advisories has grown to 39, and the number of water bodies affected has increased to 1,675. The problem is getting worse, not better. We are heading down a path where the entire nation could be under a mercury advisory. Do you want to explain to your children and grandchildren that the reason they can't eat the fresh water fish they just caught is because we failed to take action necessary to protect them?

Mr. Speaker, mercury is one of our last remaining unregulated toxins. We must act, and we must act fast. This is not an easy task. We can't see the mercury dispersed through the air and falling to the ground. However, we now know more about mercury than we ever have. We know the solutions to the problem and we have the technology to fix it. We must implement new strategies now. The future of our environment for our children and grandchildren is at stake.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRAVEL REFORM RULE

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, CHRIS COX, PETER VISCLOSKY, TOM CAMPBELL and I are introducing today a resolution that would improve accountability in congressional travel and help encourage more travel related to the official business of the House.

Congressional travel, done the right way, can greatly enhance a Member's knowledge of the issues, improving the quality of legislation and congressional oversight. Members of Congress should inspect important government activities at home and abroad, and share the knowledge they gain with their colleagues and the public.

While the 1995 House gift ban curtailed the worst abuses of congressional travel, occasional reports of travel abuse continue. These reports have led the public to view much congressional travel as wasteful or unnecessary, with the detrimental effect of discouraging some important, legitimate trips.

The Travel Reform Rule which we are introducing today aims to strengthen the House's oversight of travel by Members and staff; make all congressional travel records more accessible to the public; and ensure that the information gained through travel is more widely disseminated.

The requirements of Hamilton's resolution would apply to (1) travel that is paid for by official House funds, except for travel to a Member's congressional district; (2) travel with a foreign country paid for by a foreign government; and (3) any other travel related to official duties, including that paid for by private entities.

The Travel Reform Rule, H. Res. XXX, would require more detailed reports: Current House rules require Members and staff to file a report with the Clerk of the House for any committee-funded travel, privately-funded travel, or for foreign government-funded foreign travel.

For privately-funded travel, reports must include the source of funds paying for travel, and an estimate of the cost of transportation, food, lodging, and other expenses, and a determination that all such expenses are necessary. These reports and the reports on foreign government-funded travel must be filed within 30 days of the end of a trip, though House rules include no penalty for failure to do so.

Committee-funded foreign travel reports must disclose the countries visited, the amount of per diem and transportation furnished, and the total foreign currencies and/or appropriated funds expended. These reports must be filed within 60 days of travel.

The Hamilton resolution would improve and harmonize reporting requirements.

First, the resolution would require for all travel a substantive report to the Clerk of the House on the relation of the travel to the official business of the House, including a detailed itinerary and policy findings and recommendations.

Second, reports on travel funded by a nonprofit organization would have to include copies of the organization's reports to the Internal Revenue Service on its contributions and expenditures. This provision is intended to shed light on any shell foundations set up to fund congressional travel.

Third, the resolution requires identification of the funding entity, including: any pertinent information that could be gathered in the case of a private funding source, an estimate of the costs of travel provided by a foreign government, and if transportation is provided by the Department of Defense, the report must include an estimate of the cost of equivalent commercial transportation.

Under the resolution, the Clerk of the House would notify the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (the Ethics Committee) of any failure to meet these requirements.

Improve public disclosure: The Hamilton resolution would require the Clerk of the House to publish in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and on the Internet a compilation of travel reports for each calendar quarter, as well as an annual summary of all House travel. Currently, the Clerk is only required to publish reports for government-funded foreign travel, and there is not Internet requirement.

Require advance authorization from Ethics Committee: Travel funded by private sources would require advance authorization from the House Ethics Committee. Currently, there is not prior authorization requirement for Members, and for staff, such travel by may be approved by Members without consultation with the Ethics Committee. Prior authorization will take the guess work out of travel, and ensure for the House and the public that all private trips are legitimately related to House business.

Restrict perks: Members and staff would be prohibited from accepting first class airfare, as well as meals and lodging in excess of the federal employee per diem rate, unless previously authorized by the Ethics Committee. Moreover, travel by spouses or family members would be limited to trips where other guests are also permitted to bring their families.

