

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the inspiring life of Charles Richard Butler. He was a beloved family man who made a tremendous impact in the field of geology. The Durango community, and the State of Colorado will truly miss Charles, and my thoughts go out to his family during this difficult time of bereavement.

THE NECESSITY OF AN ENERGY
BILL

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from February 6, 2004, Omaha World-Herald.

While the energy bill conference report is obviously not perfect—it contains excesses and too much parochial pork-barrel—the legislation would provide many important improvements over the current situation. Among its beneficial provisions, the measure is designed to improve the nation's electricity transmission capacity and reliability. It also supports alternative power sources and promotes a cleaner environment. As the editorial indicates, the conference report can be improved in certain ways while retaining its beneficial provisions.

It is imperative for Congress to pass a sensible long-term energy policy which will help assure Americans of development of diverse, reliable, affordable energy sources with an emphasis on energy conservation. After years of inaction, this Member believes that it is absolutely essential to enact comprehensive energy legislation. It is overdue.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Feb. 6, 2004]

THAWING ENERGY POLICY

Signs of movement are appearing in Congress' deadlock over a comprehensive energy bill.

The \$31 billion bill passed the House but fell two votes shy of breaking a filibuster in the Senate last November. The bill was a mixed bag, containing needed electrical-grid improvements and tax breaks and incentives for alternative energy sources, including a doubling of the nation's ethanol production. But it also would have rolled back some air and water pollution standards and was bloated with more than \$11 billion in tax breaks and favors to gain votes.

Among the objectionable provisions was liability protection for makers of the gasoline additive MTBE. That would shift to state and local governments the estimated \$29 billion cost of cleaning groundwater contaminated by MTBE.

Pete Domenici, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, said he'll drop that provision. Good. It's an outrageous provision, but killing it will need the agreement of the House, where it still has strong backing from Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

Also likely to be cut in negotiations is the bill's exorbitant cost—more than half of which was targeted to existing oil, gas, coal and nuclear power production.

The electric-grid and ethanol proposals, fortunately, appear likely to emerge in either a slimmed-down energy bill or as separate proposals.

But the energy bill had many other provisions aimed at making a start (a small one, but a start nonetheless) on setting a new

course for the nation's energy policies: tax breaks for alternative-fuel vehicles; tax credits for consumer-level energy-efficiency measures; tax credits for power plant investments in clean coal technology.

These are the important provisions for Congress to safeguard as compromises are sought to pass this vital legislation. (The fact that compromises are finally being openly discussed, after a Republican-only conference committee cooked up the current bill behind closed doors, is a victory all its own for political debate.)

The chance to plot such a course change for the nation's energy policy is an opportunity not to be missed. We're glad to see it's now open to reasonable compromise.

RECOGNIZING DAVID RYAN
CLOUSE

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Ryan Clouse of Hopkinsville, KY, for his selection as a student delegate to represent Kentucky at the 42nd Annual United States Senate Youth Program. Ryan was one of two students chosen to participate from the State of Kentucky for this prestigious honor. Selection as a delegate is an honor few receive. Students are required to be involved in student organizations, community activities and achieve academically.

Ryan has excelled in academics. He has served as an officer and member in the various organizations in his school. He participated in the Governor's Cup Program. He has been a valuable member of his schools soccer team, basketball team and tennis team. Ryan has been involved in his church and community.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent David Ryan Clouse in my District. I extend my congratulations to him for his achievements, and I am proud to bring his accomplishments to the attention of this House.

TRIBUTE TO TOM O'KEEFE FOR 30
YEARS OF PROTECTING CALI-
FORNIANS FROM WILDFIRES

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute today to a dedicated public servant who for the past 30 years has devoted his life to protecting southern Californians from the danger of wildfires. I can say sincerely that many of my constituents owe their lives and homes to the hard work and leadership of Thomas O'Keefe, who is retiring as chief of the San Bernardino Unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Tom O'Keefe began his career in public service in 1968 as a member of the United States Coast Guard, where he served aboard the ice breaker Storis in Alaska.

After his 4 years in the Coast Guard, chief O'Keefe began his work for CDF on October 1, 1974 as a Fire Control Assistant in the Orange Ranger Unit. In 3 years, he was pro-

moted to a Fire Apparatus Engineer and was assigned to the El Cerrito Forest Fire Station (FFS) in the Riverside Ranger Unit. He moved up to Fire Captain in August of 1981 and was assigned to Indian Wells and later to a Training Fire Captain position in the Riverside Ranger Unit Headquarters.

In April of 1986, Tom O'Keefe became Battalion Chief in the Riverside Training Section and three years later was made a field Battalion Chief in San Jacinto. Moving up quickly in the ranks, he was named a Division Chief in 1989, in charge of the Staff Services Division and later headed the Emergency Services Division for Riverside County. In October 1996, he was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Riverside Ranger Unit and was finally named Chief of the San Bernardino Ranger Unit in July 1999.

Mr. Speaker, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is our statewide firefighting agency, and Chief O'Keefe has played an active role in many historic events, ranging from the Los Angeles riots to the Northridge earthquake. The agency is also charged with forestry management and fire prevention, and I am most grateful for Chief O'Keefe's efforts to deal with the terrible tree dieoff in the San Bernardino mountains.

On October 21, 2003 wildfires erupted throughout southern California. These fires were some of the most costly and devastating wildfires in the State's history. Two of these fires were located in San Bernardino County, and the Old Fire in my district destroyed more than 1,000 homes. Chief O'Keefe led the CDF in playing a central role as firefighters evacuated tens of thousands of residents, saved thousands of structures and protected and held the fire back from destroying the entire forest. Chief O'Keefe had already been selected to receive the Director's Leadership Award, but the recognition was especially deserved in light of his leadership and professionalism in the fires of 2003.

Thanks greatly to the efforts of Chief O'Keefe and the CDF, most of our mountain residents were able to return home after the fires. They have expressed their gratitude in many ways, and I thank him personally as we wish him well on his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in saluting this public servant, and sending him and his wife Nancy our best wishes.

RECOGNIZING DEREK SCOTT KING
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Derek Scott King, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 167, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Derek has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the years Derek has been involved with scouting, he has earned 33 merit badges and is a Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Derek