

only myself, but also many business and community leaders in the Miami Valley. When General Lyles retires, we will be sorry to lose the man I consider to be the best leader in the distinguished history of the command.

As the Congressman who represents Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in the U.S. House of Representatives, I offer my sincere congratulations to Gen. Lyles on his well-deserved retirement and on behalf of the 7th Congressional District and thank him for all he has done to preserve our freedoms.

#### HONORING WILLIAM STRAUS

#### HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2003*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William Straus, rancher, environmentalist, and father of the family whose Straus Family Creamery has set a new standard for organic dairy products. Mr. Straus, who lived in Marshall, CA, died on July 6, 2003, at the age of 88.

Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1914, Bill, whose father was the first German Jew to earn a doctorate in agriculture, also studied agriculture before fleeing to British-controlled Palestine in 1936. Although he planned to settle there, relatives lured him to California where they were expecting to find oil near San Luis Obispo.

No oil was found, but Bill fell in love with the land. He earned a degree in agriculture from UC Berkeley and purchased a ranch in Marshall. In 1949, fearing he would not find a Jewish girl to marry in West Marin, he traveled to New York twice to meet Amsterdam-born Ellen Prins. The couple married soon after, and Ellen moved to the ranch where she too fell in love with the rolling hills and beautiful landscape.

The Strauses soon became leaders in efforts to protect the land and to develop environmentally sound farming practices. The couple understood that ranchers and conservationists needed to work together to preserve open spaces. Bill was the first rancher to join the Marin Conservation League, and in 1980 Ellen co-founded Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT). In 1994, son Albert Straus established the first organic dairy west of the Mississippi.

Bill and Ellen created a warm, hospitable household based on their Jewish roots and were welcoming to friends, family, and a parade of visitors. Ellen Straus died last November. Bill is survived by four children and four grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Bill Straus left a legacy based on stewardship of the land, close personal relationships, commitment to agriculture and love of the landscape. His spirit lives on in the beautiful hills of West Marin.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2003*

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain my absence on Friday,

July 18, 2003 and Tuesday, July 22, 2003. I attended the funerals of Sgt. Roger Rowe, a Tennessee National Guardsman killed in Iraq, and Rose Barker, a longtime friend. I wanted to pay my respects to Sgt. Rowe and thank his family for his dedicated service to our country. I also wanted to say farewell to a very good friend in Rose.

#### INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS ACT

#### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2003*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my good friend from Montana, Mr. REBERG, to introduce the National Drought Preparedness Act. The companion to our bill is also being introduced today in the other body by Senators PETE DOMENICI and MAX BAUCUS.

In 1998, Congress passed legislation creating the National Drought Policy Commission. The Commission was tasked with the responsibility to examine current U.S. policy on drought. To summarize the Commission's fifty-page report in a few short words, "The U.S. does not have a policy on drought."

I wish I had just made a joke. The fact that we don't have a drought policy, however, is a joke—and not a good one at that.

Drought is not just an agriculture issue, nor is it only a water management issue. When droughts occur, forest fires erupt, small businesses close, crop yields decrease, and in many instances, people die.

Here in Washington, it's been raining all month, so people aren't talking about drought. However, just because we aren't talking about it, doesn't mean that we shouldn't be doing something about it.

In my home State of Florida, we are always taking steps to mitigate the effects of hurricanes and floods—regardless of what season it is. In the Midwest, similar efforts are made to plan for tornadoes, and in the West, the same could be said for wildfire prevention and earthquakes.

It is time for America to move away from the costly, ad-hoc, and response-oriented approach to drought, and toward a more pro-active approach that focuses on preparation and planning. Coordination between Federal, State, and local governments, in addition to watershed groups, farmers and ranchers, and resource dependent businesses, is the only way we will successfully curb the effects of drought before we find ourselves in one. The bill we are introducing today provides a new focus on an otherwise often ignored natural disaster.

Our bill accomplishes four major goals:

First, the bill begins to move the country away from the costly, ad-hoc, and response-oriented approach to drought, and toward a more pro-active approach focused on preparation and planning. The new national policy will provide the tools and focus for Federal, State, tribal and local governments to address the diverse impacts and costs caused by drought.

Second, the bill will improve the delivery of Federal drought programs. To ensure improved program delivery, integration and leadership, the National Drought Preparedness Act

establishes the National Drought Council under the direction of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Council will provide the coordinating and integrating function for the more than 80 Federal drought programs currently in existence.

Third, the bill establishes new tools for drought preparedness planning. Building on current water policy, the Drought Council will assist states, local governments, tribes, and other entities in the development and implementation of drought preparedness plans. The bill does not mandate state and local planning, but is intended to facilitate the development and implementation of drought plans through the establishment of a Drought Assistance Fund. Importantly, the bill also preserves State authority over water allocation.

Fourth, the bill improves our forecasting and monitoring abilities. Under our legislation, the Drought Council will facilitate the development of the National Integrated Drought System in order to improve the characterization of current drought conditions and the forecasting of future droughts, as well as provide a better basis to trigger Federal drought assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of a coordinated and comprehensive National Drought Council will provide efficient and time sensitive coordination between Federal agencies in preparing for and responding to droughts, as well as assisting Congress in identifying our immediate and long term needs in providing drought relief.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues and moving this bill forward. Americans are hurting throughout this country today because of water shortages and prolonged droughts. Congress must act immediately, and time is of the essence.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill, and I urge the House leadership to bring this bill to the floor for its swift consideration.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION REFORM ACT OF 2003

#### HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2003*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Federal Bureau of Investigation Reform Act of 2003," legislation that strengthens the accountability, enhances the security and improves the management of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). I am joined by Representatives BERMAN, JACKSON-LEE, DELAHUNT, BLUMENAUER, WAXMAN, FARR, and CARSON of Indiana.

The report released today by the joint congressional committee investigating the September 11th attacks was quite disturbing. It provided ample evidence of key clues and signals that astute FBI agents should have picked up on. Line after line of the report reveals incidences of missed opportunities. Beginning with the FBI's neglect of the now infamous "phoenix" memo and ending with the mishandling of potentially valuable informants, the FBI engaged in a pattern and practice of activities that did very little, if anything, to protect this nation from the devastating attacks it experienced on 9-11.

To address some of the obvious miscues and intelligence failures highlighted in the report, we are introducing the FBI Reform Act of