

on his tremendous contributions to the ministry. As a teacher and a minister, he has set a very high standard that I hope future generations will seek to emulate.

CONGRATULATING WHEATLAND  
TUBE COMPANY FOR THEIR EX-  
CEPTIONAL RECORD IN THE EM-  
PLOYMENT OF VETERANS

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 9, 2004*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and acknowledge the Wheatland Tube Company, headquartered in Collingswood, New Jersey, as a recipient of the National Outstanding Employer of Veterans Award from the American Legion and the Disabled Veterans of America. This award was presented on September 1, 2004 at the American Legion's 86th National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

The award, given to a select number of firms each year by the 2.7 million member American Legion, is designed to recognize "an exceptional record in the employment of veterans," and committed efforts to give veterans consideration in employment and job training opportunities. Over the past several years, Wheatland has demonstrated considerable dedication to this cause, working closely with the Mercer County, Pennsylvania Career Link program to provide an accessible system through which veterans have access to employment, education and training resources.

No one is more deserving of assistance in securing employment than those brave men and women who give of themselves for the defense of our country. Their training, discipline, and resourcefulness serve as invaluable assets for companies across the country, and I am proud to recognize one such company in my district who has made special and notable efforts in the field. I congratulate the Wheatland Tube Company again and wish them best of luck in their future endeavors in this area and beyond.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MAJOR R. OWENS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 9, 2004*

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall votes No. 422 and 423. If present I would have voted "yea."

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

**HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 9, 2004*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to an issue that has languished here in the House and in the other body.

Ten years ago, Congress, at the urging of then-President Clinton, enacted sweeping reforms in an effort to crack down on crime. 100,000 officers were added to the law enforcement ranks. Background checks and waiting periods to purchase firearms were made mandatory. And perhaps one of the most important pieces in this omnibus anti-crime initiative, the Assault Weapons Ban (AWB), was brought into effect.

These reforms have worked. In the ten years since enactment, crime in the U.S. has gone down dramatically. Firearm deaths have decreased by 25 percent. The use of semi-automatic guns in crimes has lowered by nearly 50 percent.

But on Monday, September 13th, one of the key policies that has made the past decade an anti-crime success story will be dismantled. Despite campaign promises in 2000 that the law would be reauthorized, President Bush has not lifted a finger to save the Assault Weapons Ban. At the same time, the House and Senate Majority Leadership have consistently opposed efforts to bring the bill up for a vote.

Despite this unwillingness to act, the sad fact remains that the banned assault weapons and copycat versions that gun manufacturers issued to legally circumvent the law lead to gun deaths. Assault weapons are being used in one out of every five killings of law enforcement officers in the U.S. These guns have no use for hunters and very limited use for sport shooting. To most people, this is a common sense public safety issue. Polls have consistently shown that nearly three-fourths of the public support extending the AWB.

On Monday, if we lose the assault ban, which appears to be the case barring a legislative miracle, then we will have lost both a symbolic and practical tool in the fight against gun violence in America. Our streets will once again be less safe. Police officers will have a greater reason to worry about their safety, and gangs, terrorists, drug dealers, and criminals of every description will have greater access to weapons enabling their activities and putting the safety of all Americans at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I call on this body to listen to the American public and do its duty to protect the safety of our citizens. The Assault Weap-

ons Ban should be brought up for a vote immediately.

CONDEMNING THE TERRORIST AT-  
TACK IN THE CITY OF BESLAN,  
RUSSIA

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 9, 2004*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the American people were struck with dismay upon hearing that on September 1st, 2004, terrorists seized School No. 1 in the city of Beslan, North Ossetia, Russia and held over 1,000 children, teachers, parents, and school employees hostage.

After 53 hours of unspeakable horror, we saw on TV when the hostage-takers began firing on hostages who were attempting to flee and set off explosions in the compound, and when Russian security forces stormed the school compound.

Tragically, as of September 7, 2004, the official death toll stood at 394, plus the 30 terrorists: 186 children are missing. The North Ossetian health ministry said 156 of the dead were children. More than 700 people needed medical help after the crisis. The regional health ministry said 411 remained hospitalized, 214 of them children.

There is absolutely no justification for such acts, which do not represent the will of the average Chechen, who wants the carnage in the Caucasus to cease.

Mr. Speaker, it is the nature of terrorism that every time one thinks there is a limit to the depths to which terrorists can sink, they contrive even more inhumane atrocities. I am particularly repulsed at the use of children as hostages and the subsequent death of many of them.

Mr. Speaker, I condemn, in the strongest terms, this and previous terrorist attacks on innocent citizens of the Russian Federation, and stand in solidarity with the government and people of Russia in combating the forces of international terrorism.

As memorial services are underway in the city of Beslan and elsewhere in Russia, the people of the United States stand with the people of Russia, and send them their prayers. Also, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, allow me to offer our sincerest condolences to the victims of the attack and to their relatives.