served as the model for Mississippi's post-Katrina housing initiative implemented through community development block grants.

Mike is a son of Newton County who grew up in what we affectionately call Hurstville, a "suburb" of the town of Hickory, population 512. His father Mike operates Mike Hurst Trucking and his mother Lucy is an assistant district engineer for the Mississippi Department of Transportation. I know they, along with his sister Aime'e Hurst Lang, are proud of Mike.

Now Mike, his wife Celeste and their children Anna Reagan, Amelia, Asa with another on the way, have returned home to Mississippi. Our office will miss his experience, knowledge, and skills, but Mississippi and our Nation will continue to benefit from his service as an assistant United States attorney.

Mike Hurst leaves a formative mark on the shape and operation of my office. We will miss his good nature, humor, and dedication to his work. But I thank him for his service to this office and to Mississippi.

HONORING THE SAFETY RECORD OF THE UTILITIES DISTRICT OF WESTERN INDIANA REMC

**HON. JOHN N. HOSTETTLER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 28, 2006*

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Utilities District of Western Indiana Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC) for its remarkable safety record, specifically working more than 750,000 hours without a lost-time accident.

Since its incorporation some seventy years ago, UDWI REMC has focused on its core mission of providing reliable and affordable power to its member consumers. The electric cooperative was formed to serve southwestern Indiana residents in 1936 when most of our nation's rural homes and farms were without the benefits of electric power.

Today, UDWI REMC delivers power, services and energy solutions to nearly 19,000 homes, businesses and farms in Indiana's Greene, Clay, Daviess, Knox, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Owen, Putnam, Sullivan and Vigo counties. Through its efforts, the Bloomfield-based cooperative has improved the quality of life for thousands of Hoosiers.

Ensuring reliable electric distribution is a vital job that requires dedication, skill and safe work practices. Electricity provides light, heat, cooling, and comfort, and power for labor-saving conveniences and electronics along with life-saving benefits. Yet electricity demands proper respects and attention. UDWI REMC's 49 employees have demonstrated their commitment to safe work practices by compiling an exceptional safety record, working from February 24, 1998 to August 10, 2006 without a lost-time accident.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the efforts and cooperation as demonstrated by UDWI REMC that our country's rural communities enjoy the benefits of clean, safe electricity. We take great pride in commending UDWI REMC General Manager Roger Davis, the cooperative's employees, and Board of Directors on a job done well—and safely—for the past 8 years. Thanks to these men and women, and others like them, the future is bright in southwestern Indiana.

**DARFUR PEACE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. LAMAR S. SMITH**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2006*

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I strongly support the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act. This bill demonstrates the strong bipartisan commitment of Congress to address to the terrible crisis in Sudan.

Day after day, month after month, we have watched the situation in Darfur deteriorate before our eyes. The genocide occurring there is a clear example and tragic reminder that atrocities still exist in the world today.

This bill sends a clear message that the United States and the entire global community must do more to intervene in this catastrophe.

It will expand our ability to support peace-keeping operations in the region and will hold accountable those responsible for committing atrocities.

I recognize that this bill alone will not stop the violence in Darfur. However, it is a step, and an important step. I am hopeful that this will signal the beginning of our increased engagement with this issue.

**THE U.S.-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (H.R. 5684)**

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 29, 2006*

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, which perpetuates the flawed CAFTA model by sacrificing worker rights and environmental standards for the sake of greater profits for the elite.

American policies should promote global trade that is both fair and free. Trade agreements that meet this standard improve the quality of life for American families by expanding export markets for our products while also providing economic opportunity, human dignity and political stability for workers around the world.

Unfortunately, the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement is another step towards a lowest-common-denominator global economy where sinking labor and environmental standards undermine American competitiveness and global security. The intellectual property provisions of the agreement will hinder the spread of lower priced generic drugs, which could improve public health and stabilize populations in Oman. The agreement's only enforceable labor protection is a requirement that Oman enforce its own labor laws, even though the country's laws fail to comply with basic international labor standards in ten specific areas. Rather than requiring improvements in Oman's labor law, H.R. 5684, accepts unenforceable promises from Oman's government. Even the most basic labor safeguards in this agreement have been crippled: the Bush Administration subverted the will of Congress and stripped out a provision inserted by the Senate Finance Committee stipulating that goods made in Oman with forced labor may not benefit from the trade agreement.

Global trade is the keystone of America's economic success. Expanding trade promotes economic growth in our country and the quest for higher living standards and opportunity abroad. And, as with foreign policy, America's trade policy is an expression of our values and a tool to advance our global vision. Unfortunately, this Oman Free Trade Agreement contradicts America's much-touted commitment to foster global democracy and freedom. If America is to find success in our efforts to spread democracy, serious commitments to the conditions that support democracy: economic stability, environmental sustainability and human dignity. To secure economic prosperity at home and human rights around the world, we in Congress do better than H.R. 5684.