I commend this resolution to my colleagues' attention.

HIGHER EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6) to extend the authorization of programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes:

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the student loan interest rate compromise that was passed last night as part of H.R. 6, the Higher Education Amendments. This bill, with strong bipartisan support, offers a sensible solution to the pressing problem of the interest rate change scheduled for July 1, 1998.

There has been a lot of discussion regarding the appropriate interest rate for student loans. The Department of Education insists that lenders can absorb much larger yield cuts to student loan interest rates without any disruption to the student loan program. Yet they are actively seeking to arrange more than $5 billion in emergency funding in case they are mistaken. Banks and other student lenders vehemently disagree. They have consistently argued that a 0.3 percent reduction in guaranteed loan yields will drive away many lenders, especially small community banks. They also argue that remaining lenders will be discouraged from making loans to high risk borrowers, such as those attending community colleges and trade schools. Yet so far no lender has announced its withdrawal from the loan program.

Suffice it to say, we simply do not know what the impact of the yield cut will be on the guaranteed student loan market. What we do know is that we cannot afford to allow our student loan program to collapse because of this dispute. No one wants to run the risk that any student in their home district will be unable to get their student loans this Fall. But we must act now because the beginning of the Fall award cycle is less than 60 days away. The compromise reached in H.R. 6 corrects the interest rate calculation and ensures that student loans remain available for all students.

For this reason, I find the Administration's veto threat over this interest rate compromise to be somewhat disconcerting. Two years ago, this Congress called for a bipartisan solution to the direct versus guaranteed student loan debate. In the spirit of that decision, we voted overwhelmingly last night in support of this carefully crafted compromise. I urge the Administration to recognize this bipartisan effort and support the interest rate compromise so that we may ensure that no students find their access to financial aid unnecessarily denied.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DARTMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL WINTER PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment today to congratulate the

Dartmouth High School Winter Percussion Ensemble for taking first place honors in the Winterguard International World Championships. The thirty-four member group, performing a routine with a ''Batman'' theme, scored a 98.7, topping one hundred and fifty other bands.

The Dartmouth High School Winter Percussion Ensemble is under the direction of Thomas Aungst, who is ably assisted by Darcy Aungst and Jaime Ecker. The ensemble endured a seventeen hour bus trip to Dayton, Ohio to bring home the World Championship. It is the first time in the history of the competition that a first time entrant has won the championship.

The Dartmouth High School Winter Percussion Ensemble's significant achievement has bestowed a great sense of pride and community spirit to the residents of Dartmouth, as well as the entire citizenry of Massachusetts. They are to be congratulated.

REMARKS BY FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES BAKER ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAN

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, the distinguished former Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, delivered a speech on America's Interest in the Middle East at a May 4, 1998, symposium in Washington sponsored by the magazine, Middle East Insight. He made many important observation about the Middle East peace process, and about U.S. policy in the Gulf. I commend him for his remarks.

I would like to bring the attention of my colleagues an excerpt of his speech, concerning U.S. policy toward Iran:

. . .Let me turn briefly to Iran. This is a country that I think most everyone who looks at it objectively would have to agree is in transition. And I think there are a number of events over the past year or so that have underscored that fact. The first, of course, and most startling was the election of a moderate or semi-moderate, President Khatami, as president last May. The second was his televised overture to the people of the United States, which we saw in January of this year. And the third and most recent was the release from arrest last month of Teheran's mayor, who had been taken prisoner by the hard-liners. And I think this is really a significant development, because it has been widely interpreted—and, I think, correctly—as a victory for Khatami and his colleagues.

So what I think we may be seeing in Iran is the beginning of a evolution toward a truly post-revolutionary Iran. I think the days of the—the heydays of the revolution are over, and I think Iran is beginning to move in a different direction. I think we're going to begin to see an Iran that is less stridently extreme, and I think we're going to begin to see one that is more open to the outside world. So the question arises: What, then, should the United States of America be doing?

First of all, I think we should be prepared to meet official Iranian representatives anywhere, anytime, to begin the formal dialogue.

Secondly, I think we ought to encourage ongoing to people-to-people contact between the two countries, such as the recent visit of a U.S. wrestling team here not long ago.

