

America, bringing products and jobs back to New Jersey, and creating further economic development and business opportunities throughout our region.

Mr. Rivera currently is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Community United for the Rehabilitation of the Addict, Inc. (CURA), Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Puerto Rican Action Board, and Trustee for New Brunswick Tomorrow. Mr. Rivera's vast community activities are an example of his wide variety of concerns for his community, while showing his dedication and desire to improve his community through action.

Mr. Rivera received his bachelor's degree from the University of Puerto Rico. Mr. Rivera is a loving husband to his wife, Nina Rivera.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Miguel Rivera for his 35 years of distinguished service, outstanding leadership, and devotion to Verizon Communications and the Hispanic community.

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### TERRORISM PROTECTION OF MASS TRANSPORTATION AND RAILROAD CARRIERS ACT OF 2004

#### HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 18, 2004*

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, the recent horrific terrorist attacks on commuter trains in Madrid, Spain tragically underscored the vulnerability of railroad and mass transit systems to terrorist attacks. It is time we identify these vulnerabilities and make the necessary changes to improve our safety.

Congressman RUPPERSBERGER and I have introduced the Anti-Terrorism Mass Transportation and Railroad Carrier Act of 2004, which is the companion legislation to a bill introduced by Senator SESSIONS in the Senate. This bill takes tangible steps to protect the millions of Americans who use our transit systems and increase punishment if a terrorist is able to conduct an attack.

Under current law, an attack on a train is treated differently than an attack on any other mass transit system. We believe clear federal jurisdiction is needed to send the message to would-be terrorists: they will face the full force of law. Under our bill, perpetrators would face up to 20 years in prison if an attack causes material damage to a railroad or mass transit system, and the death penalty if the attack results in any deaths.

Our bill would also broaden the definition of "domestic and international terrorism" to provide law enforcement with tools to combat and prevent attacks on mass transportation and railroads. Specifically, our bill would make it easier for law enforcement officials to detect and disrupt terrorist plots against mass transit systems in the planning phases by allowing the interception of wire, oral, or electronic communications if sufficient evidence existed.

Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with the terrorist threat in a forceful, decisive manner. While much remains to be done to improve railroad security in our country, this bill takes an important first step.

### INTRODUCING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS CONTINUITY OF CONGRESS ISSUE

#### HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 18, 2004*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to offer what I believe is a necessary solution to a problem not addressed in our Founding Fathers' plan for our country's government.

I recently introduced a Constitutional Amendment to address the issue of how Congress would continue should a catastrophic event occur. Under this proposal, if a majority of House members are killed or incapacitated as a result of such an event their seats could be immediately filled by temporary appointments made by state legislatures. We need look no further than the Continental Congresses and Constitutional Convention, to understand that such a temporary solution would be successful. I believe that a functional House, even in a temporarily modified form, is far better than no House at all.

The temporary appointments would be afforded full Member powers, until vacancies are filled by a special election. However, a temporary Member could not be a candidate in the election for the seat he or she holds, and the temporary Member must be of the same political party as the Member who previously held the seat.

There is no way the Founders could have foreseen the need to address such an issue. The terrorist acts that take place nearly every day across the globe were not a part of their world. That's why I believe a Constitutional Amendment is necessary to enable the House to reconstitute itself as quickly as possible.

We have amended the Constitution to address presidential succession and the appointment of Senators in the case of vacancies, but the House has no such constitutional safeguard in the event of a catastrophe. That doesn't make sense. If the Senate can accept an appointment to fill an entire term, then a temporary appointment should not be that offensive to the concept of democracy, and therefore, should be acceptable for the House.

I offered this Constitutional amendment (H.J. Res. 89), because I believe that proposals to expedite special elections and make temporary appointments are not mutually exclusive. I support the idea of a new statute that seeks to expedite special elections and fill House seats quickly in the event of a catastrophe, but this needs to be done in concert with a Constitutional Amendment for temporary replacements and with respect for views of the states.

As for other proposals that address this issue only through expedited special elections, I am certainly willing to review any compromise opportunities. However, I do not believe, nor does the secretary of state from my home state of Connecticut believe, that it is reasonable to expect that we can hold special elections within 45 days after a disastrous event has wiped out hundreds of Members. Also, expedited special elections won't reconstitute the House fast enough to deal with pressing legislative matters.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 taught us that Congress needs to act quickly

on critical pieces of legislation to deal with the aftermath of a crisis. Should such an event occur again and many Members of Congress die, the country will not have the luxury of waiting for special elections to occur in order for the people's business to continue. To avoid taking action now to prevent this scenario would be a dereliction of our duty.

My proposed Constitutional Amendment also addresses vacancies created by the incapacity of a Member of the House, which cannot be addressed by a mere statute. The article would become part of the Constitution if ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states within seven years of the date of its submission to them.

As a former history teacher and long-serving member of the Connecticut State Senate, I feel very strongly about the need to preserve the institution of Congress. In December, I held a Continuity of Congress Forum at the University of Connecticut School of Law in Hartford, Connecticut. I invited local academic leaders, who are experts in Congressional operations, to discuss current House proposals about how Congress would continue should a catastrophic event occur.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this Constitutional Amendment. This is certainly an issue that is difficult for all of us to address—our untimely demise or incapacitation. Yet, given the level of terrorist activity in our world, it would behoove us to recognize that we need a mechanism for temporary appointments should a catastrophic event occur in the House of Representatives.

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### TRIBUTE TO PELKIE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL AND THE ORIGINAL SEVEN ONE-ROOM COUNTRY SCHOOL HOUSES ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR REUNION

#### HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 18, 2004*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to call your attention and that of our House colleagues to a ceremony that will take place in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on August 9, 2004. While the Baraga County Fair goes on, the Pelkie Agricultural School along with the original seven one-room country school houses of the Pelkie area, will be celebrating with all their alumni.

In the NW corner of the Upper Peninsula there is the small town of Pelkie where a hidden treasure lay. The treasure built in 1932 is known as Pelkie Agricultural School, and is perhaps one of the oldest schools of its kind in Michigan or even in the United States still operating as an educational institution. The community looks forward to hosting the event and reuniting with old friends, teachers and classmates.

The Pelkie area was originally settled by Finnish immigrants in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. As late as the mid-1970's one could walk into the local Co-op Store and hear the Finnish language spoken, or attend an area church service on Sunday conducted in the Finnish language. In the early years, seven one-room country school houses served the educational needs of the Pelkie area children, and then in 1932 the Pelkie Agricultural