

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, July 30, 2011

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, July 27, 2011, I inadvertently did not record a vote during a series of recorded votes on amendments. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote No. 653 (on agreeing to the Tonko amendment to H.R. 2584).

IN RECOGNITION OF CHARLES IDOL AND THE NEED FOR IMPROVED PARATRANSIT POLICIES

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, July 30, 2011

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, many of our constituents come to Washington, D.C. to meet with their elected officials, to gather for conferences and to attend events. It's not always easy to do—they have to find the funds, take time off from work and often arrange alternative care-giving arrangements for family members. For people with disabilities, there is another obstacle—a transportation system that is often inaccessible because of inadequate infrastructure, poor design or breakdowns.

Today, I want to describe to my colleagues the experience of some Chicagoans who worked hard to surmount those barriers and to recognize Mr. Charles Idol, manager of Clyde's restaurant in Chinatown, who came to their rescue.

This spring, six Chicago residents traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the National Paratransit Memorial Rally. It wasn't easy for them to get from Chicago to Washington but they were determined to be here to speak out for improved paratransit policies. Of the six persons, one is a volunteer from IMPRUE (the Independent Movement of Paratransit Riders for Unity, Vehicles, Equality) and five are disabled. IMPRUE is a national organization based in Chicago committed to meeting the transportation needs of people with disabilities. Dr. Ayo Maat, my constituent and President of IMPRUE, organized the trip and arranged meetings with members of the Illinois delegation, including my office, to discuss paratransit solutions.

Once in Washington, those six Chicagoans were confronted by a situation that underscores the need for improved paratransit policies. The group decided to have dinner in Chinatown and wound up stranded after their meal because there was no accessible transportation back to their hotel. For over two and a half hours, the group tried to find accessible transportation. They called taxi services, Metro Access, the police department and 911 and no one could help them. Despite the fact that the

three in wheelchairs could not ride in a regular taxi, their situation was not considered an emergency. One person needed insulin, another needed her epilepsy medicine, yet they were unable to get back to their hotel room because there was no available accessible transportation in our Nation's Capital.

Fortunately, they found Mr. Idol. Dr. Maat wrote to tell me of his generosity, "Angels do exist and they walk among us as ordinary people with extremely big hearts and compassion and love." Mr. Idol worked to find a solution for these six stranded strangers in Chinatown, keeping his restaurant open to them while trying to find accessible transportation. When that attempt failed, he paid for a nearby hotel room for the three persons in wheelchairs who could not ride a regular taxi and sent those who could back to their original hotel so that they could retrieve needed wheelchair batteries and medicine. Meeting Mr. Idol helped avert a possible catastrophe.

But it is unacceptable that people with disabilities have to rely on the kindness of strangers instead of being able to depend on a safe, available and accessible transportation system. The D.C. metropolitan area has experienced paratransit ridership growth of more than 10 percent per year from 2006 through 2009, a trend that is expected to continue. Here in our Nation's Capital and throughout the country, we still have a long way to go to make sure that growing needs are met. We have to make improvements in the infrastructure and availability of paratransit so that people with disabilities are able to travel freely—to go to work and school, visit their friends, and come to Congress to make their voices heard.

Again, I want to thank Mr. Idol and I want to thank Dr. Maat and IMPRUE for their leadership and commitment to paratransit.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICK BERG

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, July 30, 2011

Mr. BERG. Mr. Speaker, on July 25th, 2011, I was unable to be in attendance for rollcall votes #630–636 due to the funeral of my longtime friend, North Dakota Senate Majority Leader Bob Stenehjem. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows.

RCV #630—Yes
RCV #631—Yes
RCV #632—No
RCV #633—Yes
RCV #634—No
RCV #635—No
RCV #636—No

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 25, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2584) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Chair, I filed an amendment to the 2012 Department of the Interior appropriations bill that would provide a 25-mile buffer along Florida's coast to ensure that new oil and gas drilling would not take place above the Outer Continental Shelf within 25 miles of Florida's coast line.

After reviewing the Interior bill and current drilling policies in the Atlantic and the Gulf, I have decided to hold off offering the amendment on the floor for this particular bill, which covers only the next fiscal year. There is not an imminent threat of drilling near Florida's coast due to current restrictions on leasing and drilling.

That said, going forward, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the future to tap more of our own domestic energy resources while taking common sense steps to preserve Florida's tourism economy.

It is important to note, as the amendment is drafted, that directional drilling within 25 miles would still be allowed.

The amendment make no changes—zero, nada, zilch—to the Gulf moratorium that is in place, or the Department of the Interior's current lease plans in the Atlantic.

Tourism is Florida's number one industry. My amendment would ensure that beach tourism is not harmed. Obviously, neither you nor your constituents would prefer seeing a drilling platform in lieu of a sunrise.

Just as fuel is important to our economy, so are our beaches. The amendment encourages the best possible stewardship of both, while protecting beach goers' line of sight, and preserving the scenic vistas that tourists come to Florida to enjoy.

Getting Florida's economy turned around is important. Our economy has already been harmed by the end of the Space Shuttle program. Agriculture, construction, and housing sectors continue to struggle.

Preserving a 25-mile buffer would send a message to visitors, nationwide and worldwide, that we are protecting the pristine nature of our shores that have traditionally drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. It says to millions of tourists that we remain open for their tourism business now and into the future.

Preserving a 25-mile buffer would be an important step toward ensuring that tourism, a

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