And thirdly, I think we should consider easing sanctions when and if it becomes clear that Teheran will publicly condemn state-sponsored terrorism and when it becomes clear that she is actually reducing her support for terrorist groups and her efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. That last point, I think, is a particularly vital one, because for us to get there and, actually, for Iran to improve its relations with the United States is going to take actions and not words. We're going to have to see the rhetoric and the reality match; the reality is going to have to match the rhetoric.

And without real, verifiable action on the part of the Iranians, I don't foresee any real thaw in U.S.-Iranian relations. As we contemplate, through, the prospect of such a thaw—and I think is a good prospect that it can occur if the requisite actions take place—as we contemplate such a thaw, I think we ought to remember two very important points. First is that any process is going to be a protracted process, very likely one of years and not months in duration.

And secondly, an opening to Teheran even if it's successful, is not going to be any substitute for an ongoing, energetic American-led effort to contain the efforts of Iraq to develop biological weapons. Horrific weapons of mass destruction. In other words, I think we ought to avoid the false promise that somehow an improved Washington-Teheran relationship is an ace in the hole when it comes to the question of containing the weapons of mass destruction goals of Iraq. . . .

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Day of Prayer, which takes place this year on Thursday, May 7th. This unique annual observance offers an opportunity for all Americans to join together in prayer.

The National Day of Prayer has been celebrated annually ever since its introduction in 1952 by Congress. In 1988, the National Day of Prayer was set on the first Thursday of each May. For over 45 years, the National Day of Prayer has been an occasion for countless Americans to give thanks for their blessings and ask for God's assistance.

The theme of this year's National Day of Prayer is ''America, Return to God.'' It is a theme that is undoubtedly shared by Americans of all faiths. One of the most important values promoted by the National Day of Prayer is unity among people of different faiths. Americans of all faiths are encouraged to take time during the day to offer their prayers before God.

The National Day of Prayer is a time to thank God for the many gifts and blessings that have been bestowed upon us, individually and as a nation. It is also a time to ask for stability and wisdom, and for God's guidance today so that we may restore moral values in our communities.

My fellow colleagues, I urge you to join me and Americans from every state in praying for America, its leaders, and its people on the National Day of Prayer.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE HONORING HOLLY SPRUNGER, LEGRAND SMITH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect for the outstanding record of excellence she has compiled in academics, leadership and community service, that I am proud to salute Holly Sprunger, winner of the 1998 LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This award is made to young adults who have demonstrated that they are truly committed to playing important roles in our Nation's future.

As a winner of the LeGrand Smith Scholarship, Holly is being honored for demonstrating that same generosity of spirit, intelligence, responsible citizenship, and capacity for human service that distinguished the late LeGrand Smith of Somerset, Michigan.

Holly is an exceptional student at Lenawee Christian High School and possesses an impressive high school record. Holly is the President of the National Honor Society and is Co-Valedictorian of her senior class. Holly is also involved with varsity basketball, volleyball and softball. Outside of school, Holly is involved with various community activities.

In special tribute, Therefore, I am proud to join with her many admirers in extending my highest praise and congratulations to Holly Sprunger for her selection as a winner of a LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This honor is also a testament to the parents, teachers, and others whose personal interest, strong support and active participation contributed to her success. To this remarkable young woman, I extend my most heartfelt good wishes for all her future endeavors.

HONORING GEORGE KING RADANOVICH

HON. ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 1998

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform you and the members of this body of an important and exciting event that happened today. At 3:15 a.m. here in Washington, D.C. George King Radanovich entered the world.

George King is the son and first child of my friend and colleague, Representative GEORGE RADANOVICH and his wife Ethie. Named after his grandfather, George King is twenty two and one quarter inches long and weighs in at eight pounds, two ounces.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my most hearty congratulations to George and Ethie on the birth of their son. The joys of parenthood and the awesome responsibility involved in bringing up children can only be truly understood by parents. I'm happy that George and Ethie now have the chance to fully understand the unique importance of families in our society.

I also want to honor George King. He enters the world in an exciting time. Change is all around us. We can only guess at what advances, what progress he will see in his lifetime. As we change and as we progress we